

**QUALITY OF WORK LIFE AND TURNOVER INTENTION - THE MEDIATING
EFFECTS OF CAREER AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT**

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ABSTRAK

Tujuan kertas kerja ini adalah untuk mengkaji hubung kait pandangan individu mengenai kualiti kehidupan bekerjaya dengan keinginan untuk meninggalkan sesebuah organisasi. Kajian ini adalah berlandaskan individu yang bertugas sebagai akauntan di firma-firma akauntan di Malaysia. Sebanyak 121 borang kaji selidik telah di pulangkan dan di analisa secara statistik dengan 81 peratus responden. Komitmen terhadap kerjaya dan organisasi dianggarkan mempunyai pengaruh dan kesan terhadap individu yang di kaji apabila di kaitkan dengan keinginan mereka untuk terus berkerjaya di sesebuah organisasi perakaunan. Melalui kajian statistik yang dijalankan, komitmen yan bersifat *normative* mempunyai hubungan tidak langsung yang kuat dalam mempengaruhi keputusan akauntan untuk meninggalkan seseuah organisasi perakaunan.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine the effects of Quality of Work Life factors in explaining the turnover intention of accounting professionals in Malaysia being mediated by career and organizational commitment. A total of 121 questionnaire representing 81% of response rate were used for statistical analysis and the result indicated that normative commitment mediates the relationship of Quality of Work Life and Turnover Intention.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter is organized to introduce the research outline of the study on Quality of Work Life and Turnover Intentions – The Mediating Effects of Career and Organizational Commitment. The chapter illustrates the background, problem statement, research objectives, research questions and definition of key terms of the study.

1.2 Background

The per capita income of Malaysian households has increased to substantial 26 folds since its independence in 1957, which was only RM790.00 then to RM20, 840.00 in 2006 (“PM’s Budget Speech,” 2008). Accordingly, the number of two income households in Malaysia is heightening as women’s involvement in the Malaysian workforce has increased to 3.7 million in 2006 compared to only 2.7 million in the previous year (“3.7 million Working Women,” 2007). As such, there is an increasing concern for employees to achieve quality of work life, as apparently now both males and females are independently more responsible to take care of both work and home.

Studies has proven that organizations offering better quality of work life are more likely to gain leverage in hiring and retaining its valuable work force (May, Lau & Johnson, 1999). This implies that attaining a reasonable level of quality of work life poses a significant impact on individual’s commitment towards their employing organization (Huang, Lawler & Lei, 2007; Kalbers & Cenker, 2007; Razali, 2004; Saklani, 2004).

The accounting profession posed a significant role towards the country's growth and development. Towards realizing the Vision 2020, the Malaysian government has envisioned that at least 60,000 accountants are required by the year 2020 ("The Country Needs 60,000 Accountants," 2007). However, currently there are only about 26,000 accountants available in the workforce ("Move to overcome shortage of accountants," 2008.)

Despite the increasing demand for accounting professionals, the turnover rate of accountants particularly from auditing firms has increased tremendously. The local accounting industry faces big challenges in the efforts of retaining its talented workforce as several countries are luring Malaysian accountants to work abroad with attractive pay and a promise of a better quality life ("Higher Pay, Better Life Abroad," 2007). These cost of turnover in accounting firms may result in serious losses to these firms as an organization of service provider, it relies heavily on its human capital (Chang, 1999). This is due to the fact that organizational success of service nature firms are directly linked to the service performance of its human capital. Thus, losing talented professionals may contribute to a decline in productivity, efficiency and profits of the accounting firm (Larkin, 1995; Roth & Roth, 1995)

Lau (2000) states that the effects of human resource development factors are reflected on business performance as such that it determines the success and growth of the organization, whereby a sound human resource practice which is linked to the degree of satisfaction has a significant impact on the organization's financial performance. Efficient, knowledgeable, skillful, innovative and systematic human resources are an important factor towards developing a highly reputable organization. Therefore, retaining talented workforce in the accounting profession is pertinent to the favorable growth of the accounting organization's performance.

