

# Understanding the effect of Job stress and Internal LOC with mediating role of Employee Commitment, Organizational Commitment and Job Satisfaction

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**Abstract**

**Purpose** – The challenge of attracting and retaining high performing employees is significant. Research in general has shown a link between Job stress, Job Satisfaction, Employee Commitment, Organizational commitment and personality factors (Internal LOC). This study aims to focus on examining the relationship between these variable with turnover intention.

**Design/methodology/approach** – The sample comprised 180 professional staff across different organizations (Education sectors, Banking sector and Health sectors) of Punjab province of Pakistan. Following data collection, self-administered Questionnaire, using previous scale, is applied to conduct data analysis for Turnover Intention of employees.

**Findings** – Results using regression analysis showed that, there is inverse relationship between job stress and turnover intention through mediating variables that are, job satisfaction, employee commitment, organization commitment. However, contrary to our predictions, test results indicated positive relation between Locus of control and Turnover Intention.

**Keywords:** Job Stress, Job Satisfaction, Employee commitment, Organizational commitment, Internal locus of control and Turnover Intention

**1. Introduction**

What are the factors that results in employee turnover? One may ask the significance of this question from a manager who is facing higher employee discontinuity that cause other difficulties like selecting, orienting and training new workers as well as it may harm overall productivity of the organization or from a disgruntled employee who is thinking about leaving his job. The major focal point in the eyes of employers and researchers is the actual leaving behavior, whereas, the purpose for quitting is argued to be a strong basis behind such behavior. According to (Moore, 2002) lack of job satisfaction and job stressors are among the factors which adds to an individual's intention to leave ones job.

Ajzen and fishbein (1980) igbaria and Greenhaus (1992) said that the intentions are the most closest factors of actual behaviors. Infact people apply their behavior to leave the organization to understand the earlier situations. Sager's (1991) study about the salespeople categorize the intention between leavers and stayers of a work area. To know the intentions the best indicator is behavior of an individual.

Many researchers (e.g. Bluedorn, 1982; Kalliath and Beck, 2001; Kramer et al., 1995; Peters et al., 1981; Saks, 1996) have tried to explain the factors that causes employee's purpose behind quitting by interrogating likely background behind such intentions. Till today, slight uniformity has been found in the results, which is, to a certain extent, due to the variety of variables included by the researchers and the deficiency of evenness in their measurements but also narrate to the heterogeneity of population used as sample. Furthermore, some writers have reported validity co-efficient.

The importance of apparent job stress and turnover intentions of employees is growing. To attain low staff turnover rate and maintaining costs, manager's mind set is shifting more

towards focusing on employee motivation.

Numerous past researchers have reported the factors of investigation, these factors are little implemented. One of the models of variable intention to quit is failed to explain by researchers. Turnover intentions are negatively related to job satisfaction resulted by researcher (Susskind et al., 2000). Our model of research linked job stress with turnover intentions through various mediating variables such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Mikkelsen et al., 2000). Different factors intense upon demographic features as age, tenure, sex, education standard and family size, the relationship negatively relates age and tenure with turnover intention, the assorted results are found for turnover intention with sex, education and family size.

Personality factors are directly related to locus of control, generally job satisfaction and organizational commitment both are inversely related. Psychological factors are may be useful to understand both the variables job satisfaction and turnover intention (Iarwood et al., 1998). Environmental situations are differently measured by individuals, its opposite to control outside, the propensity to believe is dependent on locus of control. Locus of control depends on two factors; internal and external which shows the feelings regarding their destinies. The intentions are determined by fate, chance or other powers are known to be called external factors. The attitudes, perceptions and behaviors in job are not implemented, in short the intense of believe can be controlled internally.

Recognition with your job position is defined as an organizational commitment (Mathieu and Zajac, 1990). Organizational commitment contains an emotional but positive relation with work place (Testa, 2001). The retention in an organization strongly relates to affection and believe of an individual towards their organization's values and goals (Scholarios and Marks, 2004). The main focal point is the relation between job satisfaction and turnover intentions (Williams et al., 2001). The most popular topics are job satisfaction and organizational commitment globally (Kontoghiorghes and Bryant, 2004; Testa, 2001). The preceding research studies proved that the turnover intention and job satisfaction are directly related but have inverse relation towards organizational commitment.

