

Determinants of Turnover Intention among Employees

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ABSTRACT

High number of turnover rate among employees signals a major weakness towards organizations achievement. This is due to the fact that employees are the key player to determine organizational performance and survival. This study attempts to determine the turnover intention among employees. Employees of Woongjin Coway (M) Sdn Bhd were chosen as subject of interests. Data was collected through questionnaire to 106 employees from four different branches located in the Klang Valley namely Ampang, Cheras, Petaling Jaya and Klang. Stratified random sampling was utilized to reach the minimum number of samples required in this study. SPSS was employed as a tool to aid in analysis of findings. The findings from the study revealed that only two factors namely available job alternatives; and work-life balance have significant impact on employee turnover intention.

Keywords: Turnover Intention, Employee Turnover

INTRODUCTION

In the competitive business climate, employees are becoming important assets in the organization. Employees' commitment determines organizational performance and survival. Employees are expected to fulfil organizations needs and objectives (Arokiasamy *et al.*, 2010) thus; many organizations are putting high expectations beyond the employees' capabilities. From an organization point of view, retaining the best employees are equally important with keeping pace with technological advances (Kuean *et al.*, 2010; & Dawley *et al.*, 2010). According to Kuean *et al.*, it is an open secret that employers are competing with each other in the labour market to get an efficient, creative and innovative employees in order to sustain their competitive advantage.

However, despite the measures taken by the organizations to retain their talents, turnover is a persistent issue in if not all, perhaps in most organizations. Trevor and Nyberg (2008) concur that high level of employee turnover may impede the quality, consistency and stability of services that organizations provide to customers which eventually lead to customers dissatisfaction. Igharia and Greenhouse (1992) demonstrate that an excessive turnover can be fatal to organization due to the shortage of expertise in the job market besides confronted with the high cost of training new employees.

The issues of staff retention and job motivation have continued to plague organizations particularly in reference to Malaysia. As reported by Annual Surveys by Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF) in 2004 and 2005, there were high labour turnover rate, approximately around 16% and 17% respectively. Malaysian Association of Hotel in its

report in 2000 tabled that hotel industry suffered high employee turnover, in average around 66% annually within a period of 1998-1999. Another surprising findings reported by Lim (2001) was that Malaysian employees are only willing to stay with their current organisations not more than three years, indicating that Malaysian employees were an active job hopper.

Employee turnover is potentially costly and may have negative implications whether it is voluntarily, such as resignations or involuntarily, such as termination initiated by the employer. The possible negative impact of turnover to organizations might be due to high cost of recruiting, training and getting new employees, productivity loss during replacement search and retaining, loss of high performers or high-skilled workers, and disruption of social and communication structures (Mobley, 1982). Abbasi *et al.*, (2008) added that the effect of turnover towards the organization is not only in terms of cost of termination, recruitment, selection, and advertising, but it also reflects the ability of the remaining employees to complete their mounting duties or accumulated works in the organization. Hence, Samad (2006) expounds that the personal costs of turnover may impede to employees not only in the form of loss of friendship and benefits but perhaps a disruption of the family.

Many organizations are focusing on the monetary aspects that could drive turnover intention. However, past researches have indicated that turnover intention is due to combination of several factors. These numerous factors are termed or known as push and pull factors or internal and external factors. Turnover intention occur when employees are feeling stressful or dissatisfaction with the organization. Regardless of internal or external factors that drive turnover intention, organization should have the best remedy to reduce the number of people leaving. Furthermore, past researches have shown inconsistencies with respect to the determinants of turnover intention.

Hence, in order to ascertain the determinants of turnover intention, this study has conducted an extensive meta-analysis via review of articles. Selected determinants are then tested against turnover intention in order to determine their relationship and effect. For that purpose, this paper is arranged in the following manner. Section 1 discusses the introduction of this paper followed by discussions on determinants of turnover intention. Section 3 discusses the proposed research model of the study. Next section elaborated on the methodology employed to carry out the research. Section 4 deliberates on the findings and discussion followed by the recommendations for future studies and conclusion section.