1.3 Problem Statement

The Eighth Malaysian Plan indicated that profession in accounting line accounts for the largest professional career in Malaysia. It accounts for 26 percent of the total professionals of the Malaysian professional workforce (The Eighth Malaysia Plan, 2001-2005). The number of participation in this career line has experienced growth, thus ignited interest on how to manage conflicting demands of quality of work life as it has a significant impact on their commitment to their career and thus has implications towards their organizational commitment and turnover intention within the accounting organization.

It is important for the accounting organization in Malaysia to retain their valuable staff, as loss of valuable knowledge can be significant to the accounting organization. The cost of turnover in accounting firms has serious consequences towards the organization as it relies heavily on the skills and expertise of its staff. This may result in serious losses to the firms as large investments are incurred in the training and development of its staff. There would also be incurrence of opportunity costs to retrain and reselect new staff due to incidence of high turnover. Existing employees may also be influenced as they experience a decreased morale as a result of high turnover among the staff.

Thus, individuals' perception and expectations from an organization may have significant implications towards the well being of an organization, especially organization of a service nature such as of an accounting firm. As such, a better understanding of turnover intention and its relation to the perceived quality of work life and commitment is required.

Measures had to be taken to increase the pool of accountants to meet local demand in view of an exodus of professional accountants since a huge number of local accountants are known to have moved to Australia, Singapore, China and the Middle East ("Move to

overcome shortage of accountants,” 2008). As such, this research analyzes the antecedents to organizational commitment and turnover intention of accountants in accounting firms. This is so as it is imperative to find ways to retain experienced accounting professionals for the firms to be successful (Taylor & Cosenza, 1998). In an effort to improve the staffs’ commitment level and reducing turnover rate, it is crucial for an organization to retain resourceful human capital by enhancing the quality of work life of the workforce.

1.4 Research Objectives

- To analyze the impact of the quality of work life of accounting professionals on both career and organizational commitment.
- To analyze the extent of how quality of work life could affect accounting professionals’ turnover intentions in accounting firms.
- To analyze the quality of work life dimensions that is thought to be influential in the Malaysian context.
- To analyze the existence of career commitment and the three-component model of organizational commitment that is affective commitment, normative commitment and continuance commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1990) and its differing implications to turnover intentions (Tett and Meyer, 1993; Allen and Meyer, 1990).

1.5 Research Questions

In order to analyze the existence of the relationship between the quality of work life factors, career commitment, organizational commitment and how it could affect the turnover intentions of the accounting professional, the below research questions are addressed:

- Does quality of work life factors influence career and organizational commitment?
- Does organizational commitment and career commitment affect turnover intentions?
- How career commitment mediates the relationship between QWL and turnover intentions?
- How organizational commitment mediates the relationship between QWL and turnover intentions?

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following definitions were referred to specifically to enhance understanding of the study:

- *Quality of work life*: There are four dimensions of quality of work life addressed by this study; job characteristics, work-life balance, compensation and benefits and supervisory behavior. These factors are thought to be the most influential factors contributing to one's satisfaction towards work life environment as discovered by the study of Chen & Farh (2000). The 4 dimensions of QWL are chosen as the independent variables for this study as it was proven to have the most significant impact towards a study conducted in an Asian setting.

- *Career commitment*: Refers to one's attachment towards his existing profession (Blau, 1989) and recognized as a form of work commitment that individuals have on a career facet (Morrow, 1993). Career commitment is a mediating variable of this study.
- *Organizational commitment*: Refers to one's attachment towards the organization he/she worked for. There are three dimensions of organizational commitment that is affective, normative and continuance commitment (Allen and Meyer, 1990). Affective commitment refers to emotional attachment employees feel towards their employing firm (Kalbers & Cenker, 2007). Normative commitment refers to employees' feelings of obligation to remain within the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990). While continuance commitment is a direct result of the binding effect of tenure and lack of alternatives in workplace (Kalbers & Cenker, 2007), where employees perceived that it would be costly for them to leave their existing employing organization. All the three dimensions of organizational commitment is regarded as the mediating variable for the purpose of this study.
- *Turnover intention*: Refers to one's intention to leave their existing employing organization which indicates a breach in the relationship between individuals and the organization (Chang, 1999).