## **2.0 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Turnover Intention**

According to Vandenberg and Nelson (1999, p. 1315), intention to quit can be defined as person's predicted possibility of quitting an organization in near future. Intentions are actually the most significant and critical predictor of certain and true behavior (Tyrrell and Lehane (2007). So, consequently, they are the true guide towards resultant behavior but the logic for these intentions is mostly yet to be discovered (Firth et al., 2004). It is still a complex paradox which is hard to understand completely. One reason could be that emotions and subconscious thoughts underlying this process are still unknown. Intention to leave is associated to and dependent factor for actual withdrawal from the organization (Firth et al., 2004; McCarthy et al., 2007).

## 2.2 Job stress

According to Williams et al. (2001), the causal influence between job stress and job satisfaction has been hypothesized. Job displeasure, organizational commitment and a greater propensity to quit the organization are the results of negative attitude and behavior which foretold through the confirmation of rational results of job stress (Barsky et al., 2004; Cummins, 1989). In other words, whenever an individual suffer from any type of stress in work, they tend to feel negative experience of job satisfaction. Hence, an opposing relationship exists between job stress and job satisfaction.

The hypothetical models of stress journal have also integrated the links of job stress to employee commitment (Mikkelsen et al., 2000). The results indicates a major influence of job stress and employee commitment, where in both the variables are negatively related to each other (Mikkelsen et al., 2000). Moreover, less organizational commitment, high absenteeism and turnover are the results of organization's dysfunctions which aroused due to the stress related problems among the workers (Mikkelsen et al., 2000).

## 2.3 Job satisfaction

According to Spector, (1997), in the field of industrial, organizational psychology and organizational behavior, job satisfaction is most broadly studied work-related approaches. Job satisfaction is further defined by Greenberg and Baron (1997) as an individual's affective, evaluative and cognitive responses towards ones profession. At another place, Job satisfaction is defined as a state where a person's outcomes and needs match well, (Locke 1984). The amalgamation of emotional and cognitive responses to the differing insights of what an individual wants to obtain and what one truly receive is another definition of job satisfaction given by Cranny et al. (1992). The relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intentions has been examined by a considerable body of investigators, (Spector, 1997).

In turnover model given by Mobley et al.'s (1978), shows that, dissatisfaction generates a sequence of withdrawal cognitions where workers investigate the benefits and costs related with quitting their jobs. Eventually, the removal of an employee from the organization is the result of cognitive appraisal.

According to (Williams et al., 2001), job satisfaction and intention to quit have a substantial amount of investigation. Job satisfaction and organizational commitment are well-liked cases in the field of work-related approaches (Testa, 2001; Bryant and Kontoghiorghes, 2004). A researcher (Blau, 1987) in his findings have clearly justified that through the commitment to organization commitment, job satisfaction has a direct and indirect influence on turnover intention. Numerous studies further support this association which pinpoints job satisfaction as a predecessor of organizational commitment (Meyer and Tett, 1993; Ma and Lin, 2004b;). According to Susskind et al., 2000, as a positively intuitive reaction, it is logical to assume that job satisfaction and behavioral intentions to quit are negatively associated. Finally, number of researches have proved that, there is a considerable negative relationship between both the variables, job satisfaction and turnover intentions (Abraham, 1999; Mannheim et al., 1997).

## 2.4 Employee Commitment

For many years, a lot has been written about employee commitment as a part of human resources management (Boshoff and Mels, 2000; Mathieu and Zajac, 1990; Meyer and Allen, 1991; Meyer and Herscovitch, 2001; Mowday et al., 1979; Pare´ and Tremblay, 2007; Tett and Meyer, 1993; Vandenberghe et al., 2004). Employee commitment in this framework refers to a state of mind in which employee accepts the principles of organization and sticks to its goals. The higher level of commitment would be achieved by attaining the optimum coincidence between employee's values and goals to those of the organizations and vice versa. Employee commitment is a variable which is directly related to desirable work behavior that is respected by the managers. To distinguish the variables that maintain higher level of commitment, during the last 40 years, a great deal of attempt has been invested. Meyer et al. (2002) found, at one side, a gloomy connection between employee commitment and absence, leaving, uneasiness at work, family-work differences, and intention to leave the organization and on the other side, positive relationship between employee commitment and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) and work competence. One of the main reasons behind actual turnover or intension to quit is employee commitment.

