TURNOVER INTENTIONS OF HOTEL EMPLOYEES: THE ROLE OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES, TRUST IN ORGANIZATION, AND AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT

by

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KEINGINAN BERHENTI KERJA PEKERJA HOTEL: PERANAN AMALAN PENGURUSAN SUMBER MANUSIA, KEPERCAYAAN TERHADAP ORGANISASI, DAN KOMITMEN AFEKTIF

ABSTRAK

Dalam suasana global dan persekitaran perniagaan yang sengit hari ini, hotel perlu membentuk dan mengekalkan kelompok pelanggan yang setia dan menguntungkan. Untuk mencapai tujuan ini, kepuasan, komitmen, dan pengekalan pekerja operasi yang berkualiti adalah sangat penting pada sesebuah firma hotel. Pekerja operasi memainkan peranan penting bagi menyediakan servis yang berkualiti tinggi kepada pelanggan atau mengembalikan pelanggan yang kecewa terhadap servis yang diterima kepada pelanggan yang berpuashati dan setia. Walau bagaimanapun, kadar berhenti kerja di kalangan pekerja yang tinggi, terutama pada tahap pekerja operasi telah menjadi satu isu yang sangat menekan di dalam industri perhotelan di peringkat global. Kadar berhenti kerja pekerja yang sangat tinggi akan memberi kesan negatif pada sesebuah organisasi. Walaupun perlakuan berhenti kerja sebenar menjadi fokus utama bagi majikan dan penyelidik, niat untuk berhenti kerja telah disaran sebagai satu indikator penganti yang sangat kuat terhadap perlakuan sebenar. Didokong oleh teori pertukaran sosial (Blau, 1964) dan model rantaian kepercayaan-sikap-niat perlakuan (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1967), kajian ini mencadangkan satu rangka kajian menghubungkan amalan pengurusan sumber manusia (HRM), kepercayaan terhadap organisasi, komitmen afektif, dan keinginan berhenti kerja. Sejumlah 380 pekerja pada peringkat operasi dari hotel besar (hotel bertaraf 5 bintang), mewakili 60.3 % kadar maklumbalas, mengambil bahagian dalam kajian ini. Data mengenai kesemua angkubah kajian ini diperolehi melalui bancian soalselidik kendiri. Analisa regresi berganda berperingkat dijalankan untuk menguji hipotesis yang dikemukakan dalam kajian ini. Hasil analisa regresi menunjukkan: (1) amalan HRM mempunyai kaitan yang signifikan ke atas kepercayaan terhadap organisasi dan komitmen afektif, (2) kepercayaan terhadap organisasi mempunyai hubungan positif yang signifikan dengan komitmen afektif, (3) kepercayaan terhadap organisasi dan komitmen afektif mempunyai hubungan negatif dengan keinginan berhenti kerja, (4) kepercayaan terhadap organisasi dan komitmen afektif didapati menjadi pembolehubah pengantara hubungan di antara amalan HRM and keinginan berhenti kerja, dan (5) komitmen afektif menjadi pembolehubah pengantara di antara kepercayaan terhadap organisasi dan keinginan berhenti kerja. Implikasi teoritikal dan praktikal kajian ini serta cadangan kajian di masa hadapan dibincangkan.

TURNOVER INTENTIONS OF HOTEL EMPLOYEES: THE ROLE OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES, TRUST IN ORGANIZATION, AND AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT

ABSTRACT

In today's global and competitive business environment, hotels aim to create and retain a pool of loyal and profitable customers. To accomplish this aim, the satisfaction, commitment, and retention of quality operational employees is of great importance to hotel firms. Operational employees play a pivotal role in delivering superior service quality to customers or converting aggrieved customers into satisfied and loyal ones. However, high workforce turnover rate, especially on operational level employees has been one of the most pressing issues of the global hotel industry. Excessive employee turnover rate is detrimental to organizations. While actual quitting behavior is the primary focus of interest to employers and researchers, intention to quit is argued to be a strong surrogate indicator for such behavior. Grounded by the social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) and beliefs-attitudes-behavioral intentions model (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1967), this study proposed a framework linking HRM practices, trust in organization, affective commitment, and turnover intentions. A total of 380 operational employees from large hotels (5-star rated hotels), representing a response rate of 60.3%, participated in this study. Data for all the study variables were collected through self-administered survey questionnaires. Hierarchical multiple regression analyses were conducted to test the hypotheses posited in this study. The regression results indicated that: (1) HRM practices were significantly related to both trust in organization and affective commitment, (2) trust in organization had a significant positive relationship with affective commitment, (3) both trust in organization and affective commitment were negatively related to turnover intentions, (4) both trust in organization and affective commitment were found to mediate the relationship between HRM practices and turnover intentions, and (5) affective commitment mediates the relationship between trust in organization and turnover intentions. Theoretical and practical implications of the study as well as suggestions for future studies were discussed.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The tourism industry today is probably the most important industry in the world. It accounts for at least 6.0 % of the world's GDP and employs about 127 million people around the world (Holloway, 2002). This industry has been making significant contributions to the economic development of many countries around the globe. In Malaysia, the tourism industry has been performing extremely well in the Malaysian economy, over-taking some of the country's traditional exports, improving in terms of foreign exchange earnings from fifth position (amounting to RM5.2 billion) in 1994 to second position in 2003 (amounting to RM25.8 billion) (*Annual Tourism Statistical Report,* 2004). Its contribution to the nation's GNP also increased from 4.7% in 1994 to 7.2% in 2003 (*Annual Tourism Statistical Report*, 2004). The number of tourist arrivals to Malaysia has soared from 7.93 million in 1999 to 13.90 million in 2004 (*Annual Tourism Statistical Report*, 2004). Despite the outbreak of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) epidemic in the region, the slowdown in the global economy, the uncertainties arising from the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the bird flu threat, and the tsunami occurrence, tourism-related activities have continued to grow in Malaysia. It is forecasted that the number of international tourist arrivals to Malaysia in 2005 will increase to 16.4 million (*Malaysian Survey of Hotel Operations, 2005*). It is also reported that tourism-related receipts in 2004 has reached RM 30.0 billion, contributing about 9 percent toward the nation's GDP (*Malaysian Survey of Hotel Operations, 2005*). This figure increased significantly by more than 50.0 % from RM 13.3 billion reported in 2002 (*Annual Tourism Statistical Report*, 2004).

The tremendous increase of tourist arrivals over the years has resulted in the rapid development and construction of hotels in Malaysia. For example, there were only about 76,373 hotel rooms in 1995. A decade later (in 2005), the total room supply has increased to 140,503 rooms employing approximately a total of 79,780 employees (*Annual Tourism Statistical Report, 2004*). The overall average occupancy level for large hotels in Malaysia has also increased from 53.3 % in 2003 to 60.8 % in 2004 (*Malaysian Survey of Hotel Operations, 2005*). In the same note, the accommodation services offered by the hotel industry constitutes the highest proportion of tourist spending (more than 35.0%) compared to shopping, food and beverage local transportation, domestic airfares, organized sightseeing, and other expenditures(*Annual Tourism Statistical Report, 2004*).

Globalization and competitive business environment have encouraged service-oriented organizations such as hotels to be proactive in their human resources implementations in order to deliver high quality services to their customers. Since the nature of hotel operations is labor-intensive, the dependence on motivated, trusted, and committed workforces is of great importance to the success of hotel businesses (Mullins, 1992). Customer retention and defection are highly dependent on how frontlines or operational employees deal with customers. Frontline employees play a pivotal role in delivering superior service quality to customers (Babakus, Yavas, Karatepe, & Avci, 2003) and/or converting aggrieved customers into satisfied and loyal ones (Gilly & Hansen, 1992). To accomplish this aim, the satisfaction, commitment, and retention of quality frontline employees is of great importance to hotel firms (Rust, Stewart, Miller, & Pielack, 1996).

The level of service may depend on how employees feel about their work environments (Ford & Heaton, 2001). Employees who are satisfied with their work environments are assumed to serve their customers better than those who are less satisfied. As services are provided through employees, employers may need to attempt to meet employees' expectations, especially in the hospitality industry since the industry is heavily based on human interactions (Spinelli & Canavos, 2000). Lau and May (1998) indicated that companies, which are able to enhance the quality of work environments for members, enjoy strong growth and profitability and gain an advantage in their recruiting and retention.

However, the phenomenon of high employee turnover rate in the hotel industry is rather daunting. High employee turnover rate in the hotel industry is well-documented (Lam, Lo, & Chan, 2002; Woods, 1997) and seems to be an inalienable feature of the hotel industry worldwide (Baum, 1995). Globally, the turnover rate in the hotel industry is estimated to range from 60 percent to 300 percent annually, far higher than the 34.7 percent reported in the manufacturing industry (Foley, 1996). Similarly, in Malaysia, the average turnover rate for operational staff in the hotel industry was reported at 65.7 percent for the year 1998/1999 (*Hotel Industry Employment Report,* 2000). Excessive employee turnover rate is detrimental to organizations. It is related to direct and indirect costs; it affects morale, productivity, reputation, and survival of the organizations (Hinkin & Tracey, 2000). Excessive turnover among service personnel, such as in the hotel industry, is likely to jeopardize customer service quality because understaffing will delay or withhold the delivery of a service. Many of these employees, especially those at the frontlines or operational level employees are in direct contact with customers. According to LaLopa (1997), it is the quality of the people (operational employees) that determines the quality of services offered by service-oriented organizations, like hotels, to their customers.