1.7 Significance of Study

This study is important as it could serve as a tool to study accounting professionals' behavior and attitudes within an organization. As this study may provide some valuable insights on organizational commitment and employee retention, the organization's management could implement ways to improve working conditions of the organization to

increase staff loyalty and attachment to their organization. Quality of work life factors that is significant towards turnover intention of accounting professionals in Malaysia could be identified and analyzed. Thus, enabling the management to institute better policies and procedures to enhance and instill sense of professionalism within the organization to improve existing commitment towards the organization.

1.8 Organization of Remaining Chapters

This paper is organized with the current chapter as the introduction. The second chapter outlines the review of the literature of previous studies. Chapter three will illustrate the data and variable that is used within the context of the study. Chapter four will present in details the results and findings of the research, which will be summarized in chapter five. Apart from the summary, chapter five will also state the research limitations and suggestions for future research of the current study.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is organized to enhance understanding of the present research on Quality of Work Life and Turnover Intention of accounting professionals, and the possibility of this relationship being mediated by the professionals' career and organizational commitments, if not both.

2.2 Theoretical Foundations

A study by Razali (2004) on professional engineers in Malaysia indicates that an individual's perception of quality of work life has a significant influence in explaining his organizational commitment, which may affect his turnover intention towards the organization. A similar study on auditors by Huang *et al.*, (2007) also indicates that there is a significant relationship between quality of work life towards organizational commitment and turnover intentions. However it was found that different dimensions of quality of work life result in distinctive effects on organizational commitment and turnover intentions (Huang *et al.*, 2007). Although these studies were conducted in a different sample and environment, they both indicate that quality of work life has an impact towards organizational commitment (Huang *et al.*, 2007; Razali, 2004).

This is further supported by two famous propositions that relate individual work behavior to organizational commitments. The first is the proposition of met expectation as suggested by Porter; where individuals bring sets of expectation to their organizations and

their attitudes and behaviors within the organizations are the reflection of their perceived expectations from the organization (Porter, Steers, Mowday & Boulian, 1974). The second proposition explains the reciprocal role of psychological contract between employees and their organization and why they behave as such (Morrison & Robinson, 1997). The psychological contract is a perceptual belief of employees towards their entitlement within the organization. Employees will show attachment towards their organization if they believe that the organization has fulfilled their obligations and employees will tend to reduce their obligations by showing reduced work commitment and absenteeism if the employer failed to fulfill their obligations.

A study by Gaertner & Nollen (1989) supports that employees' perception of career related practices influence their psychological attachment to the current company which may affect their turnover intention. As such, there was evidence that individual's attachment towards the organization is a result from identification with a specific career the individual is pursuing within the organization (Bedeian, Kemery and Pizzolatto, 1991).

Thus, it is important to understand the different dimensions of quality of work life, career commitment and organizational commitment before analyzing their relationships.

2.2.1 Quality of Work Life (QWL)

Quality of Work Life explains the extent of the relationship between individuals and his perception of life in relation to his work environment. It is important for individual to attain a satisfactory level of QWL as most of us spend a huge chunk of our time at work place rather than at home. Therefore, indicating an increased concern for employees to elevate the quality of their work life.

The concept of QWL is very close to the concept of human resource development. Originally the approach of human resource development was to dehumanize work as the emphasis was more on machine than on men, but later as human relations movement was restored, significance of human beings in organizations was brought forth. Organizations started to realize the value of treating people in organizations apart from displaying it through the monetary reward offered and allowing them to grow, develop and be actively involved in the decision making process within the organization. Thus, the organizations goal was to humanize the organizations through the attainment of QWL (Saklani, 2004).

QWL was originally conceptualized by Walton (1975). He initially proposed QWL to be categorized into eight different aspects relating to; adequate and fair compensations; safe and healthy working condition; immediate opportunity to use and develop human capacities; opportunity for continued growth and security; social integration in the work organization; constitutionalism in the work organization; work and total life space; and social relevance of work.