## 2.5 Organizational commitment

In general terms (Zajac and Mathieu, 1990) defined organizational commitment as an affection with the organization, the employee works in. Further (Testa, 2001) clarified this concept by saying that an intuitive response of the employee results in the positive appraisalment of the work surroundings. According to (Scholarios and Marks, 2004), an individual's strong faith in organizations goals and values or his great desire to sustain his presence in the company is the result of an employee's intuitive response or affection with the organization. Numerous empirical researches verified the imperative function of commitment to the organization in employees turnover intention (Van Breukelen et al., 2004; Lin and Chen, 2004a; Susskind et al., 2000), and in general they showed that turnover intention has a negative relation with both variables, organizational commitment and job satisfaction. Williams and Hazer (1986) has identified Organizational commitment as an intermediary between job satisfaction and turnover intention. According to (Joiner et al., 2004; Near, 1989), employees, fairly uncommitted to their organizations have more chances of quitting their jobs as compared to the employees who are extremely committed to their organizations. Hence, hypothesis indicates a direct influence of organizational commitment on turnover intention and these two variables shows a negative relationship with each other.

## 2.6 Personality variables (Locus Of control)

Big five personality trait model has substantial significance in literature. One of the factor discussed in personality traits is Locus of control (LOC), which is not discussed up to the level of its importance. LOC is defined as the degree to which individuals consider that they have authority to control a broad spectrum of factors in their lives. In context to LOC, individuals can be classified into two categories; internal and external, Rotter (1966).

Individuals who assume a strong connection between their activities and their results are having internal LOC. They accept that they have the capacity to control independent and external environment factors. In contrary to this, externals have more latent approach in facing the environment. They think that consequences are result of fate, chance or destiny. Job satisfaction and LOC are found to have relationship. This study analyzed that individuals having internal LOC performed better than those with external LOC.

Past studies evident a strong effect of LOC on Turnover intention (TOI). Research shows that employees having internal LOC have less TOI. Employee personality factor and service performance is dominant in those individuals who have high internal LOC, Bernardi (2003)

and such employees have stronger tendency to stay in contrast to those with externals.

LOC explains the patterns of response in tensed and stressed circumstances. According to Chiu et al. (2005), internals have more effective response system to confront unexpected and stressful conditions at workplace than externals and hence motivates employees to stay in organization for a longer period of time. Externals have low defense mechanism to deal with tough and unexpected situations which eventually leads towards low motivation level and ultimately results in the form of greater intentions to leave especially in high stressed workplaces.

### **3.0 Hypothesis and Research Model:**

On the basis of above literature review, the current study tests the following hypotheses:

**H1a:** Job stress is negatively associated with job satisfaction.

**H1b:** Job stress has an inverse relation with employee commitment.

**H2a:** Job satisfaction negatively influences turnover intentions.

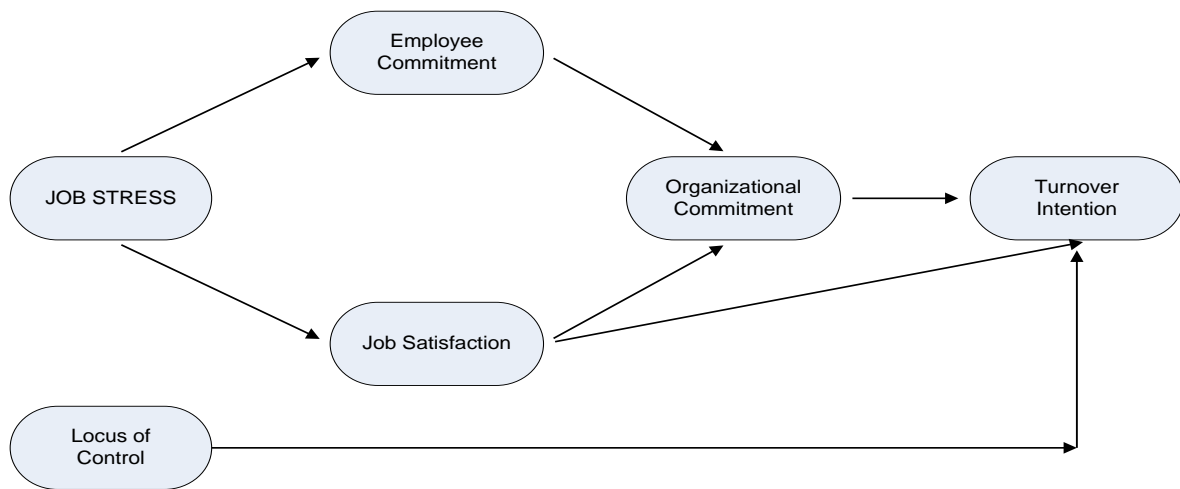
**H2b:** Job satisfaction positively influences organizational commitment.

