

Perceived alternative job opportunities and turnover intention as preliminary steps in employee withdrawal

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Abstract

Background: Employee turnover represents permanent withdrawal from the organization, which brings long-term unfavorable consequences, especially when it comes to the voluntary early departure of quality employees. Turnover intention is a preliminary step that can predict the employee's intention to leave and is very often the main precursor to the final decision to leave or stay. In addition to internal organizational influences, a strong influencing factor on such a decision is represented by perceived alternative job opportunities.

Purpose: The goal of the paper is, therefore, to examine the employee's perception of the possibilities of alternative employment and their turnover intention to determine that the main factor of the environment strongly shapes thinking in the context of leaving.

Study design/methodology/approach: The primary research was conducted on a convenience sample of 423 in 15 medium and large enterprises in Croatia (Slavonia and Baranja region) and in various economic sectors: Agriculture, Industry, Energy, Construction, Services, Trade, Transport, Education, and Tourism and Hospitality. The data were subjected to univariate and bivariate analysis. The influence of sociodemographic variables was also tested to identify possible differences between different groups of employees.

Findings/conclusions: The results of the research indicate fairly low rates of turnover intention, with a simultaneous perception of very few or weak possibilities for alternative employment. There are no statistically significant differences between the sociodemographic groups, so all employees, for the most part, do not intend to leave the organization in which they are currently employed, but they also do not think that they could easily be employed elsewhere.

Limitations/future research: The biggest limitation is the examination of only these two variables without studying cause-effect relationships, which is also a recommendation for future research. It could be helpful to analyze competitiveness on the labor market, because the situation of the market can also affect the perception of employability, which would determine whether the perceptions are close to the real picture.

Keywords

Croatia; employee turnover; organizational behavior; perceived alternative job opportunities; turnover intention

Introduction

Within organizational behavior, employee turnover is one of the forms of behavior that represents employee withdrawal and it is a dependent variable that depends on several independent variables. The simplest definition of employee turnover is given by Robbins and Judge (2017) as a permanent abandonment of the organization. Mobley, Griffeth, Hand and Meglino (1979) divided the construct of knowledge about voluntary turnover into three levels: the first is the thought of leaving the organization, the second is the intention to look for a new job, and the third is the intention to leave the current work organization. Although it is considered that most of the causes of employee turnover are in the organizational domain, the very intention of turnover, which precedes the final decision and behavior, still shapes several different variables.

1. Background

Traditional attitudes primarily include job satisfaction, expectations, organizational commitment, and organizational involvement, and new approaches to researching attitudes that shape turnover include workplace stress and strain, exhaustion, personal well-being, psychological insecurity, acceptance of change, perception, and stressors, challenges, and opportunities. If all organizational aspects are excluded, and the external environment is considered, the dominant variable that is repeated among many researchers is perceived alternative job opportunities (PAJO) (Bee, Mak, Jak & Ching, 2014; Dardar, Jusoh & Rasli, 2012; Gerhart, 1990; Griffeth, Steel, Allen & Bryan, 2005; Hausknecht & Trevor, 2011; Holtom, Mitchell, Lee & Eberly, 2008; Hulin, Roznowski & Hachiya, 1985; Ing-San & Jyh-Huei, 2006; Mobley et al., 1979; Pepra-Mensah, Adjei & Yeboah-Appiagyeyi, 2015; Saleem & Gul, 2013; Saridakis & Cooper 2016; Steel & Griffeth, 1989; Steel, 2002; Treuren, 2013; Umar, Shamsudin, Chandrakantan & Johanim, 2013).

This variable should by no means be viewed in isolation from the underlying context because it is mediated by organizational commitment and perceived organizational support (Albalawi Naughton, Elayan & Sleimi, 2019). Also, together with the quality of work-life and hardiness, perceived alternative job opportunities influence turnover intentions by 57.8% (Setyawati, 2021).

When employees in the environment notice alternative employment opportunities and perceive

them as more favorable than the current job and the organization in which they work, there is an increase in the intention to leave the current organization. On this assumption is based the basic premise of the work that the intention to leave the organization is accompanied by the perception of easier employability in other organizations. Malik, Danish and Munir (2012) therefore say that in developing countries, where unemployment is high and the economy is destabilized, people do not think from the head, but from the stomach. Carsten and Spector found (1987) that the local unemployment rate is a moderator between job satisfaction and turnover, proving that external factors are indispensable in the study of employee turnover and turnover intention.