DETERMINANTS OF TURNOVER INTENTION

Turnover is an actual employee's behaviour of leaving the organization. Meanwhile, Price defined turnover as the individual movement across the membership boundary of an organization (Price, 2001: p. 600). According to Johnsrud and Rosser (2002), practically, the study of actual turnover behaviour is difficult due to employees left are hardly traceable and usually the response rate to the survey is quite low. Turnover intention was found highly correlated with actual turnover behaviour in 13 empirical studies out of 14 studies (Bluedorn, 1982). Consistent with this view, Fang (2001) argued that turnover intention is important in the turnover literature and can safely be used as a substitute for turnover behaviour. In this regard, it was found in many studies that, turnover intention has been viewed as the best predictor of actual turnover (Herrbach *et al.*, 2004; Allen *et al.*, 2003; Griffeth *et al.*, 2000; Tett and Meyer, 1993). According to Cotton and Tuttle (1986), turnover is referred as an

individual's estimated probability that they will stay with an employing organization. Turnover intention as mentioned by Tett and Meyer (1993) is a conscious wilfulness to seek for other alternatives in other organization. Schyns and Gossling (2007) indicated that turnover intention is an employee's intention to voluntarily change jobs or organizations. Intent to turnover constitutes the final cognitive step in the decision making process which considers quitting and searching for alternative employment (Tett and Meyer, 1993).

Review of literature indicates that there are several factors that determine turnover intention among employees as summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1:
Meta-Analysis of Determinants of Turnover Intention

| Author and Year | Determinants of Turnover Intention |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Kuotsai (1998) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender (female) • Job satisfaction • Job security |
| Ucho <i>et al.</i> , (2012) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job Satisfaction |
| Macintosh and Doherty (2010) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizational Culture |
| Shankar <i>et al.</i> , (1993) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizational Commitment |
| Ali Shah <i>et al.</i> , (2010) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Push Factors (Controlled) • Pull Factors (Uncontrolled) • Personal Factors |
| Albrecht and Andreetta (2011) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empowering Leadership • Empowerment • Engagement • Affective Commitment |
| Ramley Alan <i>et al.</i> , (2009) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizational Justice • Procedural Justice • Distributive Justice |
| Jahangir (2006) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procedural Justice • Job Satisfaction • Organizational Commitment |
| Park and Kim (2009) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job Satisfaction • Organizational Culture |

Nonetheless, further readings on determinants of turnover intention have revealed various factors as discussed below. Foster *et al.*, (2011) argued that dissatisfied and frustrated employees in an organization are likely to exhibit higher career plateau tendencies and intention to leave than satisfied employees. Thus, Foster *et al.*, added that the employees are not likely to be committed and loyal to their organization. Hellman (1997) shared the same view that the increasing of dissatisfaction in employees results in a higher chance of considering other employment opportunities. This is in line with a study outcome conducted by Thatcher *et al.*, (2003) that there was a positive correlation between perceived alternative job opportunities and turnover intention.

In this regards, if organizations fail to provide substantial growth opportunities, the employees actively searching for an alternative job and their search is based upon the perceived opportunities in external market (Mano-Negrin and Tzafir, 2004). In addition, Jo (2008) added that if an employee decides to move to another job to get more money, monetary incentives such as pay raises and bonuses will be the most common and costly way to prevent turnover. However, if an employee's decision to leave a job is influenced not by money; non-monetary incentives such as work-life balance and recognition awards could be

used to induce employee retention. In many cases, offering non-monetary rewards can help maintain a motivated workforce while at the same time keeping down labour costs.

Hom *et al.*, (2008) suggested that dissatisfaction leads to thoughts of quitting. These thoughts cause employees to weight the costs and benefits of job seeking and quitting. If they find the possible alternatives, job-seeking employees compare them with their present employment and either decide to stay or leave. According to Knight and Leimer (2010), available job alternatives can lead to both a committed and an exploratory intent search and then quit. Exploratory searching includes activities such as reading job advertisements, reading about job search practices, and preparing and sending a resume, or activities that might be considered exploring options while committed searching includes activities that suggest a commitment to leave such as contacting former employers, colleagues, recruiters or prospective employers.

Job stress experienced by employees is also one of the important factor affect how they committed to the organization. Moore (2000) and Ahuja *et al.* (2007) stated that work overload has a strong influence on work exhaustion and Wofford *et al.*, (1999) added that sooner it causes a number of diseases. According to Thaden (2007), the situations that cause work overload are when there is insufficient staffing, additional work handed by down management, or when the increases of work load due to heavy duties. In this regards, employees are easily became more stressed and decide to quit, especially during the critical incidents.