**H3:** Employee Commitment is directly associated with Organizational Commitment.

**H4:** Organizational commitment has a negative impact on turnover intentions.

**H5:** Employee personality trait of internal LOC will be negatively related to employee turnover intention.

**Figure 1:** Hypothetical Model for the current research



#### 4.0 Research Methodology

The current research is descriptive in its nature. Descriptive research can be explained as describing something, some phenomenon or any particular situation. Descriptive researches describe the existing situation instead of interpreting and making judgments (Creswell, 1994). The main objective of the descriptive research is verification of the developed hypotheses that reflects the current situation. This type of research provides information about the current scenario and focus on past or present, for example quality of life in a community or employee attitudes towards any HR activity (Kumar, 2005).

#### 4.1 Sample/Data

In order to collect the data for understanding the effect of different variables on turnover intention a sample of 180 respondents will ask to participate in a self-administered questionnaire. The population for the current research is employees working in different public and private organizations of Pakistan.

The current study utilizes a non-probability sampling technique that is convenience sampling. Convenience sampling is a sampling technique that obtains and collects the relevant information from the sample or the unit of the study that are conveniently available (Zikmund, 1997). Convenient sampling is normally used for collecting a large number of completed surveys speedily and economically (Lym *et al.*, 2010).

It has ensured that the sample members possess one criteria to participate in the self-administered survey. We selected the sample from different cities of Pakistan. The main group targeted to collect the sample data like university/colleges employees, health and banking professionals.



## 4.2 Instrument and Measures

The survey instrument of the current study address two major purposes: First is to analyze the relationship of different variables contributing towards turnover intention. Second, to collect information about the different mediating variables which have an impact on dependent and independent relationship.

The survey instrument contains two sections. Section 1 includes different personal and demographic variables. This section will obtain the respondent's information about gender, age, income, status, status.

Section 2 includes the variables that are important in the current study. These variables includes locus of control, job stress, job satisfaction, employee commitment, organization commitment and turnover intention. This section of the study is developed based on the past literature and already used questionnaires (Table 1).

The scales of the study were adopted from the previous literature and published studies. The first variable of the study was Turnover Intention having three items and was taken from (Firth et al., 2004). The second variable of the study was Job Stress having four items was taken from (Williams et al., 2001). The third variable was Job Satisfaction having five items and these scales were taken from (Greenberg and Baron 1997). The fourth variable was Employee Commitment having four items and the scale was taken from (Meyer et al.2002). The fifth variable was Organizational commitment having five items and the scale was taken from (Tett and meyer 1993). The last variable was Locus of Control with seven factors and this scale was taken from (Ng et al. 2006).