Ramlawatia, Trisnawati, Yasinc, and Kurniawaty (2021) found that external alternatives have a significant effect on job satisfaction and turnover intention, while job satisfaction has a significant effect on turnover intention. They suggest that to reduce turnover intention, it is better to reduce employees' access to information about external market opportunities, because external labour market conditions have a strong influence on turnover intention. Rasheed, Okumus, Weng, Hameed and Nawaz (2020) also emphasized the importance of external opportunities and influences. They found that happiness orientation has a strong influence on TI, but that perceived career opportunities play a moderating role between TI and happiness orientation, such that the relationship between happiness orientation and TI weakens when perceived career opportunities are low.

Like all other intentions, the turnover intention (TI) is very changeable and subject to environmental conditions, primarily information. When new information becomes available after a person has expressed some of his or her intentions, the new information may influence his or her prominent behavioral beliefs and thus lead to changes in attitudes, subjective norms, and intentions; eventually, this person is no longer interested in carrying out his original intention (Ajzen, 1985). This means that a person who does not originally intend to leave their work organization can very quickly change their intention if a better offer for a new job in another organization arises. In fact, employees very rarely leave the organization without considering alternative jobs (Griffeth et al., 2005). The perceived possibility of employment in another organization is one of the most important factors

related to the turnover intention and in some cases the main one (Rahman, Raza Naqui, & Ismail Ramay, 2008). The main goal of this paper is to determine whether turnover intentions are consistent with perceived alternative job opportunities.

Another aim of this paper is to investigate whether there are differences in intention to leave an organization among different groups of employees, depending on sociodemographic variables. For example, highly educated employees and over-qualifiers display greater intentions to leave the current job and, in turn, engage in more external job search behaviors (Wu & Chi, 2020).

The differences between groups are very important to study because collective perception often encourages collective intentions and behaviors. Namely, it is interesting to note that, in a situation where co-workers are actively seeking alternative employment, an individual during such a mass exodus may also follow the behavior of a group suggesting that “the grass is always greener on the other side” (Lee, Yang & Li, 2017). Thus, some research has shown that cohorts of employees (groups of employees who share some common characteristics), often go in search of an alternative job because they monitor the behavior of their colleagues (Lee et al., 2017).

1.1. Review of recent studies

More recent studies in the field of organizational behavior agree that job satisfaction, organizational commitment, organizational embeddedness, and organizational identification have the greatest intraorganizational impact on TI, while PAJO has the greatest external impact. Organizational embeddedness, as stated by Shah, Yadav, Afzal, Shah, Junaid, Aza, Jonkman, De Boer, Ahammad, and Shanmugam (2020), with a high level of CWP (creative work performance), leads to lower TI. Higher job satisfaction and higher job embeddedness contribute to lower levels of TI (Skelton, Nattress, & Dwyer, 2019) while job satisfaction seems to be the main predictor of turnover intention (Ladelsky & Lee, 2022).

Ningsih, Susetyo, and Kananlua (2020) confirm that job satisfaction and PAJO have the greatest influence on TI, with PAJO being the moderator between job satisfaction and TI. Job alternatives play an important role in turnover intentions (Alpar, 2020) so perceived external employability predicts high risk of turnover (Zhang, Deng, Xia, Lan, 2021). The relationship between TI and PAJO is positive, while the relationship between PAJO

and organizational identification is negative. Organizational identification is also a mediator in the negative relationship between perceived external prestige and organizational career growth with TI (Zhu, Flores, Weng, & Li, 2020). In a study conducted among nurses, perceived job alternatives were found to moderate the relationship between job engagement and turnover intention (Zhou, et al., 2022).

Ozkan, Elci, Karabay, Kitapci and Garip (2020) found that organizational commitment and job satisfaction have the strongest influence on the TI and almost equally strongly, and that the influence of empowerment on the TI is small, so they consider organizational commitment and job satisfaction to be the strongest predictors of the TI. Furthermore, organizational commitment is a mediator between perceived organizational support and TI, as well as between PAJO and TI (Albalawi, et al., 2019). Perceived organizational support has a significant negative impact on TI in the way that it improves work performance and reduces burnout at work (Wang & Wang, 2020). Burnout in the workplace occurs due to being overwhelmed with work and obligations. Therefore, it is not surprising that overtime, work stress and workload significantly affect TI (Junaidi, Sasono, Wanuri, & Emiyati, 2020).

