# Role of Trustworthy Behaviour in Turnover Intention among Front Level Managerial Personnel

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In modern business environment employees' turnover is a serious problem and Indian industries have started taking preventive actions to sustain and retain their high-skilled employees in the organizations. In India human resources managers are facing problems due to the employees' turnover. Trustworthy behaviour is one of the important predictors which may play important role in reducing the turnover intention. The present study was conducted on 117 front level managers of Indian organizations to examine the role of managerial trustworthy behaviour in turnover intention. The results of correlation coefficients indicate that manner and quality of information communicated and demonstration of concern (dimensions of managerial trust worthy behaviour) and overall managerial trustworthy behaviour were found significantly and negatively correlated with intention to leave. The results of hierarchical regression analysis reveals that demonstration of concern was found significantly negatively associated with intention to leave. It can be concluded from the obtained results that increasing managerial trustworthy behaviour at workplace can play a crucial and effective role in reducing turnover intention among managers in the organizations.

**Keywords:** Managerial trustworthy behaviour, turnover intention, hierarchical regression analysis.

In competitive era employee's turnover is important concerns of human resources management of the organizations and it is one of the most serious issues facing the organizations worldwide. With the increasing competition and organizational demands emanating from all over their working environments, responding to the challenges of turnover intentions among their employees becomes crucial. Employee turnover represents a critical problem to an organization in terms of loss of talent, additional recruitment and training costs (Loi, Hang-yue, & Foley, 2006). Understanding the actual causes of turnover intention is important because when employees choose to leave the organization, there are multiple direct and indirect costs and other consequences on organizational efficiency and also their performance. Attracting and retaining employees has emerged as one of the most important concerns. Organizations with very high turnover can intimidate the sustainability of the organizational tasks and also makes it more difficult for the industrialized

organizations to make a strategy planning for serving the community and human assets in the today competitive world. Many organizations treat turnover as a serious problem and start taking preventive actions to maintain and retain their high-skilled employees in the organization, among others orientation and training programs have been adopted (Ongori, 2007). Losing highly skilled staff member's means that companies incur substantial costs associated with recruiting and reskilling, and hidden costs associated with difficulties completing projects and disruptions in team-based work environments (Niedermann & Summer, 2003).

Researchers have devoted considerable time and effort to better understand and identify various ways to decrease employee turnover. If employee turnover behaviour is not managed properly in the organizations, it would affect adversely in terms of personnel costs and in the long run it could affect its liquidity (Ongori, 2007). Therefore, the retention of skilled and experienced personnel becomes a priority for organizations, and identifying critical

organizational, job and individual factors that are involved in the process of turnover will have utility implications for these organizations. Human resources are most valuable asset for development of any organizations. Since employees are at the forefront of business agendas to ensure the organization's competitive sustainability, organizations pay increased attention to talent management in making certain that the right staff, at all hierarchical levels, is hired, developed and retained to ensure the organization's ongoing competitive advantage (Cappelli, 2008; Cheese, Thomas & Craig, 2008; Lewis & Heckman, 2006). Nowadays factors such as the changing nature of work, technological advancement and globalization seem to have heightened the importance of employees. High turnover intentions bring many undesirable outcomes for organizations.

Turnover intention is defined as "one's desire or willingness to leave an organization" (Thoresen, Kaplan, Barsky, Warren, &de Chermont, 2003). Employee turnover in the industry is almost accepted as inevitable. Turnover intention represents an attitudinal orientation or a cognitive manifestation of the behavioural decision to quit (Ajzen, 2001; Ajzen, 1991; Ferres, Connell & Travaglione, 2004; Richer, Blanchard, & Vallerand, 2002). A number of empirical studies demonstrate evidence that turnover intention is the most important predictor of actual turnover (Ferres et al, 2004; Firth, Mellor, Moore, & Loquet, 2004; Koberg, Boss, Senjem & Goodman, 1999, Griffeth, Hom & Geatner, 2000; Price, 2001; Hemdi, 2006; Samad, 2006). Turnover intention refers to the willingness of employees to leave the organization for another job and their intention to begin searching for a new job (Benson, 2006; Tett & Meyer, 1993). Lambert (2001) defines turnover intention as an employee's desire to relinquish organizational employment ties within a given time frame. Various factors have been identified as antecedent to turnover intention among employees in organizations.