However, different studies defined dimensions of quality of work life differently. Elizur (1990) indicated that there have been different approaches taken to define quality of work life. Some perceived quality of work life to include working conditions, equitable compensation and job opportunities, some even viewed it as involving autonomy, accomplishment, challenge and personal responsibility, chances in making decisions and develop interests and abilities. Some studies even suggested that quality of work life is analyzed in terms of its extrinsic and intrinsic determinants to better enhance its prediction of satisfaction level (Lewis, Brazil, Krueger, Lohfeld & Tjam, 2001). Razali (2004) has developed some of the definitions with regards to the dimensions of quality of work life, as shown in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1.***Operational Definitions for Quality of Work Life dimensions***

Dimensions	Operational Definitions
Growth and development	Opportunity to use variety of skills and perform challenging jobs
Participation	Opportunity to be involved in decisions relating to work
Physical environment	Presence of conducive work environment including work scheduling
Supervision	Relationship with supervisor and mutual understanding
Pay and benefits	Fairness and adequate monetary benefits
Social relevance	Relationship between work and other aspects of life
Workplace integration	Relationships and cohesiveness among co-workers

Source: Razali, M.Z. (2004), *Gadjah Mada International Journal of Business*, Sep 2004, Vol. 6, No. 3, pp326.

Saklani (2004) stressed from his findings that employees are inner directed and value their work life from both financial and non-financial incentives. As such, they require a work environment where the commitment of employees towards its organization could be flourished through the attainment of a positive outlook of an individual's job environment of work related experiences that devoid all negative personal consequences (Shamir & Salomon, 1985; Walton, 1975).

The four dimensions of QWL that are chosen to be analyzed within the scope of this study are job characteristics, compensation and benefits, supervisory behavior and work life balance. These four dimensions were proposed and found by Chen and Farh (2000) as significant representing the QWL elements suitable for the Taiwanese accounting professional (Huang *et al.*, 2007). Since the study was conducted in Asia, it is strongly believed that the

same dimensions would hold in Malaysian context as are Asian and some of the ethnic that are in Malaysia have found to be having a similar working culture.

2.2.2 Organizational Commitment

The changing environment and nature of professional functions towards QWL has had a significant impact towards organizational commitment. This has posed a significant importance towards the study of the relationship between employees and their firms.

Allen and Meyer (1990) identified three types of distinct organizational commitment in existence; they are labeled as affective, continuance and normative commitment. It was proven that these three dimensions of commitment correlate differently with variables purported to be antecedents of commitment (Meyer, Allen & Smith, 1993; Shore & Tetrick, 1991).

Affective commitment represents emotional commitment of an employee towards the organization and his willingness to remain within the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990). As such, individuals who are affectively committed to their organizations will be emotionally attached to their organization.

Continuance commitment reflects a commitment towards an organization because of perceived sunk costs (Somers, 1995) which may be further identified by two possible sub dimensions that is personal sacrifice and perceived lack of employment alternatives (Dunham, Grube & Castaneda, 1994; Meyer *et al.*, 1990; McGee and Ford, 1987). As such, individuals perceived that they have limited employment opportunity thus they had no choice but to remain loyal to their existing employer. It also reflects a perspective where the individuals believed that they have invested in the organization; as they remain loyal, the benefits they accrue from continuing the relationship with the organization increases.

Normative commitment concerns the employee's attachment towards the organization due to his belief of one's responsibility to the organization. It focuses on feelings of loyalty to a particular organization due to internalization of normative pressures exerted on that individual (Hackett, Bycio & Hausdorf, 1994; Popper and Lipshitz, 1992), which occurs when the induced values of the individual and the organization are in congruence (O'Reilly & Chatman 1986). This aspect indicates that individuals will show certain behaviors because it is the right and moral thing to do to remain loyal to the organization (Weiner, 1982).