Except for organizational commitment, TI is also influenced by psychological commitment. It reduces the employee's desire to leave his organization and reduces the need to consider alternative options (Murray & Holmes, 2021). TI is also influenced by employee engagement (Sandhya & Sulphrey, 2020). Work engagement has a negative effect on TI (Memon, et al., 2020).

Subjective career success negatively influences organizational and occupational turnover intentions (Talluri & Uppal, 2022). Quality and capable employees usually have more employment opportunities and are more competitive on the labor market. It would be logical that such employees, considering that they have a high PAJO, and PAJO is in a positive relationship with TI, have more intentions to leave the organization. But it doesn't have to be like that, and research proves exactly the opposite. Namely, more talented employees who possess protean career orientation (PCO), are more capable employees, choose the organization in which they will work, and therefore have a higher level of organizational commitment and higher job satisfaction (Redondo, Sparrow, & Hernández-Lechuga, 2019). Precisely because they have a higher level of commitment, a higher PAJO

does not strongly affect their TI. This is also confirmed by the research conducted by Aburumman, Salleh, Omar, and Abadi (2020), who found that career satisfaction and HRM practices have a significant negative impact on TI, with career satisfaction mediating the relationship between HRM practices and TI.

Employees' perceived employability mediates the relationship between coworkers' upward mobility and employees' turnover intention (Huang, Wang, Pi & Hewlin, 2020). Perceived employability it is an equal concept to PAJO and it should be taken into account that when workers think about their coworkers, they first consider the perception of organizational justice

Perceived distributive justice often has a strong negative impact on TI (Mengstie, 2020; Huffman, Albritton, Matthews, Muse, & Howes, 2021) because the feeling of inequality encourages thoughts of leaving. It is necessary to consider that both active and passive job seekers assess their PAJO constantly. Namely, according to Hosain and Liu (2020), passive job seekers are those who already have a job but are thinking about better alternatives, so they are not in a hurry to make a decision about actual turnover. Sometimes, even when an employee is neither a passive nor an active job seeker, he/she subconsciously evaluates his/her possibilities and compares himself with others and his/her possibilities in other organizations. Better opportunities may inadvertently arouse in an employee the desire to leave.

Sender, Morf, and Feierabend (2020) conducted a study that brought interesting results: employees with higher levels of TI are actually more prone to more or less serious deviant organizational behavior, depending on whether they can find better job opportunities more easily. Specifically, employees who have a high PAJO and high levels of TI at the same time are those who report higher levels of deviant behavior.

The relationship between TI and organizational citizenship behavior is usually negative, but this is not necessarily always the case. Given that the employee turnover and TI is more pronounced in some industries than in others, one study showed that in the construction sector, when employees believe that they have limited employment opportunities, they are more likely to engage in citizenship behavior because they see it as an opportunity to stay with the organization (De Clercq, Suhail, Azeem, & Haq, 2019). On the other hand, excessive pressures for organizational citizenship behavior drive people out of the

organization, especially if they have higher levels of PAJO. In the same industry, but in a different study, it was discovered that TI is influenced by employees' perceptions of organizational prestige, and that organizational identification serves as a partial mediator between self-construal and the TI (Uğural, Giritli, & Urbański, 2020).

Salleh, Omar, Aburumman, Mat, and Almhairat (2020) believe that TI can be shaped by an employee's career planning, employees then achieve high levels of satisfaction with their careers because they see their future clearly and feel a sense of control over their career path. Organizational culture plays an important role in TI in the way that a positive and friendly culture reduces TI (Ryu, Hyun, Jeung, Kim, & Chang, 2020). Management and leadership can undoubtedly influence TI, so it turns out that transformational leaders actually reduce TI by encouraging employee performance (Yücel, 2021).

2. Methodology

For this research, a convenience sampling was used, consisting of employees from 15 different organizations that have an annual average of more than 50 employees and operate in the Slavonia and Baranja region. The dispersion of the sample is limited due to the lack of financial and time resources. Regarding the number of employees, small and micro enterprises (with an annual average of less than 50 employees) were excluded from the survey because the turnover rate in smaller enterprises is drastically different (lower) than in medium and large enterprises. The organizations in which the survey was conducted belong to different economic sectors: Agriculture, Industry, Energy, Construction, Services, Trade, Transportation, Education, and Tourism and Hospitality. Due to the sensitivity of the issues addressed in this research and for privacy reasons, the names of the organizations that participated in this research are not mentioned anywhere in the paper, which was one of the basic conditions for most of the organizations to obtain permission to conduct the research.