Rupp and Cropanzano (2002:92) stated that what makes employee leave the organization is when they perceive that they receive low level of organizational support. If organizations fail to provide substantial growth opportunities, the employees will actively start searching for an alternative job and their search is based on the perceived opportunities in external market (Mano-Negrin and Tzafrir, 2004). Similarly, according to Arokiasamy *et al.*, (2010), employees will find better job offers and intention to leave the organization when they facing job unsatisfactory, lower perks and rewards, poor organizational support and others. For example in the management information industry (MIS), excessive turnover in this area can be dysfunctional to the organizations due to the shortage of experienced MIS employees and another factor of high cost of training new employees (Igharia and Greenhaus, 1992).

THE RESEARCH MODEL

Based on the meta-analysis of determinants of turnover intention (see Table 1) that was carried out, this research focuses on several determinants of turnover intention as depicted in Figure 1 below. The determinants of turnover intention of this study are namely perceived organizational support, job stress, work-life balance, and available job alternatives or opportunity.

Perceived Organizational Support

The development of employees perceived organizational support has received considerable attention in the industrial or organizational psychology literature (Eisenberger *et*

al., 2002; Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002; Shore and Shore, 1995). According to Allen *et al.*, 2003, although there is some evidence that perceived organizational support is negatively related to turnover intention, however there several studies examined the relationship between perceived organizational support and turnover intention, and more research is needed to empirically demonstrate the nature of the relationship between them.

Job Stress

The emerging evidence as stated by Leontaridi and Ward (2002) stated that stress is serious and noxious characteristic of the working environment impairing employee performance through turnover and absenteeism. Abushaikha and Sheil (2006) found that stress has both positive and negative aspects which may lead to either achievement or towards harmful effects. Stress, in the literature is defined as a nonspecific response of the body to a stimulus or event (Kavanagh, 2005). Furthermore, stress is naturally present in the organizations and it is produced due to different workplace stressors (Zhang and Lee, 2010). As mentioned by Applebaum *et al.*, 2010, environmental stressors in the work environment influence the job satisfaction of employees which in turn leads to the intention to leave the job.

Work-Life Balance

Most of employees at both managers and non-managers level positions are experiencing work-life imbalance problems. It existed in the form of work overload, schedule dissatisfaction and job pressures whereby the interference in such form develops by their dual career responsibilities. These situations could lead to work-family conflicts (Ghayyur and Jamal, 2012). Mitchell *et al.*, (2001) mentioned that commitments to family pressures, community issues and other non-work related factors can influence the employees' likelihood of staying with an organization. McNall *et al.*, (2010) in their study examined the relation between work-family enrichment and two important work outcomes relevant to retention namely job satisfaction and turnover intentions. Based on the outcome of the study, McNall *et al.*, proposed that the flexibility is one major driver of the enrichment process that needs to be focused on. Warren and Johnson (1995) and VanRijswick *et al.*, (2004) stated that research indicates the introduction of work-life balance triggered the conflict of employees who experience between work and personal life.

Available Job Alternatives or Opportunity

According to Robbins and Judge (2007), turnover is a behaviour directed toward leaving the organization, such as looking for a new position as well as resigning. Martin (2011) highlighted that intention to quit is the psychological process that an individual goes through when they are considering alternative employment options due to some measure of dissatisfaction with their current employment situation. In this regard, it is important to satisfy employees' needs and demands towards the organizational support. Conversely, according to Johnsrud and Rosser (1999) and Rosin and Korabik (1995), promises of greater pay and bonus are not the only incentives to prevent employee to leave and switch the job. It was reported that employees were more satisfied and committed if there is a career

development opportunities offered by organizations. As such, in many cases, employees will stay or will have no intention to leave if they perceive future advancement opportunities in the organization (West, 2000; Herman, 1999). Negrin and Tzafrir (2004) recommend that organization has to provide substantial growth opportunities in order to attract their employees from actively searching for an alternative job in external market.

Based on the determinants of turnover intention as discussed above, the proposed model of the study to be tested is shown in Figure 1 below. It is hypothesised that perceived organizational support, job stress, work-life balance and available job alternatives or opportunity have significant impacts on turnover intention.

