

The Effect of Job-Related Factors and Organisational Factors on Turnover Intention of IT Professionals in the Western Province, Sri Lanka

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INTRODUCTIONS

The key challenge faced by the industry over decades was high workforce turnover of Information Technology (IT) employees, which has been an issue for the industry since the 1960s, according to the literature. The annual turnover rate of system professionals in the 1960s ranged from 15% to 20% (Willoughby, 1977, as cited in Lo, 2013). The turnover rate of data processing workers was around 28 percent in the late 1970s (McLaughlin, as cited in Lo, 2013). The turnover rate of IS staff in the 1980s was around 20% in 1982 (Gray, 1982, as cited in Lo, 2013) and 17% in 1987 (Connolly, 1988, as cited in Lo, 2013). The turnover rate for the IT sector as a whole was around 20 per cent in the 1990s. In the 2000s, the IT turnover rate was around 15%. Research shows that the cost of losing trained IT professionals can be as much as six times that of other professionals, such as finance or human resources employees (Harden, Boakye & Ryan, 2016). In addition, the workforce is experiencing a 'job-hopping' pattern or the trend of jumping from one job to another, particularly widespread among younger workers (Harden, Boakye & Ryan, 2016).

In Sri Lanka, due to the recent growth in the IT industry, the demand for qualified IT professionals has increased. Demand for the skilled IT professional is higher than the supply from the higher educational institute. Hence, retaining IT professionals is a challenge for companies. IT industry thrives on knowledge workers who possess special technical skills. A focal point of this sector has been the recruitment of more skilled workers or excellent graduates. This created a competition between rivals in which each organisation seeks the best individuals from other rivals by offering them working conditions, salaries and other benefits. Due to these reasons, IT professionals find it easy to leave the current job and find better opportunities in the industry. This made the labour turnover high, in the IT industry compared to other industries (Jinadasa & Wickramasinghe, 2005).

The on going high turnover rate of IT professionals is a serious challenge for organisations. For companies, it mostly has a negative effect because it involves high costs related to recruiting,

selection, onboarding, and staff training. Apart from financial losses, turnover of employees causes a loss of firms' knowledge and experience as well. To reduce the effect the company should focus on retaining the employees already on board. It is necessary to determine what factors affect the decision of an employee to leave an organisation in order to get high turnover under control. This can help the organisation to take steps to address the major reasons for turnover.

The IT industry in Sri Lanka is widespread. Most of the IT organisations are based in the Colombo city, hence, the study is limited to the Western Province, Sri Lanka. Among various factors that affect the turnover intention of IT professionals, the goal of this study is to investigate the effects of job related factors as in perceived workload, role ambiguity, role conflict, work exhaustion, and organisational factors as in peer relations, supervisor relations, pay and benefits, advancement opportunities and job security on the turnover intention of IT professionals in the Western Province of Sri Lanka.

Problem Statement

What is the effect of job-related factors and organisational factors on turnover intention of IT professionals in the Western Province, Sri Lanka?

Research Questions

- What is the relationship between job- related factors and turnover intention of IT professionals in the Western Province, Sri Lanka?
- What is the relationship between organisational factors and turnover intention of IT professionals in the Western Province, Sri Lanka?

Research objectives

Based on the problem statement the following questions are derived:

- To investigate the relationship between job related factors and turnover intention of IT professionals in the Western Province, Sri Lanka
- To investigate the relationship between organisational factors and turnover intention of IT professionals in the Western Province, Sri Lanka

LITERATURE REVIEW

The theoretical and empirical literature regarding voluntary employee turnover have been critically evaluated in this section. It includes research on turnover intention, relationship between job related

factors and turnover intention and relationship between organisational factors and turnover intention. Based on the literature the conceptual framework and the hypothesis are developed.

Theories of Voluntary Employee Turnover

Most of the turnover theories have been explained why employees voluntarily leave their organisations. These theories include March and Simon's (1958) the theory of organisational equilibrium, Porter and Steers (1973) met expectations model, Mobley's (1977) linkage model, the unfolding model of turnover by Lee and Mitchell (1994), and the job embeddedness theory of turnover Mitchell and Lee (2001).

Turnover Intention

According to Harhara et al. (2015) turnover intention is "a measure for the understanding turnover before employees quit or leave organizations" (Harhara, Singh & Hussain, 2015). The present studies focus more on "turnover intention" than on the actual turnover (Lo, 2013). Employees decide to leave the current company before the actual turnover occurs, which directly influences the turnover (Lo, 2013). Multiple different, organisational and environmental characteristics are found among IT professionals to predict turnover intentions.