Depending on the total number of employees, 30-40% of employees were studied in each organization, randomly selected with the consent and support of the organization's owner, the organization's governing body, human resources staff, or one of the authorized managers. A total of 593 questionnaires were collected, but after removing incomplete questionnaires and

questionnaires with missing values, the final sample consists of 423 respondents.

The method used is the test method by batch testing. The interviews were conducted on the premises of the working organizations of the respondents. In most organizations, a separate research room was provided (conference room, separate office or meeting office, or any other available room such as a social room, kitchen, or dining room), and in some, depending on the type of workplace, the survey was conducted on the workplace itself at a time and in a manner that did not interfere with regular working hours and the business process. Due to the group type of survey, participants were not allowed to communicate with each other before completing the questionnaire to avoid bias errors.

Adult employees of both genders, all age groups, all educational levels, and from all levels of the organizational structure participated in the research, including the so-called "white collars", "blue collars" and "pink collars". White collar employees are managers, professionals, and office and administrative employees; employees with pink collars include service clerks and salespeople; while employees with blue collars refer to technicians and device and machine operators.

The created questionnaire is anonymous, and it was filled in independently on paper by the respondents, in the presence and with explanations of one examiner. The particles related to the observed variables include the responses of the subjects along the Likert-5 scale.

The Turnover Intention does not have a universally accepted valid and reliable scale, so in this paper, two different ones are applied, which consist of a total of five particles. The intention to leave the organization is measured by a combination of several scales taken directly from Schwepker Jr. (2001), and it is indirectly about: (1) Bluedorn's (1982) "staying-leaving" index which measures the intention to leave the organization in the future through different periods, and; (2) a scale developed by Wayne, Shore and Liden (1997) and taken from Yamazaki and Petchdee (2015) that measures the degree of thinking about a new job and the level of activity in search of a new job. Perceived Alternative Job Opportunities are measured by two scales: the first scale originates from Treuren, (2013), and the second is a scale created by Mowday, Porter and Steels (1982) found in Mushtaq Amjad and Saeed, (2014).

In addition to TI and PAJO, the sociodemographic characteristics of the

respondents were also examined. These characteristics include gender, age, level of education, place of residence, work status, work experience, number of work organizations changed so far, size and form of ownership of the current work organization, position in the organization, and forms of work according to working hours and type work.

Primary data analysis includes univariate analysis (frequencies and arithmetic means), and bivariate analysis (correlation analysis, ANOVA, and T-test). The used software package is Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) ver. 21.0 for Windows.

3. Results

In the sample there are equally represented men (50.7%) and women (49.3), as well as all age groups: 18-26 years (4.2%); 27-35 years (28.7%); 34-44 years (27.7%); 45-53 years (21.8%); and 54 and older (17.6%). There are the fewest youngest respondents under 26 because they are objectively the least in the labor market, and employees who perform student work, employees who have less than one year of work experience, and who are employed in the current work organization for less than a year are excluded from the survey. Regarding the level of education, 3.6% of respondents have completed primary school, 55% secondary education, 11.7% higher education, 25.5% higher education, 4% scientific master's degree and, 0.2% doctorate. This shows that the largest number of respondents have secondary education (55%) followed by higher education (47.7%).

The majority of respondents represent the urban population (59.9%), while the rest of the respondents live in the countryside (25.6%) and suburbs (14.9%). The majority of respondents are employed full-time (98.6), in medium-sized (64.2%) and large organizations (35.3%). Employees with different durations of total work experience are equally represented: for up to 8.5 years of work experience (34.7%); 8.6-16.25 years of work experience (18.4%); 16.3-23.9 years of work experience (20%); 24-31.5 years of work experience (13.7%); 31.6-39 years of work experience (13.2%). Considering the work experience in the current organization, the largest number of respondents is employed up to 8.4 years (54.6%), and only 4.7% of employees in the current organization are longer than 31.5 years. 51% of respondents have changed 2-3 work organizations so far, 26.3% have only one organization in their

work experience, and 22% of respondents have worked in 4 or more organizations.