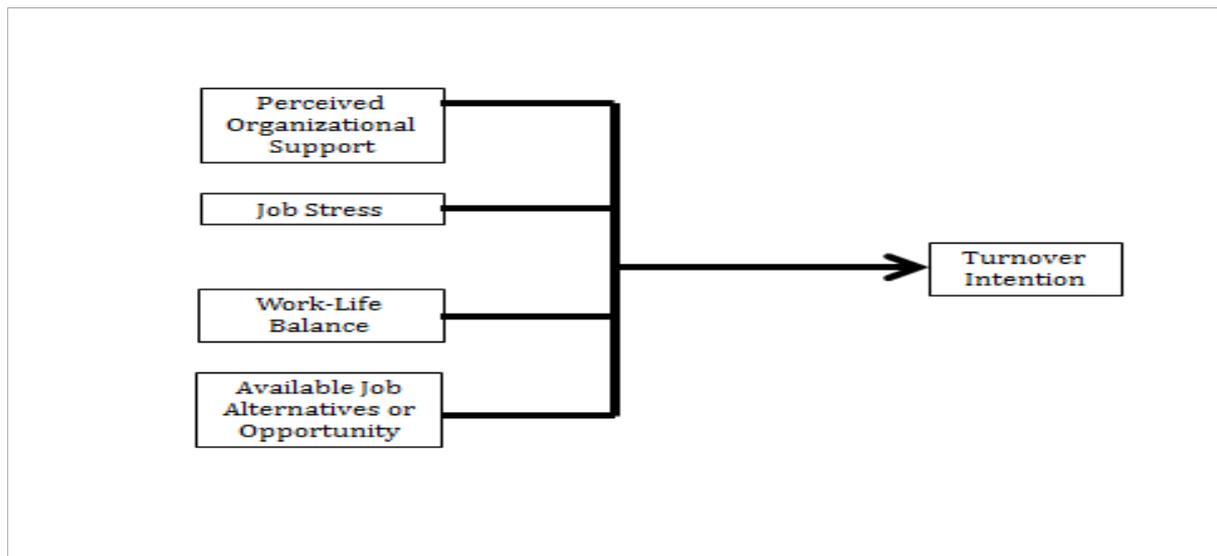


Figure 1:
Proposed Research Model

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative study via structured questionnaire using 10 point Likerts Scale ranging from (1) totally disagree to (10) totally agree as a primary data collection. Zainudin (2012) recommended that for interval measurement, the ideal measurement should be in the form of interval data from 1 to 10. This makes the measurement more accurate and independent and thus, meet the requirements for parametric analysis. Furthermore, Dawes (2008) stated that the fact that many people are familiar with the notion of rating ‘out of ten’, places 10-points of Likert Scale to be more accurate. It thus, helps to reduce the disadvantages of mid-point responses by the respondents which affect the reliability of the study (Tsang, 2012). Therefore, this study employs 10-point Likert Scale to gauge the respondents’ feedback.

Based on the statistics of active employees obtained from the HR Department of Woongjin Coway (M) Sdn Bhd, the total number of Service Technician (ST) and Coway Lady (Cody) in four different branches located in Klang Valley namely Ampang, Cheras, Petaling Jaya and Klang Questionnaires was 393. To reach the minimum sample of respondents, questionnaires were distributed using stratified random sampling to 160

employees. However, only 106 questionnaires were returned. Table 2 depicts the demographic profile of the respondents.

Table 2:
Profile of Respondents

| Variable | Description | N | % |
|----------|-------------------------|----|----|
| Gender | Male | 53 | 50 |
| | Female | 53 | 50 |
| Position | Coway Lady (Cody) | 53 | 50 |
| | Service Technician (ST) | 53 | 50 |

The independent variables (IV) of the study are perceived organizational support, job stress, work-life balance, and available job alternatives or opportunity whereas the dependent variable (DV) identified in this study is turnover intention. Items to measure IVs and DV were adapted from several past researches as depicted in Table 3 below.

Table 3:
Items of Measurement

| Variable | Sources |
|---|---|
| Turnover Intention | Foster <i>et al.</i> , (2011), Knudsen <i>et al.</i> , (2008) |
| Work-Life Balance | Huang <i>et al.</i> , (2007), White (1999) and Saltzstein <i>et al.</i> , (2001) Marks and MacDermid (1996) Institute of Stress Management Association (ISMA), UK (2012) |
| Job Stress | Institute of Stress Management Association (ISMA), UK (2012) |
| Perceived Organizational Support | Eisenberger <i>et al.</i> , (1990, 1986) |
| Available Job Alternatives or Opportunity | Schyns and Croon (2006) |

Data was analysed using SPSS. All items were tested for its reliability and validity as shown in Table 4 and Table 5 respectively. The reliability test is important to ensure the instrument of the study used to measure the concept are stable and consistent (Sekaran and Bougie, 2013). Cronbach's Alpha was used as it has the ability to produce the same results under the same conditions (Field, 2011). The construct extracted from this analysis was at excellent level of reliability, as α was greater than 0.70 and this value exceeded the minimum cut-off point suggested by Nunnally & Bernstein (1994). Based on Table 4, variables with the Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.70 and above were retained. All the variables were reliable between the range of 0.740 – 0.913 respectively.