Research On Turnover Intention

Joseph et al. (2007) identified 43 antecedents on the basis of 33 studies on IT turnover intentions. Those antecedents further falls into six large categories. Those are desire to move, ease of movement, job search, individual attributes, job related factors and organisation related factors. Job-related factors apply to the work habits and characteristics of individuals such as autonomy, job commitment, job motivation capacity, role conflicts, and role ambiguity etc., and role behaviours such as workload, and work exhaustion and performance of the job. Organisational variables apply to organisational situations that can include workers in their employment such as payments, reward programs, opportunities for promotion, social support, etc. (Mitchell & Lee, 2001).

A systematic analysis of employee turnover literature was carried out by Lo (2013) and a conceptual representation was established that summarises the factors discussed by the articles. It has been primarily classified into proximal and distal variables affecting the turnover intent of an employee. The desire to leave the organisation and the perceived ease of leaving the organisation, which is focused on March and Simon's (1958) organisational equilibrium theory, are these proximal factors. One of the most dominant theories of voluntary turnover is the organisational equilibrium theory. Most of the turnover studies are based on analysing the dimensions to the proximal turnover factors. These are marked as distal factors. Organisational factors, human factors, and external environmental factors are the three major categories of those distal factors (2013 Lo).

Current study focuses on job related factors, namely perceived workload, role conflict, role ambiguity, and work exhaustion, which fall under individual variables and organisational factors, namely peer relationships, supervisory relationships, pay and benefits, opportunities for advancement, and job security. This study focuses on the direct relationship of the mentioned factors on employee turnover intention.

Job Related Factors and Turnover Intention

As a result of work related anxiety and exhaustion with day today work, IT professionals encounter rising levels of stress (Firth et al., 2004). It is possible to characterise the "depletion of emotional and mental resources in meeting job demands" as work exhaustion. It is an especially prevalent problem among software engineers. McKnight Phillips and Hardgrave (2009) found that workplace factors such as employee senior management confidence, information sharing, job security, organisational fairness, and job-related characteristics such as job autonomy, skill verity, job feedback, and job significance have adverse effects on work exhaustion among IT sector employees. Job stress contributes to negative emotions and disappointment at work. Ultimately, IT specialists may choose to quit their jobs. Firth et al. (2004) said that work stress has a negative effect on job satisfaction. Work-related anxiety is another career stress factor, which could also have a detrimental effect on job satisfaction.

"Stressors" is the term applied to the "range of factors that lead to job-related stress" (Firth et al., 2004). Lo (2013) distinguished job related stressors into four categories: "role ambiguity, role conflict, and perceived overload and work exhaustion". Researchers have indicated that IT professionals undergo higher levels of work overload, role conflict and role ambiguity in their work than professionals from other sectors of work (Kim & Wright, 2007). As a result, high job exhaustion satisfaction levels are reduced making turnover intentions increase. Work exhaustion or job burnout represents "reflects an individual's depletion of mental resources due to work-related activities" (Moore, 2000). Work exhaustion decreases job satisfaction and improves turnover intentions. Further, the perceived workload, "the amount of work an employee believes he or she has to complete within a given timeframe", appears to increase feelings of work exhaustion and thus indirectly influences the IT employees' turnover. There are several empirical evidences for IT professionals that the perceived workload is a good predictor of work exhaustion (Kim & Wright, 2007; Moore, 2000). Role ambiguity which implies the "uncertainty about one's job goals and responsibilities" and role conflict which is "an incompatibility between what one perceives ought to be done and what is requested" both appear to increase feelings of exhaustion at work and decrease the work satisfaction of employees. All in all, job characteristics, perceived workload, role ambiguity, role conflict, and work exhaustion tend to have a direct or indirect negative effect on turnover intentions (Kim & Wright, 2007).

Organisational Factors and Turnover Intention

The organisational factors are comprised of peer relationships, relationships with supervisors/management, pay and benefits, opportunities for advancement, and job security. Peer relationships reflect the interactions with colleagues of an employee. The relationship between the employee and his or her colleagues is a significant factor in IT turnover literature (Lo, 2013). According to McKnight, Phillips and Hardgrave (2009), the sharing of transparency amongst colleagues led to increasing the job satisfaction and reduced the turnover intentions among IT sector employees (McKnight, Phillips & Hardgrave, 2009). There is evidence from studies that peer relationships are more significant in some contexts than in others. In contrast, for example, Hunter, Tan and Tan (2008) found that a substantially a higher number of low power distance (Singapore) workers stated weak peer relations as a cause for turnover than high power distance (New Zealand). Desirable peer working connections, the sharing of shared team values and collaborative collaboration were more appealing to Singapore workers than to New Zealand workers (Hunter, Tan & Tan, 2008).

Employees tend to prefer helpful and healthy relationship with their supervisors and management. McKnight, Phillips and Hardgrave (2009) found that senior management trust led to higher job satisfaction and decreased turnover intentions. Similar to peer relations Singapore and New Zealand IT employees showed different behaviours for supervisor relation, and it was found that significantly a higher number employees in low power distance countries such as New Zealand were identified bad management interactions as a reason for turnover compared to high power distance countries. Low power distance countries staff expects comparatively equal power and equal treatment as their managers, so supervisor-subordinate conflicts in such cultures would generate greater disagreements (Hunter, Tan & Tan, 2008).