**Table 1:** Scales of the study

No.	Variables	Items	References
1.	Turnover Intention	1. I will actively look for a new job next year. 2. I often think about quitting. 3. I probably look for a new job next year.	<i>Firth et al., (2004)</i>
2.	Job Stress	1. How often have you felt nervous and "stressed" at job. 2. How often have you found that you could not cope with all the things that you had to do? 3. How often have you been angered because of things that happened that been outside your control?	<i>Williams et al., (2001)</i>



		4. How often have you felt that difficulties were increasing that you could not overcome them?	
3.	Job satisfaction	<p>1. Overall, I am pleased with my work.</p> <p>2. Overall, I am satisfied in my current practice .</p> <p>3. My current work situation is not a major source of frustration in my life.</p> <p>4. My work in this practice has met my expectations.</p> <p>5. If I had it to do it all over again, I'd still choose to work where I do now.</p>	<i>Greenberg and Baron (1997)</i>
4.	Employee Commitment	<p>1. I feel much loyalty to this organization.</p> <p>2. I never intended to leave this organization.</p> <p>3. I found the working environment very friendly and comfortable.</p> <p>4. I get significant chances of decision making.</p>	<i>Meyer et al. (2002)</i>
5.	Organizational commitment	<p>1. I would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep working for this organization.</p> <p>2. I feel very little loyalty to this organization .</p> <p>3. I am proud to tell others that I am part of this Organization.</p> <p>4. I talk up this organization to my friends as a great Organization to work for.</p> <p>5. It would take very little chance in my present Circumstances to cause me to leave.</p>	<i>Tett and meyer (1993)</i>
6.	Locus of Control	<p>1. I can anticipate difficulties and take action to avoid them.</p> <p>2. When I make plans, I am almost certain that I can make them work.</p> <p>3. My mistakes and problems are my responsibility to deal with.</p> <p>4. Becoming a success is a matter of hard work, luck has</p>	<i>Ng et al.</i>

	little or nothing to do with it.  5. I believe a person can really be a master of his fate.  6. It is impossible to control my irregular and fast breathing when I am having difficulties.  7. . I am confident of being able to deal successfully with future problems.	(2006)
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### 4.3 Procedure

The questionnaire was distributed among 180 respondents in Bahawalpur, Rahim Yar Khan and Multan. Before giving the survey questions, the purpose of study and questions were explained to the respondents, so they could easily fill the questionnaire with relevant responses. A total of 140 questionnaires were selected and rest of the survey questions were not included in the further analysis due to incomplete or invalid responses. After collecting the completed questionnaires, these questionnaires were coded and entered into SPSS sheet for further analysis.

### 5.0 Results and Analysis

#### 5.1 Profile of the Respondents

Personal and demographic information such as gender, age, income, status and sector are presented in the following table (Table 2).

**Table 2**

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>	Male	85	60.7
	Female	55	39.3
<b>Age</b>	20 to 25	28	20
	25 to 30	58	41.4
	30 to 35	27	19.3
	35 to 40	24	17.1
	above 40	3	2.1

<b>Income</b>	Below 15000	21	15
	15000-25000	30	21.4
	25000-35000	41	29.3
	35000-45000	38	27.1
	45000-55000	6	4.3
	Above 55000	4	2.9
<b>Status</b>	Student	6	26.0
	Employed	123	57.3
	Businessman	6	11.3
	Unemployed	4	2.7
	Housewife	1	2.7
<b>Sector</b>	Education	86	61.4
	Business	10	7.1
	Banking	10	7.1
	Health	10	7.1
	Employed	12	8.6
	NGOs	1	0.7
	Industry	7	5.0
	Any other	4	2.9

## 5.2 Hypothesis Testing

### 5.2.1 Job Stress and Job Satisfaction

According to the results of the study, the variable Job Satisfaction is negatively related with Job Stress. Specifically, the Job Stress has a significant negative relationship with ( $\beta = -0.122$ ) and ( $p < 0.05$ ). Hence, results of the current study validate H1a.

### 5.2.2 Job Stress and Employee Commitment

According to the results of the study, the variable Employee Commitment is negatively related to Job Stress. Specifically, the Job Stress has a significant negative relationship with ( $\beta = -0.160$ ) and ( $p < 0.05$ ). Hence, results of the study validate H1b.

### 5.2.3 Job Satisfaction, Employee commitment and Organizational Commitment

According to the results of the study, both the variables, Employee Commitment and job Satisfaction are positively associated with Organizational Commitment. Specifically, the Job Satisfaction has a significant positive relationship with ( $\beta = 0.239$ ) and ( $p < 0.01$ ) with Organizational Commitment. That means the Job Satisfaction contributes more than 23% to Organizational Commitment. The regression results of Employee Commitment with Organizational Commitment is also significant with ( $\beta = 0.434$ ) and ( $p < 0.01$ ). That means Employee Commitment contributes more than 43% to Organizational Commitment. Results of the present study validate H2b and H3.