In order to retain a trusted and committed workforce to cope with the dynamic business environment in the hotel industry, management should place more concern towards possible factors that may contribute to positive employees' attitudes (e.g. trust in organization and affective commitment). In a social exchange relationship (Blau, 1964) where the norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960) is the central theme, the presence of HRM practices signaling care and concern towards employees well-being and development may induce employees to reciprocate by enhancing their display of trust in organization, affective commitment, and willingness to stay in the organization.

Researchers have not systematically investigated the linkages linking employees' perceptions of HRM practices, attitudes towards organization (trust in organization and affective commitment) and behavioral intentions (turnover intentions). However, in examining other variables, they found significant correlations between commitment and employees' trust toward a specific individual such as trust in supervisor or leader (Folger & Konovsky, 1989) or generalized trust in management (Tyler, 2003). These findings suggest that future researchers may examine the relationship between employees' perceptions on organization's HRM practices and their attitudes towards organization (trust in organization and affective commitment), and subsequently how these variables influence employees' behavioral intentions (turnover intentions).

1.2 Problem Statement

Most studies investigating the impact of HRM practices on organizational performance (productivity, financial, and turnover) have been done at the organizational level of analysis (Delaney & Huselid, 1996; Gardner, Moynihan, Park, & Wright, 2000; MacDuffie, 1995; Rogers & Wright, 1998). Despite evidences that HRM practices at the organizational level are related to organizational turnover rates (Arthur, 1994; Delery & Doty, 1996; Huselid, 1995), it would be a fallacy to assume that perceptions of such practices at the individual level are similarly related to individual turnover decisions. Huselid (1995) argued that the positive outcomes of organizational performance are affected by the individual employee's perceptions and attitudes toward his or her organization's HRM practices. Therefore, consistent with Huselid's (1995) argument, examining employees' judgments about HRM practices and how this variable influence employees' attitudes toward organization (trust in organization and affective commitment) and subsequently their turnover intentions is deemed necessary and appropriate.

Moreover, previous turnover intentions studies have focused exclusively on job-related variables (e.g. role conflict, role ambiguity, role overload, work conditions, job tasks, and autonomy) and demographic variables (e.g. gender, age, tenure, and education) as determinants affecting employee attitudes and/or turnover intentions (Kim, 1999; Lum, Kervin, Clark, Reid, & Sirola, 1998; Parnell & Crandall, 2003). Individual's beliefs about organizational-related variables, particularly HRM practices, however, has been overlooked and omitted as determinants in turnover intention studies (Arthur, 1994; Mor Barak, Nissly, & Levin, 2001; Price & Mueller, 1981, 1986). Further, previous empirical researches conducted at the organizational level have ignored the mediating hypothesis (Rogers & Wright, 1998) and merely examined the direct relationship between HRM practices and firm outcomes (Gardner et al., 2000). Little work, however, has explored the thought processes of employees that may affect their decisions toward turnover intentions. In addition, previous turnover intention studies have heavily focused on only affective attitudes (e.g. either job satisfaction or organizational commitment) as the mediating variables toward turnover intentions (Aryee, Wyatt, & Min, 2001; Currivan, 1999; Gaetner, 1999; Price & Mueller, 1981, 1986). To the researcher's knowledge, no study has examined the link between perceptions of HRM practices and behavioral intentions (turnover intentions) mediated by a collective attitude such as cognitive attitude (trust in organization) and affective attitude (affective commitment).

Additionally, studies on turnover intentions within the hotel industry were rather limited and have been conducted mainly in the United States (Deery & Iverson, 1996; Ghiselli, LaLopa, & Bai, 2001; LaLopa, 1997; Milman, 2003; Pizam & Thornburg, 2000) despite high labor turnover reported globally (Lam, Zhang, & Baum, 2001; Woods, 1997). However, these investigations were relatively fragmented in terms of the variables being examined (e.g. only focusing on job-related variables, or organizational structures, or personal variables exclusively) and focused mainly on the direct relationship between predictors and the criterion variable. Moreover, study on the Malaysian hotel scenario has been rather limited (Ansari, Kee, & Aafaqi, 2000; Hemdi, Nasurdin, & Ramayah, 2003; Nasurdin, 2001; Songan, Abang Othman, & Jerry, 2003). Nevertheless, the foci of these studies were on leader-member exchange, citizenship behaviors, organizational commitment, and motivation preferences. Again, employees' behavioral intentions such as turnover intentions were omitted. Hence, a study on employees' turnover intentions within the Malaysian hotel industry is deemed necessary. Thus, this study intends to investigate the predictors of hotel employees' turnover intentions. Specifically, this study seeks to examine the effect of hotel employees' perceptions regarding their organization's HRM practices in influencing their attitudes toward organizations (trust in organization and affective commitment) and behavioral intentions (turnover intentions).