Turnover can be categorized in two categories which is voluntary or involuntary, as well as functional or dysfunctional (Watrous, Huffman, & Pritchard, 2006). Voluntary turnover can be

defined as a process of an individual makes a decision to stay or leave the firm, is usually dysfunctional and can be the most detrimental to the organization (Mobley, 1982). On the other hand, involuntary turnover can be defined as a process the organization assumes control over an employee's decision to stay or leave. Typically, the process focuses on removing underperforming employees; it is labeled as functional (Watrous et al., 2006). Aneil and Gretchen (2002) also classify turnover into two categories which are involuntary and voluntary. Involuntary turnover occurs when an employee is being terminated, discharged or other reason of which the cause of leaving the company is not by the intention of the employee while voluntary turnover occurs when employee leaves the company because of their own decision due to several factors.

Employee turnover represents a substantial cost for companies both in tangible and intangible terms, seriously hinders efficient and effective customer service and underlines competitiveness (Alexandrov, Babakus, & Yavas, 2007; Frank, Finnegan, & Taylor, 2004; Hendrie, 2004). Past researches indicate that managerial practices in the form of management commitment to service quality (MCSQ) are the critical determinant of frontline employees (FLE) behaviour at the workplace (Alexandrov et al., 2007; Babakus, Yavas, Karatepe, & Avci, 2003; Hartline & Ferrell, 1996).

Managerial trustworthy behaviour is one of the important concept that may play crucial role in the development of organizations. Enhancing this behaviour, organizations can improve their performance and reduce turnover intention. In private sector organizations high employees' turnover brings many undesirable outcomes. Whitener and colleagues (1998) presented a framework that explains subordinates' trust in management. In their model, they identified a series of managerial behaviors that may affect employees' trust in managers. They labeled this set of behaviors as managerial trustworthy behaviors (MTB), which they defined as "volitional actions and interactions performed by managers that are necessary though not sufficient to engender employees' trust in them". They proposed taxonomy of five categories 96 A.P. Singh and Amish

of managerial trustworthy behavior derived from research on antecedents of trust (Butler, 1991; Clark & Payne, 1997) e.g.: (1) behavioral consistency, (2) acting with integrity, (3) sharing and delegation of control, (4) openness of communication, and (5) demonstration of concern.

According to Whitener and colleagues (1998), managers who engage in this behavior will increase the likelihood that employees will trust them. This behavior will provide "a necessary, but not sufficient foundation. Laboratory and field experiments demonstrated a positive effect of some of the categories of managerial trustworthy behavior on trust in the manager (e.g., Korsgaard, Brodt, & Whitener, 2002; Korsgaard, Schweiger, & Sapienza, 1995); Korsgaard and colleagues (2002), for example, have recently examined two forms of managerial trustworthy behavior (open communication and demonstrating concern for employees). Managerial behaviour and its influences on the work environment are dynamic and require continuous examination to ensure congruence of managerial and employee perspectives. This study, therefore, explored employees' views on managerial behaviour that enhance positive workplace experience in a manufacturing company. Managers and subordinates may also interpret the same events differently, leading to diverse assessments of the fairness of exchanges and consequently, of each other's trustworthiness (Cole & Flint, 2005; Lind, Kray, & Thompson, 1998; Roberson, 2006).

In a different study, Smith and Barclay (1997) demonstrated that perceptions of mutual trustworthiness and trusting behaviors were positively related to task performance and mutual satisfaction. Lester and Brower (2003) found that felt trustworthiness—perceiving that one's manager assesses one's trustworthiness highly significantly predicted subordinate behavior and attitudes, even after accounting for perceived manager trustworthiness.

