

Predictors of Job Embeddedness

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One of the recent developments in the voluntary turnover research is the embeddedness model. Job embeddedness is formed of six dimensions: links-community, fit-community, sacrifice-community, links-organization, fit-organization, and sacrifice-organization (Mitchell et al., 2001). Identifying some predictors of job embeddedness and its dimensions was the focus of the present study. Two samples of employees were used: Sample one consisted of 172 employees working full-time for various organizations, while sample two consisted of 129 employees working full-time for the same organization. Both samples completed a series of self-reports targeting various potential antecedents along with the job embeddedness survey. Sample one completed the antecedents questionnaire and the embeddedness survey at different points in time. Sample two completed both the antecedents questionnaire and the embeddedness survey at a single point in time. Drawing from social psychology, personality theory, organizational psychology, and evolutionary psychology, it was hypothesized that age, time, strength of attachment, number of children, personality traits, perceptions about work,

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and perceptions about mating opportunities will account for significant variance in embeddedness. The antecedents accounted for significant variance in embeddedness in both samples (46% in sample one, 59% in sample two). The following results replicated across both samples: links-community was predicted by age and number of children. Fit-community was predicted by the perceived mating opportunities in the community. Sacrifice-community was also predicted by the perceived mating opportunities in the community. Links-organization was predicted by age. Fit-organization was predicted by Conscientiousness of the Big Five, by organizational and supervisor support, the perceived number of alternatives, job investments, as well as the perceived number of mating opportunities in the organization. Sacrifice-organization was predicted by Agreeableness of the Big Five, the perceived supervisor support, the perception of skills transferability as well as the perceived number of alternatives.

Literature suggests that job embeddedness can be increased through a series of organizational measures, such as instituting a mentorship system or increasing the number of work teams an individual participates in (Mitchell et al., 2001). Since embeddedness is directly related to actual turnover, implementing measures that increase embeddedness will have a negative effect on turnover.

The present study makes a step further in the voluntary turnover research, in that it identifies precursors of embeddedness. Some of these precursors are stable personality traits which can be assessed

prior to the organizational entry. Others are factors which can be manipulated after the organizational entry. In practical terms, actual turnover can be affected by personnel selection procedures that put into the equation variables that have been shown to predict embeddedness.

The results of this study suggest that people likely to become embedded are those who score highly on Agreeableness and Conscientiousness, those who perceive that the organization supports them, and those who believe that their skills are transferable. Selecting people who score highly on Agreeableness and Conscientiousness may be one method of selecting people likely to become embedded. After the organizational entry, one possible way to increase embeddedness is by increasing organizational and supervisor support. Another modality of increasing embeddedness suggested by this study is training people to become highly specialized in a transferable domain (which works by increasing sacrifice-organization). Yet another method selects people who perceive that they lack job alternatives, which works by increasing sacrifice-organization and fit-organization.

Reference

Mitchell, T.R., Holtom, B.C., Lee, T.W., Sablinski, C.J. & Erez, M. (2001). Why people stay: Using job embeddedness to predict voluntary turnover. *Academy of Management Journal*, 44. 1102-1121.