Wages and other rewards, such as medical coverage and pension plans are considered under pay and benefits dimension. According to the review of Lo (2013) these were tested in ten studies and found to be linked to positive job results and decreased turnover intention. Igarria, Meredith and Smith (1994) have conducted a study with a sample of South African IT employees and discovered that there were substantial positive associations between job satisfaction, salary and organisational commitment, and the desire to remain with the current organisation. In another study Igarria and Siegel (1992) found that, staff with better pay were more likely to stay with their companies. Hunter, Tan and Tan (2008) found that incentives for IT staff, such as pay, health benefits, retirement benefits, fringe benefits etc. decreased employee turnover intention.

In the literature, advancement opportunities are regularly described as decreasing turnover intentions. Kim and Wright (2007) found that when employees have career advancement opportunities within the organisation, they have less intention of turnover. Similarly, a study conducted including a sample of

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IT professionals in Singapore by Tan and Igbaria (1994) have recorded that 47.5 per cent of the sample indicated that the key explanation for leaving the company is insufficient career advancement opportunities. Igbaria and Greenhaus (1992) also affirm that turnover intentions are negatively linked to the perception of prospects for advancement to a higher role within the company.

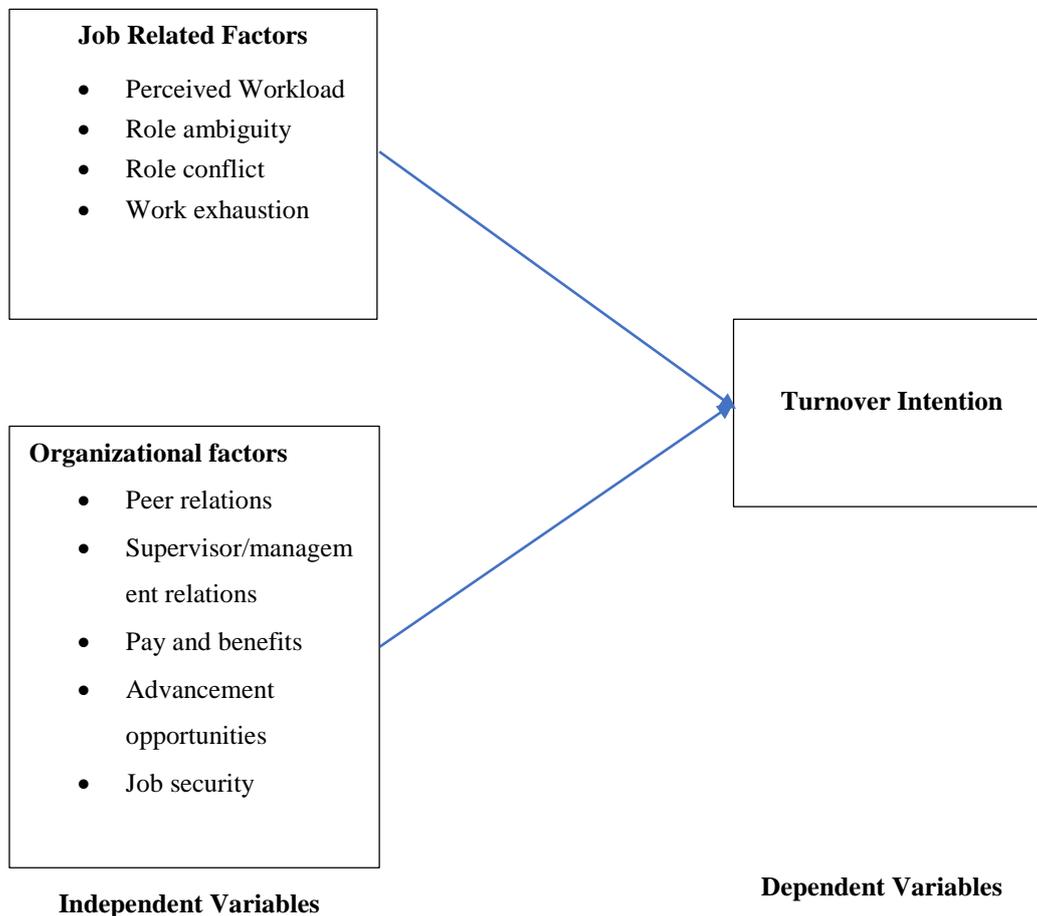
It is possible to view job security as a form of benefit offered by organisations. Job Security is a positive job related factor and increased job security decreases the turnover intentions, according to the Work literature. Research by Hsu et al. (2003) found that job security helps minimise workers' turnover intentions. Correspondingly, another IT employee's turnover research found that job security correlates to work exhaustion and turnover intentions negatively (McKnight, Phillips & Hardgrave, 2009).

