

THE IMPACT OF NEGATIVE TIES ON TURNOVER INTENTIONS

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***Abstract.** Knowledge based industries where human capital is very important are increasingly concerned about retaining human talent. We use a social network perspective to determine the effect of negative ties on an employee's turnover intentions. Interpersonal dislike ties and conflicting ties are hypothesized to be positively related to turnover intentions, keeping job fit and sacrifice as control variables. Collecting socio-metric and conventional data from 100 employees in an organization related to security and information of Pakistani individuals, OLS regression revealed that an employee's number of dislike ties has a positive and significant impact of employee's turnover intentions. Whereas an employee's number of conflicting ties does not significantly impact turnover intentions.*

Keywords: Social network analysis, dislike ties, conflict ties, turnover intentions, degree centrality.

Introduction

Human resource is an asset for organizations. In today's competitive world organizations are struggling hard to maintain and retain their employees. For increased productivity the organizations are in great pressure to satisfy and retain their employees. Turnover of committed and dedicated employees is a huge loss for organizations. It results in destruction of 17 percent of a company's pretax income (Sagie, Birati, & Tziner, 2002). Research shows that mostly organizations are effected by newcomer turnover (Farber, 1994; Griffeth & Hom, 2001), which results in the loss of costs associated with recruitment and selection of new employees (Kammeyer & Wanberg, 2003).

But many models of turnover, have found out that employees don't just quit instantaneously; rather they have turn over indentations which precede actual turnover. Turnover intention is imagined to be a mindful and thoughtful will of an employee to quit the organization.

The Job Embeddedness Model (a model of turnover) argues that turnover intention is strongly influenced by the workplace ties an employee has with other employees (Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, Sablinski, & Erez, 2001). These ties can be of both positive and negative valence and can be studied using Social Network Analysis (SNA) tools.

Therefore based on recommendation for future research, this study, explores how negative ties (dislike and conflicting relationships that an employee has with his/her coworkers in the organization) affect an employee's turnover intentions.

Turnover Intentions

Field theory shows different important potential implications for turnover. Among the 20th century social psychological theories, it is one of the most influential and practical theory applied in management and organizational literature; to elaborate change management in complicated systems (Argyris, 1989; Burnes, 2004), interpersonal trust (Lewicki, McAllister & Bies, 1998), organizational attitudes (Mathieu, 1991), the effects of foci of commitment (Becker, Billings, Eveleth & Gilbert, 1996) and retention of an employee (Mitchell, et al., 2001).

Field theory emphasizes that in turnover decisions social context is important (O'Reilly, Caldwell & Barnett, 1989). It is critically important for employees to focus on ties and links with their colleagues at their workplace, i.e. their social network. By having strong ties and relationships with their colleagues, employees will come to know about organization's culture and values. Fit, structural ties; and relationships are the forces of field employees that are embedded in, influencing turnover decisions.

Employees are tied by a web of restraining forces, called links, to others at the workplace. Their turnover decisions might depend on these links (Mitchell, et al., 2001).

Social Networks and Negative Ties

Social networks in organizations are formed by employee relations. In case of relation being of positive valence, they might provide benefits and opportunities like job satisfaction, enhanced performance, salary, power and promotions (Brass, 1984, 1985; Burt, 1992; Granovetter, 1973; Seidel, Polzer & Stewart, 2000; Sparrowe, Liden, Wayne & Kraimer, 2001). But the relationships can be of negative valence as well, which is the focus of this study. We, thus discuss them in detail as follows:

“Negative relationships represent an enduring, recurring set of negative judgments, feelings, and behavioral intentions of one person towards another

person” (Labianca & Brass, 2006). Prior research shows that as compared to positive information, people assign greater importance to negative information (Kahneman & Tversky, 1984; Peeters & Czapinski, 1990; Skowronski & Carlston, 1989). Negative relationships create temporary grudges, interrupting the attainment of goals on both individual and organizational level (Kelley & Thibaut, 1978). Prior research, in this regard, suggests negative ties might impact task-related outcomes (e.g., job performance) and socio emotional outcomes, e.g., organizational attachment (Kabanoff, 1991; Katz & Kahn, 1978; Polley, 1987). These negative relationships can often stem from dislike and conflict:

Dislike Ties

Although there may not be any observable or latent conflict but a person may dislike any other person (Labianca & Brass, 2006). Negative relationships or interpersonal dislike ties form when in a working relationship two employees dislike each other. The intensity of dislike varies depending upon personal associations, prejudices, whims, or on objections on the other's performance, social or professional behavior. The negative relationship may develop on both vertical and horizontal organizational levels and may involve any number of employees. The person who is disliked i.e. the disliked object, may return the dislikeness with a different intensity and a different reason; they may interact regularly or occasionally. Sometimes other employees and the one disliked may not know about the negative relationship. Both the issues work as the consequences of negative relationships and are strongly related to negative relationships than to positive relationships.