### 5.2.4 Job Satisfaction, Organizational Commitment, Locus of Control and Turnover Intention

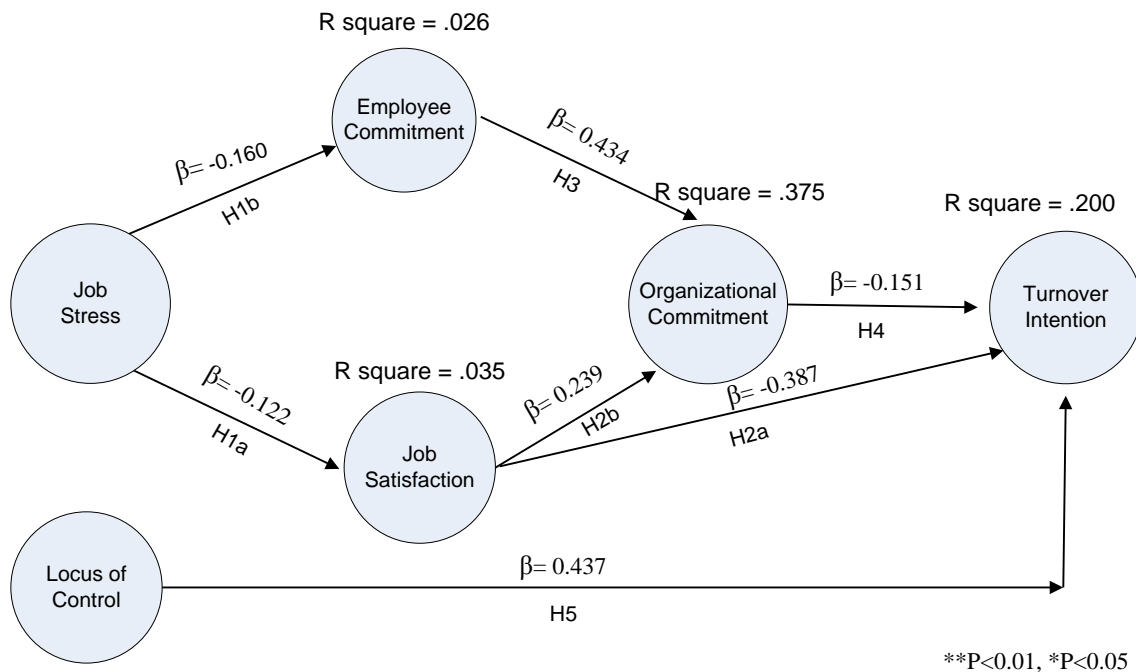
According to the results of the study, both the variables, Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment have a negative relation with turnover Intention. Job Satisfaction has a significant negative relationship with ( $\beta = -0.387$ ) and ( $p < 0.01$ ) and Organizational commitment also has a significant relationship with ( $\beta = -0.151$ ) and ( $p < 0.05$ ). However, converse to our forecast, we found a significantly positive relation between the variables internal LOC and intent to quit with ( $\beta = 0.437$ ) and ( $p < 0.01$ ). That means LOC contributes more than 43% to TOI. Results of the current study validate the H2a, H4 which means that we fail to reject the hypothesis but the current study does not validate H5.

**Table 3:** Regression results

Hypothesis	Model Variables	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Results
H1a	JSAT ←	-0.122	.071	-1.945	0.038	Supported
H1b	JSTR ECOM ← JSTR	-0.160	0.074	-1.908	0.041	
H3	ECOM ← OCOM	0.434	0.076	5.034	0.000	Supported

H2b	JSAT ← OCOM	0 .239	0.080	2.778	0.006	
H2a	JSAT ← TOI	-0.387	0.143	-4.262	0.000	Supported
H4	OCOM ← TOI	-0.151	0.167	-1.520	0.041	Supported
H5	LOC ← TOI	0.437	0.174	4.713	0.000	Supported

**Figure 2: Structural Model Results**



**6.0 Discussion:**

This study required to reduce the gap in the literature on the function of job stress, job satisfaction, employee commitment, organizational commitment & Locus of control to turnover intention. The study would make two contributions. First, it contributes to the literature on turnover intention by representing the significance by means of job stress to

predict turnover intention in the organization. Second, using Locus of control added to the literature on turnover intention.