Table 4:
Results of Reliability Analysis

| Variable | No of Item | α alpha value |
|--|------------|----------------------|
| <i>Independent Variables</i> | | |
| Perceived Organizational Support | 9 | 0.874 |
| Job Stress | 7 | 0.740 |
| Work-Life Balance | 6 | 0.824 |
| Available Job Alternatives/Opportunity | 4 | 0.913 |
| <i>Dependent Variable</i> | | |
| Turnover Intention | 6 | 0.864 |

Meanwhile, the validity analysis was conducted to determine if the data met the Kaiser Meyer-Olkin (KMO) index of sampling adequacy, Bartlett's test for sphericity and

significance value. Factor Analysis was carried out for all the construct variables. Overall results showed that KMO values were high for both IVs and DV. Table 5 reflects that KMO, Bartlett test and significance value for determinants and turnover intention were found satisfactorily.

Table 5:
Results of Validity Analysis

| Independent Variable | Value | Dependent Variable | Value |
|------------------------------------|---------|------------------------------------|---------|
| KMO index of Sampling Adequacy | .828 | KMO Index of Sampling Adequacy | .850 |
| Approx. Chi-Square | 471.346 | Approx. Chi-Square | 384.130 |
| Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (df) | 36 | Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (df) | 21 |
| Sig | .000 | Sig | .000 |

The KMO value for IVs was 0.828, which is above the cut-off point (0.70) suggested by Field (2011). The initial analysis found that the Bartlett's test for sphericity was sufficiently large ($\chi^2 (36) = 471.346, p < .001$). Meanwhile, KMO index for DV was 0.850, and Bartlett's test was sufficiently large ($\chi^2 (21) = 384.130, p < .001$) indicating that the correlation matrices for both IV and DV items were not identical matrices (Field, 2011; Hair *et al.*, 2010).

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Table 6 below depicts the correlation analysis between determinants and turnover intention.

Table 6:
Results of Correlation Analysis

| Variable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|--|---------|---------|---------|---------|---|
| Turnover Intention | 1 | | | | |
| Work-life Balance | -.554** | 1 | | | |
| Job Stress | .440** | -.609** | 1 | | |
| Perceived Organizational Support | -.460** | .604** | -.481** | 1 | |
| Available Job Alternatives/Opportunities | .789** | -.563** | .518** | -.614** | 1 |

***. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

Table 6 indicates that Work-Life Balance, Perceived Organizational Support, Job Stress and Available Job Alternatives or Opportunity showed significant correlations with Turnover Intention. The strongest significant positive relationship between variables is the Available Job Alternatives or Opportunity ($r = 0.789, p\text{-value} = .000$), followed by Job Stress ($r = 0.440, p\text{-value} = .000$). This indicates that if there is higher availability of job alternatives as an opportunity for the employees to expand their career, it will increase the turnover intention among employees. On the other hand, with respect to job stress, this showed that if there is higher Job Stress among employees, it will increase turnover intention in Woongjin Coway (M) Sdn Bhd.

Meanwhile, Work-Life Balance ($r = -0.554, p\text{-value} = .000$) and Perceived Organizational Support ($r = -0.460, p\text{-value} = .000$) showed negative relationships with

employee turnover. This implies that if the organization does not practice balance between work and personal life, it will increase employees' intention to leave and that will have a negative impact organization. In addition, if there is no organizational support provided to employees, there is a tendency that turnover intention will be affected.

With respect to the significant determinants of turnover intention, Table 7 below summarized the results of the regression analysis.