Conflicting Ties

The second form of negative ties/relationships whose intensity is very high are conflicting ties. Conflicting ties in organizations arise when employees disagree with each other on work related issues. The result is covert and overt behavior, e.g. destructive attempts against the other group (Pondy, 1967; Pruitt & Rubin, 1986). The actual and perceived performance of the employees is harmed by the conflict affected group, as they do not deliver the required information in time. Actual performance is hindered when the conflicting person withholds helpful information.

Consequences of Negative Ties/Relationships

Organizational attachment is destroyed because of negative relationships in the formal hierarchy (both direct supervisors and other managers) and makes achievement of task related outcomes difficult (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Sparrowe & Liden, 1997). Negative relationships lead to social liabilities such as two employees disliking each other in the workplace (Labianca & Brass, 2006). Employees involved in negative relationships (especially low-grade workers) their chances for promotion and salary increase are reduced. For example, in organizations power and promotion can be achieved by having positive links with supervisors and top management (Brass, 1984). Employees at the top positions have more authority to decrease an individual's involvement in the organization. Sometimes an employee's career success may be hindered when his/her immediate boss has a negative relationship with a higher-level manager (Sparrowe & Liden, 1999).

The number of negative relationships an employee has, increases with being highly central in a network, these negative relationships may decrease the individual's level of satisfaction which is not adjusted by positive relationship with others.

Negative affectivity is a personality factor. It is "a mood-dispositional dimension that reflects pervasive individual differences in negative emotionality and self-concept" (Watson & Clark, 1984). It may affect behavior, emotions and negative relationships. Individuals with high NA generally focuses the dark side of the world and as well as of others. They "may act in ways that alienate their co-workers, resulting in more negative interpersonal interactions" (Brief, Butcher & Roberson, 1995).

Employees that are frustrated to attain their goals and complete tasks have more negative relationships. Thus negative relationships decrease employee's commitment, performance, job satisfaction and organizational attachment, while absenteeism and turnover increases as a result of negative relationships.

Figure 1 depicts the social network perspective of dislike and conflicting ties. Circles represent fictional employees. The arrows represent ties/relationship between employees. Both employee A and B are in relation with three other employees. Employee A dislike three of the employees, while the third employee also dislikes employee A. Employee B has a conflict with the three of the employees. On the other hand the two employees in relation with employee B are also in conflict with him.

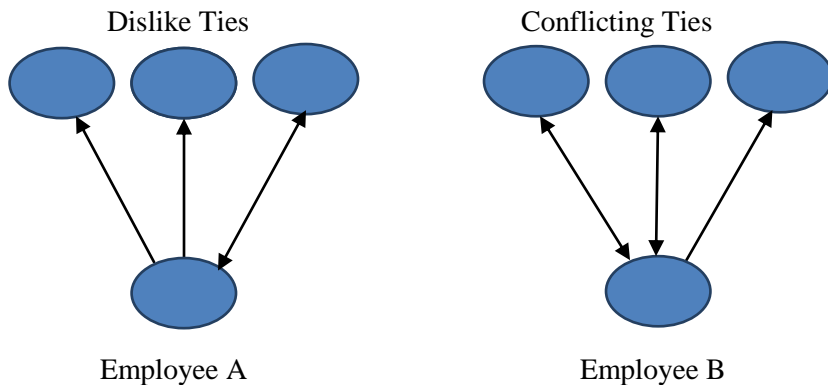


Figure 1 Dislike and Conflict Ties

Hypotheses

Dislike Ties and Turnover Intentions

Positive Interpersonal relationships/ties at workplace provide access to diverse, useful and trusted information that can lead to power in organizations (e.g., Brass, 1984; Burkhardt & Brass, 1990; Sparrowe & Liden, 2005) or that can enhance their performance, creativity, job attainment, job satisfaction and promotions (e.g., Burt, 2004, 2010; Seidel, et al., 2000; Sparrowe, et al., 2001). That is if an employee has positive interpersonal ties with his or her coworkers it will serve as a fuel for his/her work achievement, happiness, and success. On the other hand negative interpersonal ties or interpersonal dislike ties will cause hindrance for an employee's work achievements (Jehn, 1995; Labianca & Brass, 2004). The result will be frustration and depression, leading to strong turnover intentions (Soltis, Aagneessens, Sasovova & Labianca, 2013). Therefore we propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: An employee's number of interpersonal dislike ties will be positively related to his or her turnover intentions.