In a summary, according to the literature review findings all the organisational factors that were considered, namely peer relations, supervisor relations, pay and benefits, advancement opportunities, and job security, are negatively related to the turnover intention.

Conceptual Framework

The study establishes the following conceptual structure on the basis of the literature review findings.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study



Source: Author Compilation

As shown in the conceptual framework independent variables are job related factors as in perceived workload, role ambiguity, role conflict, work exhaustion, and organisational factors as in peer relations, supervisor relations, pay and benefits, advancement opportunities and job security.

Hypothesis Development

According to the literature review and the given conceptual framework following hypotheses can be developed.

- *H1a: There is a significant, positive relationship between perceived work-overload and turnover intention.*

- *H1b: There is a significant, positive relationship between role ambiguity and turnover intention.*
- *H1c: There is a significant, positive relationship between role conflict and turnover intention.*
- *H1d: There is a significant, positive relationship between work exhaustion and turnover intention.*
- *H2a: There is a significant, negative relationship between peer relations and turnover intention.*
- *H2b: There is a significant, negative relationship between supervisor relations and turnover intention.*
- *H2c: There is a significant, negative relationship between pay and benefits and turnover intention.*
- *H2d: There is a significant, negative relationship between advancement Opportunities and turnover intention.*
- *H2e: There is a significant, negative relationship between job security and turnover intention.*

Table 1: Operationalization of Research Variables

Variable	Dimension	Measurement	Category of Data	Source	Question Number
Job Related Factors (Independent Variable)	Perceived Workload	Likert scale	Scale	Kirmeyer and Dougherty, 1988 cited in Kim and Wright (2007) and Moore (2000)	8,9,10,11
	Role ambiguity	Likert scale	Scale	Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman, 1970 cited in Kim and Wright (2007) and Moore (2000)	12,13,14,15,16
	Role conflict	Likert scale	Scale	Rizzo et al., 1970 cited in Kim and Wright (2007) and	17,18,19

		Moore (2000)			
	Work exhaustion	Likert scale	Scale	Schaufeli, Leiter and Kalimo, 1995 cited in Kim and Wright (2007) and Moore (2000)	20,21,22,23
Organisational Factors (Independent Variable)	1. Peer relations	Likert scale	Scale		24,25,26
	2. Supervisor relations	Likert scale	Scale		27,28,29,30,31
	3. Pay and benefits	Likert scale	Scale		32,33,34,35
	4. Advancement opportunities	Likert scale	Scale	Balfour and Wechsler, 1990 cited in Kim and Wright (2007)	36,37,38
	5. Job security	Likert scale	Scale	McKnight, Phillips and Hardgrave (2009)	39,40,41
Turnover Intention (Dependent Variable)	Turnover Intention	Likert scale	Scale	Porter, Crampon and Smith, 1976 cited in Kim and Wright (2007) and Moore (2000)	42,43,44,45

Source: Literature Review

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This analysis is a quantitative research that comes under positivism and is intended to test an established hypothesis. The type of the study falls under descriptive statistics; the research approach is the deductive approach. Research choice is quantitative research and as a research strategy survey method is used. This study is a correlation study and the research setting is non-contrived. The study was conducted in an environment where there is minimum interference to the normal behaviour of the participants. This study is conducted as a cross-sectional study.

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The analytical unit for this study is an IT professional working in the Western Province of Sri Lanka. In Sri Lanka, there are about 300 IT organisations and 64,000 employees in the information and communication sector (Department of Census and Statistics, 2019). No reliable estimates were found for the statistics of the workforce in the Western Province. Being the main province of the country, the majority of the population is spread in the Western Province.

When drawing the sample from this population, several factors were considered such as availability of time, availability of population to be sampled. According to the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table of sample selection, the sample size is nearly 381 and it is selected as the sample size for the study as well. The convenient sampling technique which is a non-probabilistic sampling technique is used to draw the sample.

The primary data collection for the study is through well-structured standard questionnaire. It included Likert scale questions which ranked responses from “Strongly Disagree” (1) to “Strongly Agree” (5). A self-administrated questionnaire was given to the targeted sample of 380 IT Professionals in the Western Province, through online platforms.

In this research study, first the questionnaire was given to a domain expert and got it reviewed. Then the analytical process began with a pilot study that provided the opportunity to go back and refine questions to gather accurate data that is needed for the study.

The questionnaire comprised of three sections grouped based on different categories. Section A was to gather demographic data of the participants, which consisted of multiple-choice questions. Sections B included sets of questions anchored on a 5-point Likert scale to gather data related to job and organisational factors that can have an effect on the turnover intention of IT professionals in the Western Province, Sri Lanka. Finally, two open-ended questions for comments were also included in section C. Comments received via open-ended questions were dealt qualitatively by perusing the responses, recording, and categorizing the findings.