Habbell and Chory-Assad (2005) have developed theoretical perspective of managerial behaviour, which are widely accepted. According to this perspective, managerial trust worthy behaviour is categorized in four factors: behavioural

consistency (predictability of a manager's behaviour over time and across situation), behavioural integrity (manager's propensity to tell the truth and keep promises), manner and quality of information communicated (manager's communication accuracy, explanations, and openness), and demonstration of concern (manager's interest in protection of, and ability to avoid hurting subordinates). According to Kaiser and Hogan (2010) research has shown that managerial trustworthiness is important in organisational trust. It is particularly the degree to which employees trust their direct line manager that is correlated to job satisfaction, job performance and exercising discretionary effort.

Whitener et al (1998) explains the basic dimensions of the behaviour of a trustworthy manager as behavioural consistency, behavioural integrity, sharing and delegation of control, communication (e.g. accuracy, openness), and demonstration of concern and this constitutes the references for many subsequent studies (Ugboro, 2003; Cardona & Elola, 2003; Hubbell & Chory-Assad, 2005; Burke, Sims, Lazzara, & Salas, 2007). Likewise, ability, benevolence and integrity as the dimensions of trustworthiness developed by Mayer & Davis (1999) are the most commonly used structures in the analyses of the behaviours of a trustworthy manager (Ristig, 2009).

In view of the stated importance of turnover intention and trustworthy behaviour in the organizations, present study was planned with the following objective and hypothesis.

### Objective:

To examine the role of trustworthy behaviour in turnover intention of front level managerial personnel.

## Hypothesis:

Managerial trustworthy behaviour (dimensions and total) would be negatively related to turnover intention of front level managerial personnel.

#### Method

In the present investigation, authors have used a correlational design where managerial trustworthy behaviour has been treated as a predictor variable and turnover intention as a criterion variable.

# Sample:

Present study was conducted on 117 first level managerial personnel of public and private sectors organizations of India. The subjects were convinced to participate and they were not paid for participation in this study.

### Measures:

In addition to a demographic data schedule the following measures were employed in the present investigation:

Managerial Trustworthy Behaviour Scale (MTB): For the measurement of managerial trustworthy behaviour, authors used Managerial Trustworthy Scale developed by Hubble and Medved (2001) which includes four dimensions of managerial trustworthy behaviour namely, behavioural consistency, behavioural integrity, manner and quality of information communicated, and demonstration of concern. This scale contains 21 items. Items were rated on a 7-point likert scale. Cronbach's alpha for the scale was .92

Intention to leave (Farrel & Rusbult, 1992): It is manifested by intentions of searching for a different job and thinking about quitting. It contains 4 questions. Respondents were asked to report the degree to which they agreed with a four-item scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The full scale included four items. Reliability of this scale was. 81.

# Procedure:

All the front level managers were contacted individually by the authors at their respective workplaces and informed consent was obtained after establishing the rapport with the participants. Both the measures were administered with full care and specific instructions were followed adequately. Responses were noted down and suitable statistics was used for the treatment of data.

#### Results

At the first instance, Pearson correlation between intention to leave and other variables were obtained.

Table1. Correlation coefficients of managerial trustworthy behaviour (dimensions and total) and demographic variables with intention to leave (N=117)

Variables	Intention to Leave the Organization
Age	100
Gender	080
Education	091
Marital status.	.203*
Divorced	.032
No of Child	037
Visit to Doctor	023
Rate of Health	.028
Behavioural Consistency	117
Behavioural Integrity	175
Manner and Quality of Information Communicated	224*
Demonstration of Concern	366**
Overall Managerial Trustworthy Behaviour (MTB)	292**

<sup>\*</sup>p<. 05, \*\*p<. 01

Table 1 shows the results of correlation coefficients of demographic variables and predictor variable (managerial trustworthy behaviour) with intention to leave (criterion variable). The results indicate that marital status was found significantly positively correlated with intention to leave the organization (r=.203, p<.05). It also indicate that manner and quality of information communicated (dimension of managerial trustworthy behaviour)was found significantly but negatively correlated with intention to leave the organization (r=-.224, p<.05). Demonstration of concern (another dimension of managerial trustworthy behaviour) was found significantly and negatively correlated with intention to leave the organization (r=-.366, p<01). Overall managerial trustworthy behaviour (MTB) was also found to be significantly and negatively correlated with intention to leave the organization (r=-.292, p<.01). However, other correlation coefficients were not found to be significant.