Conflict Ties and Turnover Intentions

Conflicts are inevitable in organizations because there people spend extended hours of the day. Interpersonal conflicts can be caused by employees having abrasive personalities that may prohibit them from working well and interacting with others (e.g., Jehn, 1995; Pondy, 1967; Pruitt & Rubin, 1986). Sometimes conflicting ties are formed in organizations when an employee is hard working and authoritative, the coworkers may not accept his/her progress (Brooks & Schetter, 2011; Galinsky & Schweitzer, 2015). Inadequate information may also lead to the formation of conflicting ties among

employees. They blame one another for not properly transferring information. Some employees intentionally do not transfer complete information in order to maintain their priority. This results in hatred and development of conflict (Davidson & Duberman, 1982). Favoritism is another source of formation of conflicting relationships among employees leading to turnover. If conflict is not resolved the conflicting ties between employees become stronger, causing employees to intend for turnover and resulting in a loss for organization. Therefore if an employee is not on good terms with his colleagues due to many conflicting ties, his survival in the organization might become difficult and he may intend to quit (Soltis, et al., 2015). Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: An employee's number of conflicting ties will be positively related to his or her turnover intentions.

Research Methodology

Data Collection

The data for the research was gathered from six different offices of NADRA placed in different regions, namely Sibi, Dhadar, Usta Mohammad, Jaffarabad, Naseerabad and Loralai. 100 employees of NADRA Balochistan region were identified. Networks are identified and population boundaries are defined prior to the research (Hanneman & Riddle, 2005). Respondents differ in terms of age, tenure, education, job experience and demographic region. Participants voluntarily completed questionnaires during their working hours. As the data was collected on negatives ties so the participants were assured about its confidentiality

Measures

Dependent Variable: Turnover Intentions

The dependent variable turnover intention was measured using Michigan Organizational Assessment Questionnaire (Cammann, Fichman, Jenkins & Klesh, 1979). The scale intention to turnover had following three items. "I often think about quitting," "I will probably look for a new job in the next year," and "How likely is it that you could find a job with another employer with about the same pay and benefits you now have?" 0.66 was the value of Cronbach's alpha of this scale.

Independent Variables: Dislike and Conflict Ties

The study included two independent variables, interpersonal dislike ties and conflicting ties. The independent variables were based on two socio-metric questions: "Name the coworkers/colleagues in your department, whom you prefer to avoid" tapping dislike ties and ". Identify your coworkers within your department with whom you disagree on work related issues" tapping conflict ties. To construct the network, two separate matrices of relations (one for dislike and one for conflict) were created in excel with rows and columns containing employees and cell containing values (1 and 0; 1 indicating presence of dislike or conflict relationship and a 0 indicating absence of dislike or conflict relationship). The matrices were then imported in SNA software UCINET VI (Borgatti, Everett & Freeman, 2002) to calculate the out-degree centrality. Out-degree centrality is the number of direct outgoing ties an actor has with other actors (employee in this case) in the social network (Ahuja, 2000). So out-degree centrality in our networks of dislike and conflict measured the number of employees which a focal employee dislikes and has conflict with. The measures computed were then exported in SPSS to test our causal model.

Control Variables: Job Fit and Sacrifice

Job's fit and sacrifice are the two control variables in this study. Employee's job tenure was used to analyze fit. Employees were asked to mention that how long they had been working for their organization. Greater fit was possessed by those individuals who have been working in organization for a long time (Schneider, 1987). According to meta-analytic research tenure exhibits a positive relationship to different kinds of person-environment fit (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman & Johnson, 2005).

Sacrifice was statistically controlled by referring for continuance organizational commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1984). Two commitment scales were used for measuring sacrifice i.e. affective commitment scale and continuance commitment scale. A 7 point Likert-type response format was used by both the measures. The items included in the ACS measure were "This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me" and "I do not feel 'emotionally attached' to this organization" (reversed). While the sample items included in the CCS measure were "It would be very hard for me to leave my organization right now, even if I wanted to" and "It would not be too costly for me to leave my organization in the near future" (reversed) (Meyer & Allen, 1984).