The secondary data for the study were obtained from written data through research papers, books, corporate reports, peer reviews, and credible online tools through the examination of past literature.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

This section focuses on the data analysis and interpretation based on the research objectives. The statistical significance of relationships among selected variables was determined using the bivariate correlation analysis. The software package SPSS version 27.0 is used for statistical analysis. The findings of this study are classified into different sections as reliability and validity testing, the descriptive statistics of demographic variable and hypothesis testing results.

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The questionnaire was sent to 380 respondents of different IT sector organisations in the Western province, Sri Lanka through online platforms such as email groups, Facebook, Skype, and Whatsapp. From those 380 questionnaires, 182 respondents answered to the survey and filled the questionnaire. Thus, the response rate is 47.89%. Out of these 182 returned questionnaires, the main data analysis was based on 177 responses which are derived after data pre-processing. These data were collected from November 2020 to December 2020.

Reliability and Validity

The Cronbach's alpha test is used in this study to test the internal consistency of the scales, and the findings are as below.

Table 2: Reliability test (Cronbach's Alpha) results of each scale

Scale	No of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Perceived Workload Scale	4	0.743
Role Ambiguity Scale	5	0.842
Role Conflict Scale	3	0.701
Work Exhaustion Scale	4	0.860
Peer Relation Scale	3	0.899
Supervisor Relation Scale	5	0.884
Pay and Benefits Scale	4	0.907
Advancement Opportunities Scale	3	0.881
Job Security Scale	3	0.887
Turnover Intention Scale	4	0.895

Source: Survey Data (2021)

All variables have an alpha value that is higher than 0.7 in the acceptable reliability range, according to the results given in the above table. Hence, it can be concluded that the instrument used is reliable to do further studies.

A specific questionnaire that has already been checked for validity and reliability has been used in this study to satisfy the validity criteria. In addition, an expert of IT and statistical domains reviews the questionnaire and makes the requisite alterations. The KMO and Bartlett's Test was conducted to test the sampling adequacy. In the current study, the KMO value is 0.828 which means the sample is adequate to do the factor analysis.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics – Demographic Variables

Variable	Valid	Frequency	Percentage
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Gender	Male	103	58.2
	Female	74	41.8
Age	18-24 years	3	1.7
	25-34 years	157	88.7
	35-44 years	17	9.6
Highest Education Level	High School graduate(Advanced level)	4	2.3
	Diploma or equivalent	1	0.6
	Professional degree	3	1.7
	Bachelor's Degree	137	77.4
	Master's degree	32	18.1
Marital Status	Single	91	51.4
	Married	83	46.9
	Other	3	1.7
Job Category	Software Developer/Engineer	103	58.2
	Quality Assurance Engineer	36	20.3
	Architect	3	1.7
	Manager	11	6.2
	Consultant	5	2.8
	Administrator	1	0.6
	Analyst	7	4
	Designer	1	0.6
	Other	10	5.6
Duration worked in the current workplace	Less than 1 year	45	25.4

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	2 to 3 years	82	46.3
	4 to 5 years	29	16.4
	6 to 7 years	8	4.5
	8 to 9 years	6	3.4
	More than 10 years	7	4
Duration worked in IT field	1 to 5 years	115	65
	6 to 10 years	47	26.6
	11 to 15 years	11	6.2
	16 to 20 years	4	2.3

Source: Survey Data (2021)

Hypothesis Testing

Bivariate Correlation Analysis: In this analysis, the study of Pearson's correlation is used to assess the relationship and the strength of the relationship between independent and dependent variables.

To interpret the size of the interaction, Cohen (1988)'s guidelines for interpreting effect size is used. According to Cohen (1988), a coefficient value of 0.10 - 0.29 is regarded to reflect a weak association, a coefficient value of 0.30 - 0.49 is believed to be a moderate correlation, and a coefficient of 0.50 or higher is considered as a heavy correlation.

Mean Role Ambiguity	Pearson Correlation	-.270**	-0.088	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	0.246				
	N	177	177	177			
Mean Role Conflict	Pearson Correlation	.403**	.343**	-.172*	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	0	0.022			
	N	177	177	177	177		
Mean Work Execution	Pearson Correlation	.449**	.657**	-.242**	.439**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	0	0.001	0		
	N	177	177	177	177	177	
Mean Peer Relation	Pearson Correlation	-.315**	-0.096	.345**	-.168*	-.249**	1