56.7% of respondents are employed in the public/state sector, while a slightly lower percentage of 43.1% is employed in the private sector. 99.1% of respondents cite work in an organization as a spatial workplace, while only 10% of respondents have the opportunity to work from home. 80.6% of respondents work based on

fixed working hours, and only 22.2% of respondents have the option of flexible working hours.

The results of the univariate analysis for turnover intention are shown in Table 1, where it is clear that the intention to leave the current work organization is generally low. Table 1 shows descriptive values for turnover intention

Table 1 Turnover intention

Turnover intention (N=423)	Arithmetic mean	Standard error of the arithmetic mean	Standard deviation
As soon as I find a better job, I will leave the current organization.	2,21	0,071	1,456
I am actively looking for a new job outside the current organization.	1,57	0,051	1,050
I am seriously considering the possibility of resigning.	1,63	0,055	1,124
I intend to leave the current organization in the next year.	1,54	0,052	1,061
I intend to leave the current organization in the next two years.	1,76	0,061	1,258

Source: the authors

22.5% of employees said they were very likely or extremely likely to leave the current organization as soon as they find a better job, only 8% of respondents are actively looking for a new job, and 9.6% of respondents are seriously considering resigning. Furthermore, 7.4% of respondents intend to leave the current organization in the next year, and 12.7% of respondents intend to do so in the next two years.

When it comes to perceived employment

opportunities in another organization, respondents generally rate them at lower levels. This means that they do not believe in the possibility of employment in other organizations, which is shown by the arithmetic mean of the collected answers, that is, they do not believe that they could easily find other jobs, similar jobs or better jobs than those they currently do. Table 2 shows descriptive values for PAJO.

Table 2 Perceived Alternative Job Opportunities

Perceived Alternative Job Opportunities (N=423)	Arithmetic mean	Standard error of the arithmetic mean	Standard deviation
I could easily find another job.	2.86	0.064	1.323
I could easily find another job that is better than the current one I have.	2.49	0.059	1.212
I could easily find a similar job in another organization.	2.72	0.066	1.348
I am familiar with several alternative employment opportunities that I could apply for.	2.50	0.069	1.419
I have job offers available in other organizations.	2.14	0.068	1.397
There are many more jobs available similar to my current job.	2.59	0.066	1.355
I can find another job doing exactly what I do now.	2.57	0.069	1.410

Source: the authors

Only a quarter of all respondents have a positive perception of their employment opportunities in another organization, with 19.6% of respondents stating that they already have job offers in other organizations.

To further investigate the turnover intention, a bivariate analysis was conducted to try to determine the differences in the turnover intention concerning different sociodemographic characteristics. A t-test was performed to determine differences in intent to leave between

men and women. Leven's test and t-test on the equality of arithmetic means were performed. Since the Leven test shows a significance of less than 0.05 (0.013), and the significance of the two-way t-test is greater than 0.05 (0.145), that means that there is no statistically significant difference in the turnover intention concerning gender.

The same analysis was conducted to examine the differences between organizations concerning the form of ownership, where the respondents were divided into two categories: employees in

public/state organizations and employees in private organizations. There were no significant differences in the turnover intention in the form of ownership of the organization either. The arithmetic mean shows that there are no discrepancies in the results between the respondents of public/state organizations concerning the respondents employed in privately-owned organizations. Leven's test determined that these were assumed to be equal variances (significance greater than 0.05 (0.343)), and the two-way test of equal assumed variances also showed no statistically significant difference (significance greater than 0.05 (0.275)).

Further, the turnover intention concerning employees who have an open opportunity to work at home and work in an organization was tested. Leven test results (significance less than 0.05 (0.000)) show that equal variances are not assumed. Although the arithmetic mean shows that there are deviations of respondents who have the opportunity to work from home compared to those

who do not, the t-test found that these deviations are not statistically significant because the results of the two-way test are not statistically significant (significance greater than 0.05 (0.148)).

Among the represented forms of work, the turnover intention concerning flexible working hours was also tested. Analysis has shown that there is no difference in the turnover intention between respondents who apply flexible working hours and those who do not. This is evidenced by both the Leven test (assumed equal variances: significance greater than 0.05 (0.328)) and the t-test (two-way significance test: significance greater than 0.05 (0.702)).

After the t-test applicable to the nominal variables, the ANOVA test was used to test the turnover intention relative to the ordinal variables to compare the differences between the different groups. The turnover intention concerning age was examined first and the results are presented in Table 3 and Table 4.