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The study aimed at examining the predictors of hotel employees' turnover intentions. Specifically, the study intends to investigate whether employees' perceptions of HRM practices will influence their trust in organization, affective commitment, and turnover intentions. Thus, the objectives of this study are:

1. To determine whether employees' perceptions regarding their organization's HRM practices will have any influence on their attitudes toward the organization (trust in organization and affective commitment).
2. To determine whether employees' cognitive attitude (trust in organization) influence their affective attitude (affective commitment).
3. To determine whether employees' attitudes (trust in organization and affective commitment) influence their behavioral intentions (turnover intentions).
4. To determine whether employees' attitude toward organization (trust in organization and affective commitment) mediates the relationship between perceptions of HRM practices and their behavioral intentions (turnover intentions).

5. To determine whether employees' affective attitude (affective commitment) mediates the relationship between employees' cognitive attitude (trust in organization) and behavioral intentions (turnover intentions).

1.4 Research Questions

This study attempted to answer the following research questions:

1. Does employees' perception concerning their organization's HRM practices influence their attitudes toward the organization (trust in organization and affective commitment)?
2. Does employees' cognitive attitude (trust in organization) influence their affective attitude (affective commitment)?
3. Does employees' attitude toward organization (trust in organization and affective commitment) influence their behavioral intentions (turnover intentions)?
4. Does employees' attitude toward organization (trust in organization and affective commitment) mediates the relationship between employees' perceptions of HRM practices and their behavioral intentions (turnover intentions)?
5. Does employees' affective attitude (affective commitment) mediates the relationship between employees' cognitive attitude (trust in organization) and behavioral intentions (turnover intentions)?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study hopes to provide significant theoretical and practical contributions in the area of employee turnover behaviors. From the theoretical perspective, this study hopes to shed some light on the role of HRM practices, trust in organization, and affective commitment on turnover intentions at the individual level of analysis. Specifically, the findings from this study will provide additional knowledge into the existing body of knowledge on turnover decision processes by incorporating cognitive attitude(trust in organization) and affective attitude (affective commitment) as the mediating variables based on the beliefs-attitudes-behavioral intentions model (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1967). This study contributes to the field of Human Resource Management by suggesting ways in which HRM practices can be designed to encourage employees' positive attitudes toward organization, which in turn, could lower their turnover intentions. Hence, a combination of social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), and Fishbein and Ajzen's (1967) model will provide the additional theoretical knowledge in viewing behavioral intentions processes from the psychology and social psychology perspectives.

From the practical perspective, findings from this study will help policy makers and practitioners in developing effective HRM practices aimed at enhancing employees' positive attitudes toward their organization (trust in organization and affective commitment) which in turn, lead to lower turnover intentions. The findings will be particularly beneficial to the hotel industry, which has been noted for its high turnover rates by prior scholars (Iverson, 1999; LaLopa, 1997; Pizam & Thornburg, 2000; Woods, 1997).

In addition, due to the scant empirical research on employee turnover intentions in the Malaysian hotel industry except for the work of Khalid (2005), it is hopeful that the findings from this study will create interest and provide an avenue for the development of further research in the same or related area.

1.6 Definitions of Key Terms

Definitions and descriptions of key terms used in the study are presented below:

Turnover Intentions. For the purpose of this study and following Hom and Griffeth (1991), turnover intention is defined as an employee's own estimated probability that he or she has a conscious and deliberate intent to permanently leaving the organization at some point in the near future.

Trust in Organization. Following Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, and Camerer's (1998) definition, trust in organization in this study is defined as hotel employees' psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behavior of their top management. In particular, this study will focus on trust as a cognitive psychological state, such as a cognitive attitude of a trustor (employee) toward a trustee's (top management, hence organization) trustworthiness.

Affective Commitment. Following Mowday, Steers, and Porter (1979), affective commitment in this study is defined as hotel employees' strong belief in their organizations' goals and values, willingness to exert considerable effort for their organizations, and strong desire to maintain membership in the hotel organization.

HRM Practices. Following Dittmer (2002), HRM practices in this study is defined as an individual's perceptions of the extent of the implementation of the strategies, plans, and programs used to attract, motivate, develop, reward, and retain the best people to meet the organizational goals of the hospitality enterprise. The HRM practices' dimension proposed for this study are realistic job preview, orientation programs, job security, compensation system, performance appraisals, training and development, and career advancement.

Realistic Job Preview (RJP). RJP is conceptualized as perceptions of employees regarding the hotels provision of providing positive and negative aspects of the job, organization, and industry to potential job seekers (Tsaur & Lin, 2003).