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	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	0.204	0	0.026	0.001				
	N	177	177	177	177	177	177			
Mean Supervisor Relation	Pearson Correlation	-.436**	-.160*	.302**	-.328**	-.329**	.557**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	0.034	0	0	0	0			
	N	177	177	177	177	177	177	177		
Mean Pay and Benefits	Pearson Correlation	-.536**	-0.119	.261**	-.157*	-.231**	.376**	.483**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	0.113	0	0.037	0.002	0	0		
	N	177	177	177	177	177	177	177	177	
Mean Advancement Opportunities	Pearson Correlation	-.491**	-.162*	.310**	-.184*	-.268**	.422**	.542**	.723**	1

s												
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0	0.031	0	0.014	0	0	0	0		
		N	177	177	177	177	177	177	177	177	177	
Mean Job Security		Pearson Correlation	-.387**	-0.08	.313**	-.180*	-.240**	.375**	.434**	.606**	.609**	1
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0	0.29	0	0.016	0.001	0	0	0	0	
		N	177	177	177	177	177	177	177	177	177	177
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).												
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).												

Source: Survey Data (2021)

Table 5: Summary of the Direction and the Strength of the Relationship between Independent and Dependent Variable Derived from Bivariate Correlation Analysis

Correlations		Turnover Intention	Strength of the relationship
Perceived Workload	Correlation	.279**	Weak Positive Correlation
	Significance	.000	
Role Ambiguity	Correlation	-.270**	Weak Negative Correlation
	Significance	.000	
Role Conflict	Correlation	.403**	Moderate Positive Correlation
	Significance	.000	
Work Execution	Correlation	.449**	Moderate Positive Correlation
	Significance	.000	
Peer Relation	Correlation	-.315**	Moderate Negative Correlation
	Significance	.000	
Supervisor Relation	Correlation	-.436**	Moderate Negative Correlation
	Significance	.000	
Pay and Benefits	Correlation	-.536**	Strong Negative Correlation
	Significance	.000	
Advancement Opportunities	Correlation	-.491**	Moderate Negative Correlation
	Significance	.000	
Job Security	Correlation	-.387**	Moderate Negative Correlation
	Significance	.000	

Source: Survey Data (2021)

The bivariate correlation analysis findings in between independent and dependent variables are shown in Table 6. All the independent variables (perceived workload, position uncertainty, role conflict, work fatigue, peer relationship, supervisor relationship, pay and benefits, promotion opportunities, and job security) indicate a substantial relationship at the level of alpha 0.001, according to Table 6. Perceived workload indicates a small positive relationship with Turnover intention as an overview of direction and strength, Role ambiguity has a small negative relationship with turnover intention, role conflict, and work exhaustion has a moderate positive relationship with turnover intention, peer relationship, supervisor relationship, promotion opportunities. Job security has a moderate negative relationship and there is a strong positive correlation with turnover intention for pay and benefits.

According to the summary following hypotheses are accepted.

- *H1a: There is a significant, positive relationship between perceived work-overload and turnover intention.*
- *H1c: There is a significant, positive relationship between role conflict and turnover intention.*
- *H1d: There is a significant, positive relationship between work exhaustion and turnover intention.*
- *H2a: There is a significant, negative relationship between peer relations and turnover intention.*
- *H2b: There is a significant, negative relationship between supervisor relations and turnover intention.*
- *H2c: There is a significant, negative relationship between pay and benefits and turnover intention.*
- *H2d: There is a significant, negative relationship between advancement opportunities and turnover intention.*
- *H2e: There is a significant, negative relationship between job security and turnover intention.*

According to the overview of the hypothesis test, the following hypothesis is not accepted because it predicted a positive relationship between role ambiguity and turnover intention, but according to the survey data it gives a negative relationship.

- *H1b: There is a significant, positive relationship between role ambiguity and turnover intention.*

Analysis for Open-Ended Questions

As mentioned in the methodology section, in the questionnaire there were two open-ended questions to get comments from the respondents, the first question was “What are the other reasons that you like working in your current workplace?” and the second question was “What are the other reasons that you think that you DO NOT like working in your current workplace?” .Tables 6 and 7 below summarise the findings of those open-ended questions.

Table 6: Responses for the open-ended question “What are the other reasons that you like working in your current workplace?”

“What are the other reasons that you like working in your current workplace?”	No of Responses
Flexible work hours/Work From Home facility/Work-life balance	31
Friendly Staff/co-workers/colleagues	24
A friendly, supportive environment and flat culture	20
Easy to reach the office	8
Technologies	7
Extra activities and Facilities are given (Sports, outings, etc)	7
Good work experience	7
Pay and benefits	6
Job security	6
Supervisor relation	6
Career development	5
Less stress	3
Not tracking time (Feeling of trust)	2
Autonomy	2
Company reputation	2
Humanity	1

Recognition	1
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Source: Survey Data (2021)

Table 7: Responses for the open-ended question “What are the other reasons that you think that you DO NOT like working in your current workplace?”