2.2.3 Career Commitment

Career commitment is recognized as a form of work commitment that individuals have on a career facet (Morrow, 1993). It can be defined as "one's attitude towards one's vocation, including a profession" (Blau, 1989). Blau (1989) has discovered career commitment to be distinguishable from other commitment measures. It has growing importance since it provides a significant source of occupational meaning and continuity when organizations are unable to provide employment security (Aryee, Chay & Chew, 1994). Commitment to career affects individuals' behavior as when they became more committed to their careers they tend to show more interest in developing their work skills and show less intention to withdraw from their careers and jobs (Aryee & Tan, 1992; Blau, 1989). Thus, the possibility of them to leave the profession becomes lower.

2.2.4 Turnover intention

Turnover indicates a breach in the relationship between individuals and the organization (Chang, 1999). The cost of turnover in accounting firms, which includes opportunity costs, retraining and reselection and decreased morale of existing employees, may

result in serious losses to the firms (Chang, 1999). Thus, a better understanding of the turnover intention and its relation to the perceived quality of work life and commitment is required.

Various studies have proven the significance of commitment as an influential factor towards turnover intention. Chang (1999) has proven that career commitment plays a strong role in predicting turnover intention in that when individuals are committed to their careers, they are less willing to leave their organizations. It was found in his study that high career committers consider leaving the organizations if the growth opportunities are not provided by the current organization which is also consistent with an earlier study by Bedian et al., (1991). Thus, high career committers tend to spend more time developing their skills in their existing organization thus express less intention to leave their organization.

High turnover rate in accounting firms' world wide has been long known; therefore, a practical objective of behavioral research of employees of accounting firms is to provide better insights into the factors that lead to employee turnover intention. Earlier research on turnover in the accounting literature has identified organizational commitment as a consistent predictor of an individual's intention to leave (Huang *et al.*, 2007; Bline, Duchon & Mexnier, 1991; Lachman & Aranya, 1986a, b).