Table 3 Descriptive analysis of turnover intention concerning age

Age	N	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Arithmetic mean error	Arithmetic mean interval (95% reliability)	
					Low value	High value
18-26	17	2.0471	1.10120	0.26708	1.4809	2.6132
27-35	116	1.7966	1.06876	0.09923	1.6000	1.9931
36-44	111	1.7820	1.02285	0.09708	1.5896	1.9744
45-53	88	1.7647	1.02906	0.10970	1.5467	1.9827
54+	70	1.3886	0.79264	0.09474	1.1996	1.5766
Total	402	1.7251	1.01375	0.05056	1.6257	1.8245

Source: the authors

Table 4 Analysis of age variance

	The sum of squares	df	The square of the arithmetic mean	F	Sig.
Between groups	10.779	4	2.695	2.666	0.032
Within the group	401.325	397	1.011		
Total	412.104	401			

Source: the authors

In the analysis of the smallest and largest variance, the F-ratio is observed, which in this case is statistically significant (0.032), which means that there are differences between the groups in the

turnover intention. The post hoc test can determine which groups there are differences, so the Bonferroni test was applied.

Table 5 Bonferroni test: turnover intention concerning age

Age (I)	Age (J)	Arithmetic mean difference (I-J)	Standard error	Sig.
18-26	27-35	0.25051	0.26111	1.000
	36-44	0.26508	0.26186	1.000
	45-53	0.28236	0.26637	1.000
	54+	0.65849	0.27186	0.159
27-35	18-26	-0.25051	0.26111	1.000
	36-44	0.01457	0.13350	1.000
	45-53	0.03185	0.14213	1.000

36-44	54+	0.40798	0.15217	0.076
	18-26	-0.26508	0.26186	1.000
	27-35	-0.01457	0.13350	1.000
	45-53	0.01728	0.14351	1.000
45-53	54+	0.39341	0.15346	0.107
	18-26	-0.28236	0.26637	1.000
	27-35	-0.03185	0.14213	1.000
	36-44	-0.01728	0.14351	1.000
54+	54+	0.37613	0.16102	0.200
	18-26	-0.65849	0.27186	0.159
	27-35	-0.40798	0.15217	0.076
	36-44	-0.39341	0.15346	0.107
	45-53	-0.37613	0.16102	0.200

Source: the authors

Table 5 shows that despite previous analyses, there are no significant differences between groups (statistical significance is greater than 0.05 everywhere). Such results sometimes occur when sample sizes in groups are not uniform (Pallant, 2005). Therefore, it cannot be interpreted that there

are differences between the groups, which means that the turnover intention does not differ depending on the age of the respondents. After age testing, the turnover intention concerning the level of education was examined (results in Table 6 and Table 7).

Table 6 Descriptive analysis of turnover intention concerning the level of education (6 groups)

Level of education	N	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Arithmetic mean error	Arithmetic mean interval (95% reliability)	
					Low value	High value
Primary school	15	1.6667	0.86740	0.22396	1.1863	2.1470
Secondary school	231	1.6519	1.00697	0.06625	1.5214	1.7825
Undergraduate studies	49	1.7429	1.02144	0.14592	1.4495	2.0362
Graduate studies	107	1.8168	0.98675	0.09539	1.6277	2.0059
M.S.	17	2.2706	1.36554	0.33119	1.5685	2.9727
Ph.D.	1	4.6000	-	-	-	-
Total	420	1.7371	1.02748	0.0510	1.6386	1.8357

Source: the authors

Table 7 Analysis of variance in education levels

	The sum of squares	df	The square of the arithmetic mean	F	Sig.
Between groups	15.466	5	9.093	3.000	0.011
Within the group	426.875	414	1.031		
Total	442.341	419			

Source: the authors

Table 7 shows that there are differences between groups defined by different levels of education because the F-ratio shows statistical significance (0.011). Therefore, the Bonferroni post hoc test should be carried out further, but this is not possible because at least one group has a sample of less than 2 (specifically, only one subject has a doctoral level of education). In the next step,

all levels of education that include university education, from an undergraduate level to M.S., are grouped into one common group to determine the differences between respondents in primary, secondary, and higher education. The ANOVA test and analysis of variance in education levels are being conducted again.