What are the other reasons that you think that you DO NOT like working in your current workplace?	No of Responses
Poor Pay and benefits	18
Lack of communication and planning	8
No personal growth and promotions	8
High workload	8
Out-dated technologies	7
Poor culture(unfair)	6
Less recognition	5
Unnecessary deadlines/timelines	5
Inflexible working time	4
Organisational politics	4
Less support from supervisors	3
No diversity in work	3
Stress	3
Less freedom to think and do	2
Less job security	2
Poor supervisor relations	2
No performance evaluation	1

Interference of people in other teams	1
Bad HR practices	1
Unnecessary nontechnical work(meetings etc)	1

Source: Survey Data (2021)

DISCUSSION

Findings from the previous section concluded that the following research objective was met.

- To investigate the relationship between job related factors and turnover intention of IT professionals in the Western Province Sri Lanka

According to the hypothesis testing results, perceived workload, role conflict, work exhaustion positively influences the turnover intention of IT professionals in the Western Province, Sri Lanka. Among them, perceived workload has a small positive relationship with turnover intention, role conflict, and work exhaustion has a moderate positive relationship with turnover intention.

- To investigate the relationship between organisational factors and turnover intention of IT professionals in the Western province, Sri Lanka

According to the hypothesis testing results, peer relations, supervisor relations, pay and benefits, advancement opportunities, and job security negatively influence the turnover intention of IT professionals in the Western Province, Sri Lanka. Among them, peer relation, supervisor relation, advancement opportunities, and job security have a moderate negative relationship and pay, and benefits have a strong positive correlation with turnover intention.

According to the literature review, Firth et al. (2004) and McKnight, Phillips and Hardgrave (2009) found that there is a positive connection between perceived workload and the intention of IT sector employee's turnover. It was also found that there is a substantial and small positive association between perceived work-overload and turnover intention, according to the current study findings which is in line with the results of current literature.

According to studies conducted by Kim and Wright (2007) and Moore (2000), there is a positive relationship between role conflicts and employee turnover intention . Similarly, the same authors found that a positive relationship exists between the work exhaustion and employee turnover intention. On the basis of the current study findings, it was also found that there is a moderate positive relationship between role conflict and work exhaustion with turnover intention, which again prove the current results in the context of Sri Lanka.

McKnight, Phillips and Hardgrave (2009) and Hunter, Tan and Tan (2008) found in their studies that a negative relationship exist between peer relations and supervisor relations on IT sector employee's turnover intention. Similarly, the current findings confirms that peer relations and supervisor relations have a moderate negative relationship on employee turnover intention which is consistent with the existing findings.

Igbaria, Meredith and Smith (1994), Igbaria and Siegel (1992), and Hunter, Tan and Tan (2008) discovered that pay and benefits and employee turnover intention have a negative relationship.

Current study results also suggest that there is a substantial strong positive relationship between pay and benefit and turnover intention of IT professionals in the Western Province of Sri Lanka, which is in line with the existing literature.

Kim and Wright (2007), Tan and Igarria (1994), and Igarria and Greenhaus (1992) found in their studies that there is a negative relationship between the advancement opportunities and employee turnover intention. The present study also showed that there is a moderate and negative relationship between advancement opportunities and turnover intention, consistent with the listed scholars.

In their study "Which most reduces the intention of IT turnover: Workplace features or job characteristics?" McKnight, Phillips and Hardgrave (2009) states "It was found that job security among IT professionals has negative effects on work exhaustion and then indirectly increases employee turnover intention." Hus et al. (2003) also found that job security reduces the employee turnover intention. It was also found that there is a significant and negative association between job security and the intention of turnover, according to the current research findings.

According to the findings of Kim and Wright (2007) and Moore (2000) role ambiguity indirectly reduces the employee turnover intention through job satisfaction. However, current study results show that, role ambiguity has a small positive relationship with the turnover intention of IT professionals in the Sri Lankan context. It was non-consistent with the existing findings. It needs to be further investigated on this result to be interpreted. As Kim and Wright (2007) Rutner, Hardgrave and McKnight (2008) mentioned in their studies, role ambiguity increase work exhaustion and through work exhaustion role ambiguity has an indirect relationship to the employee turnover intention. Hence, to find out the reason for rejecting the hypothesis in Sri Lanka further investigation of the IT context is needed.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that there is a significant positive relationship between job related factors; Perceived workload, role conflict, and work exhaustion among IT professionals in the Western Province, Sri Lanka. It can be concluded that there is a significant negative relationship between organizational factors; Peer relations, supervisor/management relations, advancement opportunities, pay and benefits, and job security among IT professionals in the Western Province, Sri Lanka.

There are different studies carried out worldwide related to turnover in the information technology field, but only one such study could be found in the IT industry in the Sri Lankan context, by Jinadasa and Wickramasinghe, (2005) which focused on investigating trends in job fit and labour turnover in terms of gender, age and tenure. There is no evidence relating to other factors influencing

the turnover intention of Sri Lankan IT professionals. This research will add to the current literature, empirically offering insights into the relationship between job related factors and influences in the work environment on the turnover intention of the IT professionals in the Western Province, Sri Lanka. Additionally, this will help strengthening the existing literature on IT sector employee turnover by proving the existing theories.