2.3 Theoretical Framework

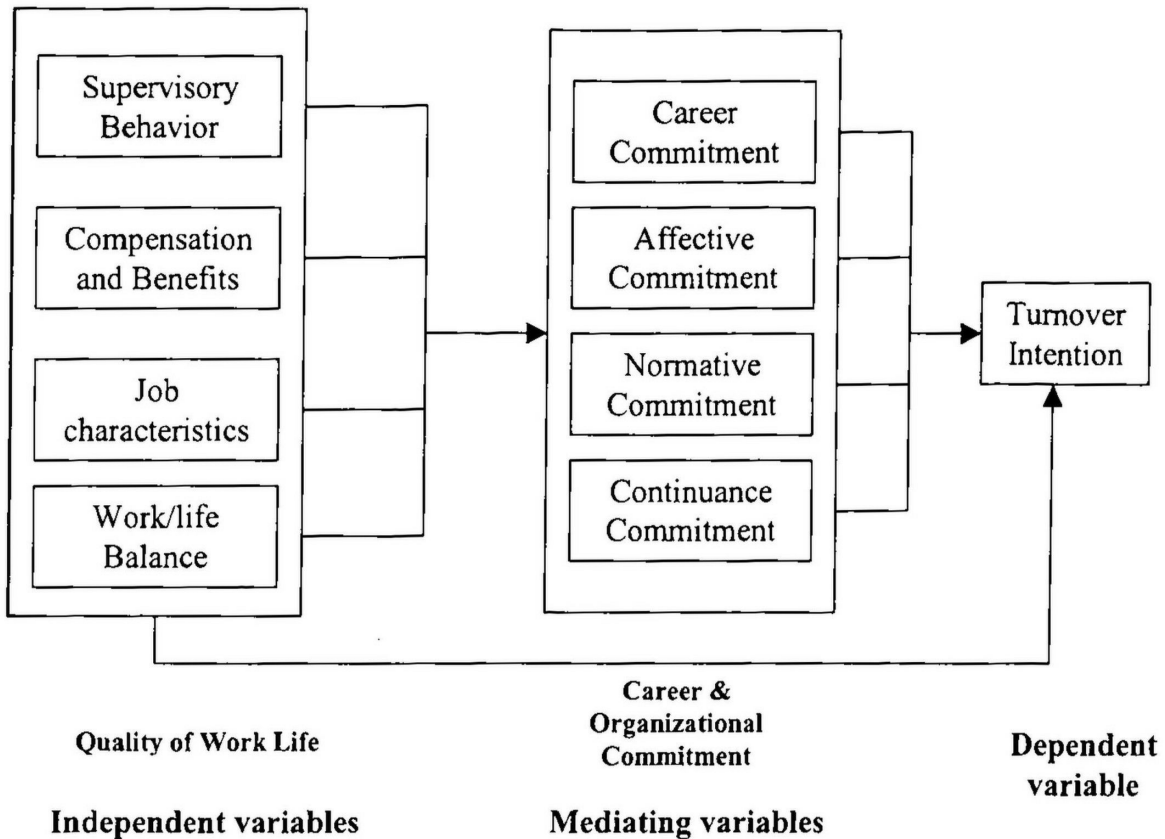


Figure 2.1 The Theoretical Framework: The effects of QWL on turnover intention mediated by commitment level.

Figure 2.1 illustrates the possible relationships between QWL factors with turnover intention, mediated by career and organizational commitment. It is thought that quality work life attained may adversely affect one's turnover intention through the mediating effects of individual's commitment level towards career and organization.

As mentioned earlier, the theoretical framework is supported by two underlying propositions. The first one is the proposition of met expectations as suggested by Porter and his colleagues (1974). This is where individuals bring sets of expectations to their employment scenario, and their attitudes and behaviors towards their organization are the

outcomes of the comparison of their expectations and the realities they perceived. As such, they will show their devotion towards the organization when their prior expectations are satisfied.

The second proposition is the psychological contract where it explains the reason behind individual's attachment towards their organization. The psychological contract is a perceptual belief of employees' entitlement of their employment (Robinson, 1996). It indicates employees' belief about the reciprocal obligations between their organization and themselves (Morrison & Robinson, 1977). As such, upon believing that the employer has fulfilled their obligations, the employees will reflect an increased attachment towards the organization (Robinson, Kraatz & Rousseau, 1994).

This research aims to study how perception of QWL affects turnover intentions of accounting professionals particularly those in accounting firms. Thus give rise to the research framework with QWL as the independent variable that is believed to have an adverse relationship to turnover intention through the mediating roles of the mediating variables that is career and organizational commitment. The QWL factors selected were proven to have significant relationship to turnover intention in the study of auditors' QWL and turnover intention in Taiwan (Huang et al., 2007), thus deemed appropriate for this study as this research is studying the same profession. Previous accounting literature had proven that organizational commitment plays a vital role in determining turnover intention and it was known that affective commitment has the most significant relationship to turnover intention. However, in the context of the study, any significant relationship between both career and organizational commitment towards accounting organization turnover intention will be evaluated. As Malaysia is a multi-racial society, there may be different work culture influences embedded in its society, thus making it a more interesting study.

2.4 Hypotheses

As mentioned earlier, the quality of work life factors used in the framework (job characteristics, supervisory behavior, compensation and benefits and work-life balance) are the four dimensions of quality of work life derived from a study by Chen and Farh (2000). This is chosen as the earlier study was conducted in an Asian context which is somewhat familiar to the Malaysian work scenario. Earlier study (Huang et al., 2007) has also proven that the four QWL dimension has significant influence on accounting professionals. Thus, it is regarded as the most suitable QWL dimension for this study as the nature is rather similar. The relationship of the QWL components and turnover intention are as hypothesized in this chapter. The mediating effects of different commitment are also tested to analyze its significance in explaining the relationship of QWL and turnover intention.

2.4.1 QWL and Turnover Intention

Earlier studies suggested that organizations offering better QWL are likely to gain leverage in hiring and retaining valuable workforce (May, Lau & Johnson, 1999). Employees become attached to their organization when their prior expectations are met (Chang, 1999). Thus give rise to the hypotheses which study the direct relationship of the independent and dependent variables.