Orientation Program. Within the context of this study and following Tsaur and Lin (2003), orientation program is conceptualized as the degree to which the employees' perceived that the hotels have conducted formal or informal orientation programs in order to familiarized the employees to the new work environment, job tasks, organization structures, values, and goals.

Job Security. Job security in this study is conceptualized as the degree to which an employee perceived he or she could expect to stay in his or her job over an extended period of time (Delery & Doty, 1996).

Compensation System. Following Uen and Chen (2004), this study conceptualized compensation system as the degree to which the employees' perceived that the hotels have practiced a formal, fair, and equitable salary policies.

Performance Appraisal. Following previous scholars (Delery & Doty, 1996; Tsui, Pearce, Porter, & Tropoli, 1997), this study conceptualized performance appraisals as the degree to which employees' perceived that the hotels have conducted formal performance evaluations and feedback systems for the purpose of employees' control and development.

Training and Development. In line with Delery and Doty (1996), this study conceptualized training and development as the degree to which employees' perceived that the hotel has conducted formal and informal training programs aims at developing employees' knowledge, skills, and ability.

Career Advancement. Following Delery and Doty (1996) and Burke, Divinagracia, and Mamo (1998), this study conceptualized career advancement as the degree to which the employees perceived that the hotels have provided career planning programs to assist its organizational members to achieve their career goals.

1.7 Organization of the Thesis

The thesis is arranged into five chapters including this chapter. Chapter 2 highlights the literature relevant to turnover intentions, HRM practices, trust in organization, and affective commitment. This chapter also includes theoretical framework and the hypotheses posited in this study. Chapter 3 covers the methodology used in the study. It includes a description of the research approach, the population and sampling design, the measures, the data collection procedure, and the statistical methods used to analyze the data. Chapter 4 focuses on the analyses and results of the study. Finally, Chapter 5 presents the discussion and conclusion of the study. This chapter includes discussion of the findings in line with the objectives of the study, implications of the study, limitations and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationships between employees' perceptions of organization's HRM practices, trust in organization, affective commitment, and turnover intentions. This chapter reviews the relevant literatures leading to the development of the conceptual model. Specifically, literatures pertaining to turnover intentions, affective commitment, trust in organization, and HRM practices will be reviewed. Previous empirical findings relating to each construct will be explored. Next, theoretical underpinnings that form the basis of the current study will be put forward. Finally, theoretical framework and hypotheses for this study will be provided.

2.2 Definition and Conceptualization of Turnover Intentions

Various definitions of turnover intentions can be found in the literature. Tett and Meyer (1993) referred to turnover intentions as a conscious and deliberate willfulness to leave the organization. Cotton and Tuttle (1986), on the other hand, referred to turnover intentions as an individual's perceived probability of staying or leaving an employing organization. Similarly, Hom and Griffeth (1991) defined turnover intentions as the relative strength of an individual's intent toward voluntary permanent withdrawal from the organization. Such intentions are typically measured along a subjective-probability dimension that associated a person to a certain action within a specific time interval (e.g. within the next six months or one year). Hom and Griffeth (1991) conceptualized turnover intentions as the last in the sequence of withdrawal cognitions, which consists of thinking of quitting and intent to search for alternative employment. Thus, for the purpose of this study, turnover intention is defined as an employee's own estimated probability that he or she has a conscious and deliberate intent to permanently leaving the organization at some point in the near future.

The turnover intentions construct is drawn from the beliefs-attitudes-behavioral intentions model (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1967), which holds that one's intention to perform a specific behavior is the immediate determinant of the behavior, meaning that turnover intentions is one's behavioral intention to separate from job. Most turnover studies reported that the relationship between attitudes about the job or organization and behavioral intentions were significant (Allen, Shore, & Griffeth, 2003; Ghiselli et al., 2001; Iverson & Deery, 1997; Parnell & Crandall, 2003; Tett & Meyer, 1993). Mor Barak et al. (2001) in their review of antecedents to turnover argued that many studies use turnover intentions rather than actual turnover as the outcome variable due to two main reasons. First, there is evidence to indicate that workers typically make a conscious decision to do so before actually leaving their jobs. Findings from studies on the relationship between turnover intentions and actual turnover have provided empirical evidence for a significant and positive relationship between these two constructs (Currivan, 1999; Hellman, 1997; Lambert, Hogan, & Barton, 2001; Price, 2001). Hence, scholars (Price & Mueller, 1981, 1986; Price, 2001) have recommended the use of the turnover intentions construct as a proxy in measuring actual turnover. Second, it is more practical to ask employees of their intention to quit in a cross-sectional study than actually tracking them down via a longitudinal research to see if they have left. In addition, actual turnover may be more difficult to predict, as there may be other factors such as employment alternatives that affect a person’s turnover behavior. According to Mor Barak et al. (2001), an unfavorable economy may reduce a person’s flexibility to move elsewhere leading to lower correlations between intent to leave and actual turnover whilst the job satisfaction-intent to leave relationship tend to be stronger when greater economic choice existed.

