

Careers for years? Testing the stability of a career and job satisfaction model in a multi-year study

For many employees, the transparency of career opportunities plays a major role in the decision to leave or stay with a company (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2010; Towers Watson, 2012). At the same time, there are few models in research that combine the turnover intention with constructs of career research, like career management or career satisfaction (De Oliveira, Cavazotte, & Alan Dunzer, 2019). In contrast, job satisfaction is considered an important factor influencing the turnover intention and is therefore examined as a mediator in this context (Judge, Weiss, Kammeyer-Mueller, & Hulin, 2017). The question to be examined in this research is to what extent the organizational career management has an influence on job satisfaction and thus on turnover intention.

The first models that try to explain turnover intention came up in the 70s and 80s (Mobley, Griffeth, Hand, & Meglino, 1979; Price & Mueller, 1981). Important influencing factors here were, besides job satisfaction, job characteristics and leadership (Michaels & Spector, 1982; Williams & Hazer, 1986). Career management can be found in both. For example Hackman and Oldham (1976) define feedback as part of job characteristics. However, career management and career satisfaction were rarely considered as independent influencing factors (De Oliveira et al., 2019).

One of the few existing models is that of De Oliveira et al. (2019) which propose a model that considers Job Satisfaction as a mediator of the relationship between career management and turnover intention. Other authors also examined a relationship between career management and career satisfaction (Bagdadli & Gianecchini, 2019; Eby, Allen, & Brinley, 2005). According to (Guan et al., 2014), career satisfaction influences the turnover intention negatively.

The aim of this research is to develop a model which examines career factors as antecedents of job satisfaction and turnover intention. For this purpose, data of four different representative surveys from Switzerland will be investigated. It is assumed that career satisfaction mediates the relationship between organizational career management and job satisfaction. In addition, job satisfaction mediates the connection between organizational career management and turnover intention. Both career management and job satisfaction have a direct influence on turnover intention. The influence of job satisfaction on turnover intention is also partially mediated by career satisfaction. To test whether these relationships changed over time, data sets from 2012, 2014, 2016 and 2018 were tested regarding measurement model invariance. This shows if the data represents a stable model over the researched period. Based on the results, measures for the career management of companies could be improved. The demonstrated stability over time of the model is a solid foundation for further investigations.

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