H1: QWL has a negative impact on turnover intention

A study by Huang and his colleagues (Huang et al., 2007) has proven that an improved work life balance reduces intention of turnover of auditors. Grover & Crooker (1995) discovered that employees with access to more family-responsive practice benefits showed

greater organizational commitment. This may be due to the fact that the employee is content with his working environment as he is still able to balance between his career and his social life. This is further supported by an IBM survey (Landauer, 1997) that suggested that an intention to stay within the organization is most likely dependent upon the employees' ability to balance work and personal responsibilities that implies the significance of quality of work life. Thus an increase in the value of quality of work life is adversely associated with turnover intentions. Thus give rise to the following hypotheses:

H1a: Work life balance has a negative impact on turnover intention

The more challenging the auditors view their job characteristics, the more stressful they would felt and the more they are encouraged to leave their existing organization as they feel pressured to stay within their existing organization with the work challenges they experience. This was proven in a study by Huang et al (2007), as such, the hypotheses proposed is:

H1b: Job characteristic has a positive impact to turnover intention

The supervisory skills added with supervisor's support through promotion within the organization suggests an important factor in managing employees commitment, thus increase their attachment towards their organization and reducing their turnover intention (Gaertner & Nollen, 1989). As such the hypotheses proposed are:

H1c: Supervisory behavior has a negative impact on turnover intention

H1d: Compensation and benefits has a negative impact to turnover intention

2.4.2 QWL, career and organizational commitment

Highly career committed individuals may show higher levels of commitment towards their professions, provided that they have achieved a significant level of QWL within their profession. It was proven that supervisory support and motivating job characteristics have significant positive influences towards career commitment (Aryee, Chay & Chew, 1994). As individuals recognize their job as interesting with a positive support from their supervisors, they tend to value their job more. Greater skills and abilities from one's job characteristics as an element of QWL, were shown to lead to better performance and in the process, lead to better attitudes towards the job, thus enhances career commitment (Miller & Jablin, 1991). Huang et al., (2007) also proves that there is a significant effect of compensation and benefits as an element of QWL, on career commitment. As auditors perceived their jobs in a positive manner, with a fairly paid income when compared across other professions, they tend to be more committed to their career. The extent of promotion within the career has also proven to increase individual's attachment towards the career indicating that they are well compensated for and have somehow attained a balanced work-life through the reflected rewards (Gaertner & Nollen, 1989). Thus the following hypotheses generalize the relationship of QWL and career commitment:

H2: QWL has a positive impact on career commitment

As individuals perceived that they have a better QWL, they become more attached to the organization. Razali (2004) has proven in his study that QWL has a significant positive impact towards affective, normative and continuance commitment. Employees in Malaysia value the attainment of QWL and reciprocated these values by showing an increased commitment towards their organization, thus supporting the following hypotheses:

H3: QWL has a positive impact towards affective commitment

H4: QWL has a positive impact towards continuance commitment

H5: QWL has a positive impact towards normative commitment

2.4.3 Organizational commitment, career commitment and turnover intention

Allan and Meyer (1990) state that employees with affective commitment remain attached to an organization because they want to, thus resulting in a negative turnover intention. This is further supported by Stallworth (2004) and Law (2005) who discovered that affective commitment is the best predictor of turnover intention of the accounting organization.

H6: Affective commitment has a negative relationship with turnover intention

Kalbers and Fogarty (1995) found a significant inverse relationship between continuance commitment and turnover intention in public accountants which support the following hypotheses. This is supported by Law (2005) who found that there is an interactive effect of affective and continuance commitment in predicting the turnover intentions of public accountants, which also follows the result from Somer (1995) in the sample of nurses.

H7: Continuance commitment is negatively associated with turnover intention

This suggests that both continuance and affective commitment plays an important role in the turnover of the accounting profession.