Although turnover intentions need not necessarily lead to actual turnover, Bluedorn (1982) found that turnover intentions was highly correlated with actual turnover behavior in thirteen out of fourteen empirical studies. In fact, studies on turnover have shown that turnover intentions is the best immediate predictor of voluntary turnover (Griffeth, Hom, & Gaetner, 2000; Price, 2001). Equally consistent is the finding that turnover intention is the strongest precursor of turnover (Allen et al., 2003; Lum et al., 1998). Studies on turnover have discovered predictor of voluntary turnover have significant positive relationships between turnover intentions and actual turnover (Price, 2001). In conclusion, the utilization of the turnover intention construct in explaining actual turnover has been well-established (Mor Barak et al., 2001; Price, 2001), hence the use of turnover intentions as the final outcome variable in this study is deemed appropriate.

2.3 Unidimensionality of Turnover Intentions

Hom and Griffeth (1991) argued that withdrawal cognitions consist of three items: thinking of quitting, intent to search, and intent to quit. Hom and Griffeth (1991) tested several models of linkages between job satisfaction and turnover based on numerous cross-sectional and longitudinal studies. In the first part of their study, confirmatory factor analysis was used to evaluate specific withdrawal cognitions that contributed to turnover. In the second part, they tested the effect of withdrawal cognitions over time on job search and turnover behavior. From the study, Hom and Griffeth (1991) confirmed that withdrawal cognitions is a unitary concept, in which indicators of thinking of quitting (employee considers leaving the organization), intention to search (employee decides to go about looking for a job outside the organization), and intention to quit (employee decides to leave the organization at some point in the future) are all proposed as measures for turnover intentions. Therefore, following Hom and Griffeth (1991) this study conceptualized turnover intention as a unidimensional construct. Furthermore, past researches in turnover studies (Allen et al., 2003; Griffeth et al., 2000; Lum et al., 1998; Price, 2001;) confirmed that turnover intentions is a unidimensional construct and a reliable criterion variable.

2.4 Antecedents of Turnover Intentions

Appropriate review of previous literatures on antecedents to turnover intentions is required so that a better understanding of factors affecting actual turnover and ways to minimize them could be further investigated. The following discussions relate to the review on antecedents to turnover intentions. These antecedents can be categorized as personal, job-related, organizational, contextual, and attitudinal variables.

2.4.1 Personal Variables

Much has been written about individual demographics or personal variables as factors influencing turnover intentions. Those personal variables receiving much attention include age, gender, organizational tenure, education level, and marital status.

Studies on age and turnover intentions have reported mixed results. A study in hospitality settings by Tepeci and Barlett (2002) found a positive relationship between age and turnover intentions. However, other studies within the hotel industry, such as those by Iverson and Deery (1997) and Ghiselli et al. (2001) reported that age had a negative impact on turnover intentions. This means that younger hotel workers were more likely to express intentions to leave their organizations compared to their older counterparts. Reviews of the turnover literature across occupations indicate that both age and tenure are associated with voluntary job leaving (Mor Barak et al., 2001). Those who are younger and those who have been in the job for a shorter period of time are more likely to leave the job than older or longer term employees (Cotton & Tuttle, 1986; Mobley et al., 1979). Possible reasons for such relationship may be attributed to unmet job expectations, higher job opportunities, and fewer obligations to dependents. Alternatively, those who are older and who have been in the job for some time may have more limited job opportunities, and thus, stay in the job (Tepeci & Barlett, 2002). On the same notion, Griffeth et al. (2000) observed that the available time to amortize the cost associated with a job change diminishes with age, thus making a job change less attractive.

Gender has been shown to influence turnover intentions and actual turnover (Royalty, 1998). Depending on the level of education, Royalty (1998) postulated that women are less likely to change jobs. Royalty (1998) suggested that women generally have higher levels of job satisfaction, which in turn, reduces job or organizational-change inclinations. Yin and Yang (2002) postulated that for older cohorts, job quitting behavior is more pronounced for men, while leaving a job for another reason is more common for women. However, in other studies, female employees have been reported to be more likely to leave their jobs than male employees (Cotton & Tuttle, 1986; Iverson, 1999), while other studies postulated that no significant differences existed between males and females (Griffeth et al., 2000). Findings gathered from several studies in the hospitality industry, however, have reported that male employees did show higher intentions to leave than their counterparts (Khatri, Fern, & Budhwar, 2001; Iverson & Deery; 1997; Lum et al., 1998).