Table 8 Descriptive analysis of the turnover intention concerning the level of education (3 groups)

Level of education	N	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Arithmetic mean error	Arithmetic mean interval (95% reliability)	
					Low value	High value
Primary	15	1.6667	0.86740	0.22396	1.1863	2.1470
Secondary	231	1.6519	1.00697	0.06625	1.5214	1.7825
High	174	1.8563	1.05996	0.08036	1.6977	2.0149
Total	420	1.7371	1.02748	0.05014	1.6386	1.8357

Source: the authors

Table 9 Analysis of variance in education levels (3 groups)

	The sum of squares	df	The square of the arithmetic mean	F	Sig.
Between groups	4.223	2	2.111	2.010	0.135
Within the group	438.118	417	1.051		
Total	442.341	419			

Source: the authors

After classifying all highly educated respondents into one group, however, it was found that there is no difference between the groups (0.135) which means that the intention to leave the organization does not vary depending on the level of education.

In order to explore the strength and direction of the linear relationship between TI and PAJO, a correlation analysis was made by calculating the Pearson product-moment correlation. The results of the aforementioned are shown in the following tables.

Table 10 Descriptive statistics for correlation analysis

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
TI	8.7139	5.15136	423
PAJO	17.8747	8.00568	423

Source: the authors

Table 11 Correlation analysis

		TI	PAJO
TI	Pearson Correlation	1	.309**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	11198.388	5383.839
	Covariance	26.536	12.758
	N	423	423
PAJO	Pearson Correlation	.309**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	5383.839	27046.359
	Covariance	12.758	64.091
	N	423	423

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

Source: the authors

After the analysis, a positive correlation was established between the two observed variables, which means that people who have higher PAJO levels also have higher TI. The size of the "r" value shows medium strength of the relationship (.309). Continuing with the previous, the calculation of the coefficient of determination shows 0,09, which means that two observed variables share 9% of the variance, so PAJO explains only 9% of the variance in TI. Although the previously mentioned strength between variables is medium, this strength

can really be significant because the sample is large.

Also, large sample allows further analysis. Regression analysis was performed to determine whether PAJO has any predictive power on TI. The dependent variable in this case is TI, and the independent variable is PAJO. The results of the regression analysis are shown in the following tables.

Table 12 Model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.309 ^a	.096	.094	4.90448	.096	44.554	1	421	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), PAJO

Source: the authors

Table 13 ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1071.705	1	1071.705	44.554	.000 ^b
	Residual	10126.682	421	24.054		
	Total	11198.388	422			

a. Dependent Variable: TI

b. Predictors: (Constant), PAJO

Source: the authors

Table 14 Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	5.156	.584		8.829	.000
	PAJO	.199	.030	.309	6.675	.000

a. Dependent Variable: TI

Source: the authors

As mentioned earlier, this model explains 9,6% of the variance in the dependent variable. The ANOVA table reveals statistical significance (Sig = .000, $p < .0005$). The Beta coefficient in the last table shows PAJO’s fine contribution to explaining TI, which is why it can be considered as its suitable predictor.

4. Discussion

Low rates of turnover intention indicate a misperception of the public that Croatian employees are mostly dissatisfied with their jobs and want to leave the organizations in which they work. It is worth mentioning that the public is often misled about the labor market in Croatia, so the society is presented with inaccurate statements about excessive turnover rates of domestic employees, although statistics indicate that these rates are completely acceptable. Of course, there are economic activities in which employee turnover is always a problem, but generally speaking, organizations in Croatia have on average acceptable turnover rates of up to 15% per year.

Low rates of turnover intention are not a guarantee of satisfied employees, but it should be borne in mind that, no matter how traditional the attitude, job satisfaction should not be excluded from the study of turnover intentions. This research, of course, says nothing about this variable, but it certainly suggests that Croatian

employees have fewer intentions to leave the organization than expected.

Furthermore, this low level of TI is consistent with PAJO because respondents have very low levels of PAJO, implying that employees believe they have few better or no better opportunities in the environment, and thus their intentions to leave the organization are lower. In order to prove this presumption, the statistical analysis in this paper showed a direct, positive, medium-strong connection between TI and PAJO. Furthermore, by this simple model, it is established that PAJO can be a valid predictor of TI, and if a model were developed with more independent variables, it would be interesting to study how strong its influence would then be.

However, this paper confirmed the relationship between TI and PAJO, just as other studies have confirmed that external circumstances have a significant influence on TI (Alpar, 2020; Ramlawatia, et al., 2021; Zhou, et al., 2022). It is obvious that PAJO must be included in the model in correlation with other variables and even individual variables, as it can change the strength of the influence of other factors, as has already been confirmed (Rasheed, Okumus, Weng, Hameed & Nawaz, 2020).