Normative commitment includes individual's moral obligation towards an organization where there exist an element of loyalty. As stated by Allen and Meyer (1990), normative commitment refers to employees' feelings of obligation to remain within the

organization. As such, this hypothesis is formulated to test the significance within the scope of this study:

H8: Normative commitment is negatively associated with turnover intention

Career commitment affects individual's turnover intentions in that individuals who are highly committed to their careers show less intention to withdraw from their careers and organization they worked for (Aryee & Tan, 1992; Blau, 1989). Thus give rise to the hypothesis:

H9: Career commitment is negatively associated with turnover intention

2.4.4 The mediating effects of commitment

Employees tend to have a reduced intention to leave as they perceived a satisfactory level of QWL through the attainment of an increased commitment to both career and organizational commitment. The logic of both career and organizational commitment mediating the relationship between QWL and turnover intention is valid as it is apparent from previous literature that QWL has significant and negative impact towards turnover intention. Previous studies (Chang, 1999) have also proven that an attainment of both organizational commitment and career commitment provides significant impact to turnover intention as mentioned on the hypotheses developed earlier. Thus provides the rationale for the development of the hypotheses as addressed:

H10: Quality of work life has a negative relationship with turnover intentions, with affective commitment as the mediating factor

H11: Quality of work life has a negative relationship with turnover intentions, with normative commitment as the mediating factor

H12: Quality of work life has a negative relationship with turnover intentions, with continuance commitment as the mediating factor

A study by Chang (1999) indicates that career commitment mediates the effect of career related practices towards predicting turnover intention, in that when individuals are committed to their organization they are less willing to leave the company and the degree is stronger for those highly committed to their careers. This is so as individual who possessed a stronger career desire may become more attached to the organization. As such, the hypothesis is formulated as:

H13: Quality of work life has a negative relationship with turnover intentions, with career commitment as the mediating factor

2.5 Summary

This section provides a comprehensive examination of literature that supports the present research with corresponding theories and propositions from earlier research. The relationship of QWL and turnover intention is discussed in depth to provide a better insight from previous studies on the extent of the research area. The relationship of both career and organizational commitment with turnover intention is also discussed and the extent it mediates the relationship between QWL and turnover intention is developed.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The present study seeks to investigate the relationship of Quality of Work Life and Turnover Intention of accounting professionals, and the possibility of this relationship being mediated by the individuals career and organizational commitments, if not both. Thus, this chapter will elaborate on the methodological details of the study. It comprises of research design, development of questionnaires, measurements, and data analysis details.

3.2 Research Design

This section discusses the topic of nature of study, population, sample frame, and unit of analysis

3.2.1 Nature of Study

The study is of correlational nature where it attempts to investigate the relationship between the independent variables (QWL factors) and turnover intention as the dependent variable, as mediated by career and organizational commitment. The four dimensions of QWL included in the study are job characteristics, supervisory behavior, work-life balance, and compensation and benefits. The mediating variables consist of the three organizational commitments; affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment as well as career commitment. The dependent variable is turnover intention.

3.2.2 Population and Sample Frame

The population of the study covers accounting professionals from the big four accounting firms in three of the biggest cities in Malaysia that is Penang, Kuala Lumpur and

Johor Bharu. 150 questionnaires were distributed to these accounting professional whose specialization is auditing and taxation. The minimum requirement of sample is one variable to ten respondents (Hair, Anderson, Tatham & Black, 2006), thus a sample size of 121 as observed in this survey is more than adequate for this study.

3.2.3 Unit of Analysis

The problem statement lies on the turnover intentions of the accounting professionals where respondents will be conveniently selected among the big four accounting firms in Penang, Kuala Lumpur and Johor Bharu. Demographic analyses and analyses on the chosen variables will be performed based on the questionnaires distributed.

3.3 Development of Questionnaires

The questionnaires are designed to measure the factors influencing turnover intentions where the relationship of the affected variables is analyzed. The questionnaires consist of two different sections, that is Section A and Section B.

The demographic variables are measured in Section A by using nominal scales of two and more than three categories. The demographic variables measured are gender, age range, marital status, income level, tenure and ethnicity. Section B is designed to measure the independent variables, mediating variables and dependent variables. Respondents were asked to indicate their perception on QWL. The questions designed with A 6-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly agree* (1) to *strongly disagree* (6). The 6-point Likert scale is used to offset the central tendency bias that may be encountered with Asian respondents (Chen,