Organizational tenure refers to the length of time an employee has been with the organization (Kim, 1999). Past literatures have in fact consistently supported a negative relationship between tenure and turnover intentions (Tepeci & Barlett, 2002). According to Porter and Steers (1973), tenure–turnover relationship can be explained in terms of employee's personal investment. The longer the tenure, the greater the personal investment, thus lowering the likelihood of voluntary turnover.

On the effects of educational qualification, Igharia and Greenhaus (1992) found that in retail sector, employees with a higher level of education are more likely to express higher turnover intentions than employees with a lower level of education. Similarly, within the nursing occupation, Yin and Yang (2002) reported that highly educated nurses are more prone to exhibit turnover intentions. Yin and Yang (2002) postulated that highly educated nurses may have more work opportunities than those with lower level of education. On the other hand, Khatri et al.'s (2001) study on food and beverage service employees in the hotel industry only found a weak positive relationship between education and turnover intentions. Other studies, for example, Lambert et al. (2001) found that education has only an indirect effect on turnover intentions through job satisfaction.

In terms of marital status, married employees were found to be somewhat less likely to leave the organization (Bluedorn, 1982; Cotton & Tuttle, 1986). Marriage could have a negative effect on the probability of quitting a job, since it is usually more costly if a family (as apposed to an individual) has to move (Royalty, 1998). Furthermore, married and employed women are, due to the traditional gender roles, more likely than men to be negatively effected by marriage. Similarly, Lum et al. (1998) on their study on nurses' retention reported that singles have significantly higher turnover intentions compared to married ones. Lum et al. (1998) further argued that nurses who were married were more stable in their jobs, thus they were less likely to express turnover intentions.

2.4.2 Job-Related Variables

Among the job-related variables that have been thoroughly examined as predictors of turnover intentions are: job stress (role overload, role conflict, role ambiguity, and resources inadequacy), work autonomy, and task variety.

Job stress is defined as the degree to which employees experience difficulty in performing their jobs (Currivan, 1999). Kim (1999) suggests that job stress is a global, multidimensional concept that incorporates four structural properties of role ambiguity (e.g., unclear demands), role conflict (e.g., incompatible demands), workload (e.g., too much work), and resources inadequacy (e.g., too few resources). Job stress is significant because job-related pressures are inherently noxious states that impede an employee's affective responses (Currivan, 1999), thereby, prompting them to cope with the problem by leaving the organization. Work stress due to high work load was reported as among the most frequently cited reasons for leaving a nursing job in Taiwan (Yin & Yang, 2002). Similarly, Wu, Zhang, and Gao (2000) reported a positive and significant relationship between job stress and intention to quit among Mainland Chinese nurses. Empirical studies in the marketing literature indicated that role ambiguity increased sales-person's intention to leave, while role conflict did not have any direct effect (Brown & Peterson, 1993). Brashear, Manolis, and Brooks (2005) confirmed that high levels of role ambiguity experienced by salespeople led to high levels of turnover intentions. Recent findings however, reported that there was no direct relationship between job stressors (role conflict, role ambiguity, and role overload) and turnover intentions; rather, job stressors impacted turnover intentions indirectly via job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Firth, Mellor, Moore, & Loquet, 2004).

Work autonomy has been defined as the degree to which the job provides substantial freedom, independence and discretion in scheduling the work and in determining the procedures to be used in carrying it out (Manning, Davidson, & Manning, 2005). Work autonomy has been shown to have significant positive effects on job satisfaction, which in turn negatively affect turnover intentions (Griffeth et al., 2000; Price & Mueller, 1981, 1986; Samad, 2006). Jackson, Schwab, and Schuler (1986) found that one outcome of lack of autonomy is work exhaustion, which in turn, increased one's intentions to leave the organization. Empirical findings within the hospitality settings echoed that work autonomy correlated significantly and negatively with employees' turnover intentions and positively with customers' satisfaction (Manning et al., 2005).

Besides autonomy, varying and challenging job tasks also influenced employees' job attitudes and behaviors (Price & Mueller, 1986). Varying job tasks provide challenges and sense of meaningfulness at work by stretching employees' abilities and skills (Hackman & Oldham, 1975). Iverson and Deery's (1997) study of hotel employees in Australia, ascertained that employees whose jobs are repetitive are less satisfied, less committed, and consequently less apt to stay in the organization. A subsequent study by Blau and Lunz (1998) on medical technologists confirmed that task repetitiveness is positively related to job turnover.

2.4.3 Organizational Variables

Organizational determinants of turnover intentions are: organizational justice (distributive and procedural justice), pay, promotion and career advancement, supervisor and co-worker relations, and organizational support.