Data Analysis Techniques

Spearman Correlation and OLS regression were used to test the hypotheses.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 reports the means, standard deviations, and spearman correlation among variables. Out of 100 employees 7 were females and 93 males. The mean age of sample was 41.24 years and the median age was 40 years. The minimum age of the employees was 23 years and the maximum was 59 years. 31% of the employees were under matric, 13% had completed matric, 19% had completed intermediate, 26% were bachelor degree holder and only 11% were those who had master's degree.

Correlation results showed that dislikeness was strongly positively correlated to turnover intentions, whereas conflict also showed a correlation with turnover. Among the controls job's fit was not correlated to turnover, while sacrifice was negatively correlated to turnover intentions.

Table 1 *Descriptive Statistics of the Study*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Turnover							
2. Job's fit	0.024						
3. Sacrifice	-0.16	-0.167					
4. Age	0.05	.915**	-0.16				
5. Gender	0.05	.224*	-0.01	.230*			
6. Out-degree dislike	.654**	0.152	-0.03	0.17	0.13		
7. Out-degree conflict	.386**	0.059	-0.14	0.03	-	.492**	
					0.065		
Mean	4.237	16.96	4.04	41.24	0.92	2.11	2.67
Standard deviation	1.655	10.988	0.35	10.666	0.273	1.78	1.86

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

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 2 shows the results of multiple regression. There was no problem of multicollinearity among the variables as all the VIF values were below 5. The regression standardized residual was normal (histogram looked normal) and the normal P-P plot was also a straight line. 1.619 was the value of Durbin-Watson

statistic, which was near to 2 indicating independence (no autocorrelation) of residuals. $R^2 = 0.456$, which showed the variance in turnover intentions due to interpersonal dislike and conflicting ties.

Table 2 *Results of Multiple Regressions for Turnover Intentions*

	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
(Constant)	6.056		0.003
Job's fit	-0.014	-0.09	0.698
Sacrifice	-0.692	-0.148	0.072
Age	-0.003	-0.016	0.944
Gender	-0.088	-0.015	0.896
Out-degree dislike	0.655	0.702	0
Out-degree conflict	0.003	0.004	0.975

We hypothesized that an employee's no of interpersonal dislike ties are positively related to his or her turnover intentions, and luckily there was a significant relationship between dislike ties and turnover intentions ($\beta_5 = 0.702$, $p < 0.05$). However no support was found for hypothesis 2, which stated that an individual's no of conflicting ties are positively related to his or her turnover intentions ($\beta_6 = 0.004$, $p > 0.10$). This indicates that if an employee dislike other employees in the organization his/her turnover intentions will increase with the intensity of dislikeness, while if an employee is on conflicting terms with other employees in the organization his/her turnovers will not increase or may not be effected with the rise in the degree of conflict. As we used Out-degree centrality as a measure to find dislikeness and conflicting ties, so this explains how many other employees are disliked by and have conflict with for a focal employee.

The analysis confirmed that the dislikeness among employees can lead to turnover, while conflict may not be the cause of turnover. Employees ignore negative ties in organizations and avoid to discuss such issues. When inquired from employees that if conflict does not irritates them the most, the answer was the working conditions and the strict rules and regulations. Considering the scenario of Balochistan where ethnicity and racism are very high, dislikeness among employees in organizations is high.

Conclusion and Future Recommendations

Although the study emphasized the negative relationships, but it did not imply to mean that negative relationships are not beneficial for an organization. When negative relationships are handled in a productive manner they can have beneficial outcomes both for the individuals and the organization (Labianca & Brass, 2006). The study was based on the individual level i.e. on the employees, however this can be applied to groups.

The study used SNA measures, particularly the centrality measure to analysis turnover, however this study can be conducted using other measures of SNA like closeness and betweenness. Gathering negative data from a sensitive organization, which is related to identity of Pakistani individuals was difficult. I suggest if this study is replicated in different work setting it may produce better results.

A single sample involved in this research leads to some generalizability of findings, as the job title of employees varied from janitorial staff to directors' shows that the study can be applied on every type of staff. Also the involvement of six different regional offices in the research makes it useful and more generalizable across the whole NADRA department.

The research suggests that the type of ties effect an individual's decision about turnover. Positive ties such as friendship ties can help individuals to stay in organization for a longer period and can reduce turnover.

As the study used the JEM model of turnover as its primary model, the work can be extended using other models of turnover. Apart from the formal networks in an organization, the informal networks also play a very significant role in determining how the task is accomplished (Krackhardt & Hanson, 1993). If these informal ties are properly managed and handled they can be beneficial and productive for the management.

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