Previous researches showed an inverse relation between job stress and turnover intention. Maximum number of the hypothesized paths in the model is supported by statistical data; thus, this discussion will now highlights and discusses the total standardized effects of the paths in the model and the individual and organizational significance to be derived from these. Clearly, the major impact in reducing employees' intention to quit came from job satisfaction and stress. The current findings are consistent with previous studies (Williams et al., 2001; Cummins, 1989) in identifying relationship between job stress and turnover intention. Support for the projected model provides stimulations for organizational leaders inclined towards creating reliable and low turnover environments that provides betterment to both; employees and organizations. When employees are relieved from job stress, this feeling is requisite for fostering job satisfaction and employee commitment. Further, enhancing job satisfaction and reducing job stress will fundamentally lead to reduced turnover intentions. Feelings of stress (e.g. feeling emotionally drained; tense) not only contributed to a reduced sense of job satisfaction, but also was the variable with the next highest contribution to intention to quit.

The crust could be, employees having low stress and high Job satisfaction would have more tendency to remain in their posts and jobs longer than other employees. Even though this work provides some effective and practical points for creating effective work place and proactive work environment, this technique needs a renewal in mindsets of leaders because study also focuses on internal LOC.

The supposed connections about Job satisfaction's negative influence on turnover intentions and Job satisfaction has a positive influence on organizational commitment would need discussion now. Intention to quit is majorly influenced by job dissatisfaction, lack of commitment to the organization and employee commitment, which in the current model are influenced by job stress. However, for managers concerned about the effect of intention to quit and possible turnover, these variables are determinant factors for such behaviors over which they may have some control. In particular, job stress factors (e.g. work overload, job ambiguity), are the factors that provoke the series of psychological states that eventually lead to TOI, can be adjusted.

The study also builds positive connection between employee commitment and organizational commitment. Organizational commitment and employee commitment are acting as an influential mediator within the model and can reduce the impact of Job stress on psychological states and intentions to quit. Managers could rely on employee commitment, once enhanced would elevates organizational commitment. Clearly, the major impact in reducing employees' intention to quit came from a sense of commitment to the organization and from a sense of job satisfaction. Both of these factors can be interpreted to suggest that a high degree of reciprocity exists between the individual and the organization. That is, the more satisfied individuals are with the job, the more committed they will be to the organization. As described in many previous researches both are very strong influencing

variables in context to minimizing the turnover intentions.

The supposed theory discussing that organizational commitment has a negative influence on turnover intentions is proved by statistical regression analysis. The test results of this investigation support the conjecture that organization commitment has negative influence on TOI. As there is a strong relationship found among organization commitment and TOI. Previous researchers also found a significant correlation between them.

Now considering the relationship between internal LOC and TOI, the results are contrary to our supposed hypothesis that perceived a negative relationship, but the data shows that positive correlation exists between turnover intention and internal LOC. The past research conducted by Olukemi O. Sawyerr, Shanthi Srinivas, Sijun Wang on internal Locus of control and turn over intention also assumed that these two would have negative relation, but their results also divergently proved a positive relationship.

Traditional administration and HR practices and concepts force managers to apply same policies and practices to all the employees but the analytical results of the study forces managers to understand the individuality of every employee and these differences are manifested in the perceptions of job stress and internal LOC.

## **7.0 Limitations and Future Research**

Along with these results and findings, there are still many dimensions related to these variables which are left to explore. The current study focuses on turnover intention, which could not be a true predictor of actual act and behavior. Future research could perform cross-sectional research or take response from those employees who actually had left their jobs after intended to do it, so validity of results related to intention could be gauged.

The current study focus only on one geographical area; due to time and resource constraints. But future researches could overcome this deficiency by covering a large geographical area and diverse workforce for increasing the generalizability of this investigation.

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