Two sources of organizational justice that have been frequently cited in the literatures are distributive justice and procedural justice (Moorman, 1991). Distributive justice reflects employees' perceptions of the outcomes they receive based on their evaluations of the end state of allocations process (e.g. pay, benefits, or promotion) (Folger & Cropanzano, 1998). Distributive justice has been found to have a significant, direct negative impact on turnover intentions (Aryee & Chay, 2001; Iverson, 1999). Researches also reported an indirect relationship between distributive justice and turnover intentions through job satisfaction (DeConinck & Stilwell, 2002), organizational commitment (Hassan, 2002), and trust in organization (Chen, Aryee, & Lee, 2005). Milkovich and

Newman (1999) identified allocation of unfair and inequitable compensation as having a positive influence on employees’ turnover intentions.

Procedural justice, on the other hand, refers to the perceived fairness of the means used to determine the amount of rewards (Folger & Cropanzano, 1998). Employees who perceived that they have been treated fairly in the process of allocating rewards exhibited higher job affection (Folger & Konovsky, 1989), displayed greater organizational commitment, and experienced lower turnover intentions (Aryee & Chay, 2001; Khatri et al., 2001; Samad, 2006). Delery and Doty (1996) identified performance appraisal systems as one of the HRM practices that relates to procedural justice. This variable (e.g., performance appraisal systems) has been found to influence employees’ turnover intentions (Erdogan, 2002).

Pay dissatisfaction has been found to significantly predict absenteeism and turnover (Cotton & Tuttle, 1986; Lum et al., 1998). Huselid (1995) has shown that employees’ perception of HRM practices on inequitable compensation level can predict organizational turnover. Workers with higher paying jobs were more likely to stay than those with lower paying jobs. In line with this statement, Woods (1997) wrote that globally employees in the hotel industry are lowly paid as compared to other similar occupations globally. Hinkin and Tracey (2000) reported that one of the main reasons cited by hotel employees for leaving their jobs was low and inequitable pay. An inverse relationship between the wage rate and the probability of a job change among operation workers in the manufacturing industry has been noted (Lawler, 1987). It is expected that the higher the actual wage rate is, the lower the probability will be for an employee to leave his or her current employer (Lawler, 1987).

Limited opportunities for internal promotion and career advancement have been reported to impact employees' attitudes and behaviors (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Price, 2001; Samad, 2006). Promotional chances refer to the degree of potential upward occupational mobility within an organization (Kim, Price, Mueller, & Watson, 1996). Promotional chances typically fosters an individual's affective response and behavioral commitment by encouraging internal careers, thereby, guaranteeing job security and other favorable future rewards (e.g., income, power, status) to the employees (Kim et al., 1996). Yin and Yang's (2002) meta-analysis reported that the strongest organizational factors related to nurse turnover intentions were lack of internal promotion and career advancement opportunity. Within the local context, Samad's (2006) study on Malaysian government doctors found that recognition for achievement and career advancement were negatively and significantly related to turnover intentions.

Positive perceptions of workplace relationships (supervisor and co-workers support) may help reduce work-related stress, increase job satisfaction and motivation, enhance commitment, improve performance, and reduce employees' turnover intentions (Currivan, 1999; Lam et al., 2002). Firth et al. (2004) found that social supports from supervisors directly reduced the level of employees' burnout and indirectly reduced employees' intention to quit via job satisfaction. Other researchers found that organizational climate that encouraged peer supports was able to enhance employees' positive job and organizational attitudes (Currivan, 1999; Manning et al., 2005). Manning et al. (2005) in their study on hospitality employees' perception of organizational climate reported that co-workers cooperation, friendliness, and warmth were found to significantly explained the variation in employees' turnover intentions.

Research suggests that employees are more likely to indicate intent to leave in the absence of adequate support from top management and co-workers. Perceptions of organizational supports and cares about workers are positively related to job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Allen et al., 2003). Regarding turnover, Eisenberger, Fasolo, and Davis-LaMastro (1990) specifically ascertained that individuals with higher perceived organizational support would be less likely to seek out job alternatives in other organizations. Klein and Weaver (2000) postulated that employees who participated in the organizational support program (e.g., employee orientation training program) generally exhibited higher organizational commitment, supported the firm’s mission, understood the firm’s corporate culture, adopted its values and beliefs, and demonstrated a willingness to stay longer in the organization. Moreover, the level of employee training through a realistic job preview, job shadowing opportunities, and core-standards training have instilled loyalty and a positive attitude among resort club employees (LaLopa, 1997). In line with this thought, Settoon, Bennett, and Liden (1996) confirmed that emotional support (e.g., showing appreciation, taking an interest in employees’ work, maintaining open communication, helping on personal problems) and instrumental support (e.g., providing needed resources, helping with work tasks) correlate positively with job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Previous researchers reported that perceived organizational support (in the form of an organization’s HRM practices) are more likely to influence turnover intentions through other key mediating variables such as job satisfaction (Ghiselli et al., 2001), trust (Mayer & Davis, 1999), and commitment (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990).