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Table 2. Summary of hierarchical regression analysis for managerial trustworthy behaviour as predictor and intention to leave as criterion variable

Variables	Criterion Variable Intention to Leave the Organization	
Control Variable First Step	Step-1	Step-2
Age	139	044
Gender	100	048
Education	098	070
Marital status.	. 265*	. 296*
Divorced	169	292
No of Child	.152	. 138
Visit to Doctor	061	070
Rate of Health	. 076	. 009
Predictor Variables Second Step		
Behavioural Consistency		. 054
Behavioural Integrity		. 012
Manner and Quality of Information Communicated		074
Demonstration of Concern		343**
Overall R2	. 080	. 202
Adjusted R2	. 003	. 101
R2 change	. 080	. 122
F-change	1. 037	3. 916**
Fa	1. 037	2. 001*

a- Step 1 degree of freedom=8, 109 Step 2 degree of freedom = 12, 105

Note- Standardized Beta ( $\beta$ ) is reported in table-2 \*p<.05, \*\*p<. 01

Further, hierarchical regression analysis was performed to find out the causal relation of managerial trustworthy behaviour with intention to leave the organization and the results of regression analysis were reported in table-2. Results of regression analysis indicate that demonstration

of concern (dimension of MTB) was found to be significantly negatively associated with turnover intention ( $\beta$ =-.343, p<.01). Though there was significant negative correlation between manner and quality of information and intention to leave but the association between the variables were not found significant while computing hierarchical regression analysis. Results further show that all demographic variables used as control variables were explaining 8.0 percent of variance in explaining intention to leave whereas managerial trustworthy behaviour (behavioural consistency, behavioural integrity, manner and quality of information communicated, demonstration of concern) was explaining 12.2 percent of total variance in intention to leave the organization.

## **Discussion**

In this study it has been found that managerial trust worthy behaviour play an important role in reducing the problem of turnover intentions. Turnover intention is a major challenge for the modern competitive organizations. Managers have set goals while working for the success of organizations but when they are willing to leave the jobs, predetermined goals are not fulfilled and organizations suffer due to their turnover intention. Loss of potential and productive employees may have unfavorable effect on the performance, productivity and effectiveness of the organizations. As mentioned earlier, the present study was aimed to examine the role of managerial trustworthy behaviour in predicting turnover intention of front level managerial personnel. In this study correlation analysis indicates that manner and quality of information communicated and demonstration of concern (dimensions of managerial trust worthy behaviour), and overall managerial trust worthy behaviour of front line managers were found significantly negatively correlated with intention to leave. It shows that increasing managerial trustworthy behaviour can be effective in reducing the turnover intention of managerial personnel. Managers are important part of the organizations. Turnover intention of the employees can lead to actual turnover; which in turn affects the recruiting and training cost of organizations. Senior Managements' communication accuracy, explanations, and openness play crucial role in overcoming the problem of turnover intention. Managements' interest in protection of and ability to avoid hurting subordinates create security and positivity among their employees. This behaviour leads to reducing the turnover intentions because employees show their attachment and involvement with the organizations. The consequences of living with continued insecurities will lead to, decreased commitment, decreased job satisfaction and eventually turnover. Managers showing MTB at workplace get respect from their subordinates and workers. In hierarchical regression analysis it has been found that demonstration of concern (dimension of MTB) was significantly negatively associated with intention to leave. It shows that when managers show concern towards their subordinate, it affects them positively and produces psychological attachment for their organizations.