Managers need to be aware that the turnover of IT professionals in Sri Lanka is influenced by job related factors such as perceived workload, role conflict, and work exhaustion as well as organizational factors such as peer relationships, supervisory relationships, advancement opportunities, pay and benefits, and job security. The data indicate that managers need to consider these variables in resolving the problems of employee turnover intention in IT professionals of the Western Province of Sri Lanka.. It was found that the three job related factors (perceived workload, role conflict, and work exhaustion) were positively correlated with the intention of turnover. The higher the perceived workload, role conflict, and ambiguity levels are faced by workers, the greater their intention to leave.

Managers must consider the challenging and rapidly evolving IT environment and attempt to minimise the workload by changing the target dates of IT projects and offering more resources. Management should take practical measures to reduce these conditions. They need to create clear goals, avoid unrealistic deadlines, maintain clear reporting networks, and schedule tasks in order to be able to execute them within the desired quality, cost, and time dimensions. By specifying the performance standards of IT professionals, managers may take steps to minimize the implications of role conflicts.

The current study shows that supervisor and peer relationships negatively correlate with the turnover intention of IT professionals in Sri Lanka. Thus, supervisors should provide more input on their job to employees. Participative management activities can also be advantageous, it would be helpful to encourage performance reviews and promote productive contact between IT practitioners and management to decrease the intention to turnover.

The creation of collectivist cultures to promote better working relationship with co - workers would be one recommendation for organisations. This can be accomplished by combining out-of-work sessions such as gatherings, entertainment events, seminars, celebrations, etc., which can help create peaceful and prosperous relationships with colleagues and thereby strengthen teamwork.

Advancement opportunities have also been found to be negatively associated with the IT professionals' turnover in Sri Lanka. This ensures that the most competitive workers are less likely to leave. Organisations need to manage to retain their best IT experts and attract the most talented ones.

Organisations can evaluate their career development path, by offering greater career prospects and quicker promotions.

Pay and benefits were also found to be negatively associated with the IT professionals' turnover intention in Sri Lanka. As the decision to stay with an organisation is highly correlated to financial status, companies need to be cautious about tangible benefits. Organisations need to reward the good performers with salary increments. Compensation is often cited as primary reason for a career change and it is among the most powerful motivators for IT professionals (Igbaria, Meredith & Smith, 1994)

Job security among Sri Lankan IT professionals was also found to be negatively correlated with the intention of turnover. Staff should believe that their jobs are relatively safe in order to decrease the incentive for turnover.

Additionally, open-ended questions gave some insight into the things that influence to remain or leave the current organisation. Among them, the majority mentioned the flexible work hours, Work From Home facility, work-life balance, friendly staff/co-workers/colleagues, friendly, supportive environment, and flat culture as the reasons to stay in the current organisation. Contrastingly, majority mentioned that the poor pay and benefits, lack of communication and planning, no personal growth and promotions, and high workload as reasons to leave the current workplace. This also can be considered by managers when taking actions towards retaining the existing employees in the organisation.

In this research, there might be some potential limitations such as time limitation and the sample size. Due to the time limitations, the study was limited to the organisations situated in the Western Province. In addition, it was difficult to get the responses by circulating questionnaires via online channels without many follow-ups. Due to the pandemic situation, it was not possible to reach the people physically as well. Hence, it can be sample bias. The relationship between job related factors and organisational factors on the turnover intention of Sri Lankan IT professionals are the only factors considered in this analysis. It does not take into account the other direct and indirect relationships that may occur in these variables. The lack of previous studies in the research area in the Sri Lankan context was also another limitation.

Although employee turnover is a prominent problem in the IT sector, in the Sri Lankan context there are very few research studies found on employee turnover intention in the IT sector. Hence, there is a vast area to explore in this field in the local context. Among them, it is better to understand how organisations can better absorb the turnover in the Sri Lankan context. There were various studies found in the literature on IT turnover intention. However, it is beneficial to find out how IT turnover findings differentiate from those of the other sectors. For the open-ended questions, flexible work hours and Work From Home facility, work-life balance, supportive environment, and flat culture,

technologies used, extra activities and facilities are given (Sports, outings, etc.) and good work experience was mentioned as factors to retain in the current workplace. Similarly, they have mentioned, lack of communication and planning, no personal growth, outdated technologies, less recognition, unnecessary deadlines/timelines, inflexible working time, poor/unfair culture, and organisational politics were mentioned as reasons for leaving the current workplace. Those can be considered in future research studies. Furthermore, other factors such as job-related factors, social factors, demographic factors, disposition factors, etc. can be studied to investigate how they affect turnover among IT professionals in the Sri Lankan context.

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