In contrast to the studies presented previously, the results of the bivariate analysis did not show significant differences between any of the observed groups, which can be interpreted positively

because it indicates that the observed sample does not tend to collective behavior, which is a conclusion that is always desirable when it comes to undesirable organizational behaviors. However, these results also may indicate a group perception and mindset, such that overall, the surveyed employees believe that they have very few alternative employment opportunities.

Usually, the process of leaving the organization takes place in such a way that the perpetrators realize the withdrawal from the organization which is manifested by the expected benefits of withdrawal, intention to withdraw (turnover intention, TI), turnover costs, creating a plan to leave the organization and potential discomfort.

Alternatives that appear include the perceived possibility of employment in another organization, i.e. perceived alternative jobs, general availability of jobs, and the unemployment rate, as well as the employability index. After all, the initial behavior that indicates withdrawal, and that is the search for a new job and a new work organization, and the behavior of the withdrawal itself begins with absenteeism, delay in work to extreme withdrawal – voluntary turnover. All the influential variables on the intention to leave and actual turnover need to be studied together and the emphasis should be put on “the functional relationship between employer offerings as an input and employee attitudes as an output, with more emphasis on the organizational equilibrium” (Ahmad, 2018).

Lower turnover intention rates are not necessarily an indicator of the success of an organization and its socially responsible business towards employees, nor an indicator of quality Human Resources Management. Sometimes it is simply a matter of contingency variables, i.e. environmental factors that help employers in conditions of the high unemployment rate, which in turn results in lower turnover rates. Whether or not an employee leaves the organization also depends on his or her employability. When society and the labor market are more competitive, more choices will result in higher turnover rates. Labor markets, as well as the general economic situation in Croatia, are not at an enviable level, so the perception of employees about their jobs and organizations is similar to that of the economic situation, which is that mostly the “glass is half empty”.

Conclusion

Monitoring turnover intentions is sometimes not so easy because current employees cannot be

expected to explicitly state their intentions, especially in situations where employees are calculating and are not sure if they will work in another organization. Greater opportunities encourage people to think about leaving, and since employees in the study conducted rate alternative opportunities low, it is reasonable to expect that their turnover intentions are also lower. The implications of this work certainly do not go in the direction of relaxation, because it is only a matter of time before the situation in the labor market becomes more favorable and more accessible and attractive opportunities arise. Before competitors recognize talent, organizations should strive to retain quality employees which is certainly one of the most difficult tasks of HRM.

Regardless, no company can change the conditions of the labor market, but by investing internally in its employees, it can change their perceptions of the benefits of their work and their jobs. Of course, market competition creates a lot of pressure, but under these circumstances, investing in desirable employees is the only sure way to maintain their loyalty. Few will “flee” to other companies because of unsatisfactory salary levels if they feel happy, relaxed and unencumbered in their current company. Going to work without “stomach cramps” means an incredible amount to employees, and even if the company can afford to raise salary levels, this may not be a long-term solution.

The practical implications of this work suggest that other organizational behaviors and attitudes can also be indicators of turnover intentions and actual turnover, so managers need to keep their eyes open and carefully and systematically monitor the competition and trends in the labor market when taking preventive measures and solving this problem.

This research is a valid basis for more complex future research of causal relationships among the observed variables. Recent studies, some of which are presented in this paper, point to the immediate influences of key organizational aspects that moderate or mediate the relationship between TI and PAJO. It is these influences and key variables such as organizational commitment that should be the focus of future research, not only in scientific but also in practical terms. However, arguing about the importance of turnover intention, Cohen, Blake and Goodman (2016) suggest that managers should focus on unique demographic characteristics and specific management practices, rather than on their employees’ self-reported aggregated turnover

intention rate. This only points to the fact that sociodemographic variables must by no means be neglected in the study of organizational behaviors because very often they speak much more than their perception of some attitudes, which are of course subject to change. Also, considering that many previous studies have shown that people leave when they are treated unkindly, it is necessary to include this variable in future studies of turnover intention. One possible reason for intention to leave is the incivility and discourtesy experienced by employee's experience in the workplace, which was found to be a particularly dominant factor for leaving in the academic community (Namin, Øgaard & Røislien, 2022).

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