From various studies turnover intention is found to be the important predictor of actual turnover. (Price, 2001; Hemdi, 2006; & Samad, 2006). Therefore, managers should also be prepared and have competency to deal with human oriented problem solving skills and negotiation skills. These will facilitate good and pleasant relationships which can lead to appreciation, cooperation, and support from their employees. When managements are loyal to their subordinates, they will be psychologically and physically attached simultaneously and thus willing to stay or remain with their organizations.

Trustworthy behaviors are particularly relevant to the superior- subordinate dyad because it is the superior who models trustworthy behaviors to subordinates (Whitener, Brodt, Korsgaard, & Werner, 1998). The potential link between trust in senior management and intention to turnover is also supported in the literature (Albrecht, Savery, Firns, & Travaglione, 1997; Konovsky & Cropanzano, 1991; Mishra & Morrisey, 1990). Empirical studies demonstrate that perceptions of a supportive manager are related to higher levels of job satisfaction, productivity, and organizational loyalty, as well as lower turnover intentions, less work-family conflict, less depression, and even lower cholesterol levels (e.g., Baruch-Feldman, Brondolo, Ben-Dayan, & Schwartz, 2002; Jones, Smith, & Johnston, 2005; Mansell, Brough, &

Cole, 2006; Thomas & Ganster, 1995; Thompson, Beauvais, & Lyness, 1999).

Obtained results further help in understanding the relationships between managerial trust behaviour and their relationship with turnover intention and it has been recognized as a key approach that can be helpful for managers. practitioners, and organizations when designing strategies, policies, and interventions. These findings are useful in highlighting the need for the organizations to develop appropriate strategies and human resource practices in order to reduce its high employee turnover intentions in the future. Turnover is a major problem for many organizations because it is extremely costly for the employer, particularly in jobs which offer higher education and extensive on the job training. Losing productive and effective managers can be extremely costly to organizations. At present organizations' aims are to minimize the employees' turnover intention because continuous recruitment and training of a new workforce can be a serious concern for human resource management. The organizations must also impose effective policies on human resource retention.

In sum results of the present study partially supported the proposed hypothesis. One specific thing which present study reveals that demonstration of concern (one dimension of MTB) play important role in predicting intention to leave the organizations.

#### Implications of the Study

Present study confirms that managerial trustworthy behaviour (MTB) plays an important role in predicting withdrawal behaviour like intention to leave the organization. The results of the present study can be implicated in reducing the turnover intention through increasing managerial trustworthy behaviour in the organizations. Managerial trustworthy behaviour like behavioural consistency, behavioural integrity, manner and quality of information communicated, demonstration of concern can play a crucial role in turnover intention of managers. When there is a high degree of congruence of individual's managerial trustworthy behaviour with the work environment, it is believed to result in stability and less turnover intention.

#### **Limitations and Future Research**

Like any study, this study is also having shortcomings. This study is subject to limitation in terms of sample size (only 117 executives) with front level managers only, thus the findings may not be generalized so participants from all the levels of hierarchy in organization can be included for better results. Use of short version of scale (Intention to leave-4 items) might be another imperfection of the study. Cross-cultural studies should also be conducted. Several recommendations related to human resource practices have been proposed. Future research should investigate to find the various mechanisms involved in explaining the role of psychosocial factors in turnover intention.

#### Conclusion

The investigation confirms the significant negative relation of managerial trustworthy behaviour (dimensions and total) with intentional to leave. Manner and quality of information communicated and demonstration of concern (dimensions of managerial trust worthy behaviour) and overall managerial trust worthy behaviour were found to be significantly and negatively correlated with turnover intention but significant negative association is found between demonstration of concern and turnover intention, whereas results do not confirm any significant association of other dimensions of MTB with intention to leave the organization. Demonstration of concern is found important predictor of turnover intention of managers. Though, there are certain limitations of present study but the results can be utilized in reducing the turnover intention through increasing managerial trustworthy behaviour. Management policies which support employees can also be expected to make the organizations more attractive to employees, leading to lower turnover while also enhancing the organization's competitiveness in hiring valuable and skilled employees.

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