Table 7:
Results of Regression Analysis

| Variable | Standardized Coefficient | | t | Sig. |
|---|--------------------------|--|--------|------|
| | Beta | | | |
| Work-Life Balance | -.219 | | -2.585 | .011 |
| Job Stress | -.025 | | -.325 | .746 |
| Perceived Organizational Support | .122 | | .1496 | .138 |
| Available Job Alternatives Or Opportunity | .754 | | 9.384 | .000 |
| R ² | .649 | | | |
| Adjusted R ² | .635 | | | |
| Sig | .000 | | | |
| Durbin Watson | 1.892 | | | |

According to Petrocelli (2003), R² is associated with a model's degree of predictability of a criterion variable. Table 7 displays which turnover intention determinants are the most significance and contribute more to the model of study. The value of coefficient explains on the relative importance of IV (determinants) towards DV (turnover intention). It was found that the level of influence of the independent variables on the dependent variable is moderately high (R² =.649). The model of the study indicated that 64.9% of turnover intention was determined by several factors namely work-life balance, job stress, perceived organizational support, and available job alternatives or opportunities.

Available Job Alternatives or Opportunity ($\beta = .754, p = 0.000 < 0.05$) was found to have the highest impact on turnover intention. The second highest impact on turnover intention was Work-Life Balance ($\beta = -.219, p = 0.011 < 0.05$). Meanwhile, Job Stress ($\beta = -.025, p = 0.746 > 0.005$) and Perceived Organizational Support ($\beta = .122, p = .138 > 0.005$) were found insignificant towards Turnover Intention.

Based on the above findings, available job alternatives or opportunities and work-life balance have significant impacts towards turnover intention. The findings concur with past studies by Miller *et al.*, (1979), Mowday *et al.*, (1980) and Arnold and Feldman (1982) in their study found that intention to search for alternative employment is an important component of the turnover decision and also has been found to be a significant predictor of the turnover intention. A research conducted by Thatcher *et al.*, (2003) on turnover of information technology workers found a strong positive correlation between perceived alternative job opportunities and turnover intention. Mobley *et al.*, (1979) that employees are exposed with a variety available job alternatives and opportunities provided in the labour market.

Furthermore, on work-life balance effect on turnover intention, the finding is supported by Casper and Buffardi (2004) that stated work-life balance initiatives through increasing their ability to attract employees might improve organization's competitiveness. These efforts might induce employees to exercise discretionary efforts in performing their

work (Konrad and Mangel, 2001) and help employees to be more productive as suggested by Eaton (2003). Moreover, by improving an organisation's Work-Life Balance not only leads to greater productivity but greater company loyalty among employees and low level intention to leave the organisation (Moore, 2007).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study concludes that Available Job Alternatives or Opportunity and Work-Life Balance are the most influential predictors of turnover intention in Woongjin Coway (M) Sdn Bhd. In this regard, the organization has to be more proactive in dealing with employees' right at workplace to avoid the feeling of intention to leave and find other jobs. Thus, employees are easily to switch jobs when their needs are not being fulfilled. This is due to the fact that there are lot of alternative jobs and opportunities with a variety of posts being offered by government and private sectors.

The findings also imply that serious efforts must be taken to formulate an appropriate work-life balance policy in the organization to ensure the existence of employee well-being particularly among women workers. Feasible efforts must be taken into consideration such as introducing flexible working hours and no working day on Sunday and Public Holiday. These initiatives might reduce job stress among workers especially for those who have a family and help to balance between work and life.

Therefore, the researchers believe that further research should be carried out considering all the limitations confronted by the researcher in order to avoid any inaccuracies data and thus the result will be improved and more accurate. To further improve the future study on the determinants of turnover intention, the scope of the research can be widened. It is noted that the study was only limited to the perceived organizational support, job stress, work-life balance and available job alternatives or opportunities as turnover intention predictors. It is suggested that future research should consider investigating other possible variables or predictors. The new findings may also be able to provide better results in determining turnover intention in order to get a higher percentage of effect size of the research model.

It is also suggested that more studies should be carried out on the implementation of Work-Life Balance in private sector as well as the salary commensurate. These studies are important to ensure and protect the well-being of Cody and ST as well as to permit them to work in a conducive environment at their workplace in Woongjin Coway Sdn Bhd. Meanwhile, the sample size can also be collected randomly from all branches of Woongjin Coway (M) Sdn Bhd in Malaysia. The researcher believes that the extensive study with a larger and more representative sample is important to give more generalized picture of the prevalence of intention to quit from their organization. Since the present study has concentrated on one organization only, it is recommended that future research to be extended to other giant private company in Malaysia.

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