

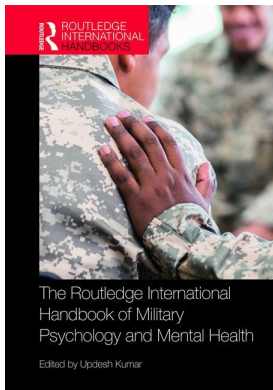
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18

WHY DO THEY LEAVE? A CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF MILITARY TURNOVER

H. Canan Sümer and İpek Mete

Overview

Understanding the process within which voluntary turnover unfolds is vital for all organizations due to the tangible and intangible costs involved in losing personnel that the organizations would have desired to keep. Voluntary turnover is even more challenging for military organizations because of the size of the workforce as well as the context-specific need for preserving morale, motivation, and unit readiness. However, most models of voluntary turnover are developed for civilian organizations and fail to capture the unique aspects of the process in the military context (e.g., Schwerin, Kline, Olmsted, & Wilcove, 2006). Furthermore, these models have conventionally focused on the attitude-intentions-turnover linkages and largely ignored factors such as dispositions, job and organizational characteristics, quality of life concerns, and unexpected life events that may be particularly critical in understanding the route that leads to turnover for military members. The military turnover model we propose in this chapter is an attempt to fill this void in the literature. It represents a revised version of the model developed by H. Canan Sümer and Cyril van de Ven (2007) as part of their work in a NATO task group on military recruitment and retention. The original model has been updated based on more recent empirical and theoretical evidence and advancements in the turnover literature.

An overview of the turnover literature and models

Employee turnover has been a topic of empirical interest for about a century now (Hom, Lee, Shaw, & Hausknecht, 2017). Attesting the importance of the topic, a web of science literature search for the period 1945–2018 revealed 3506 articles in which employee turnover or its derivative concepts (voluntary turnover, turnover intentions, intentions to quit, quit intentions, or employee retention) was a part of the title. Turnover that is voluntary, dysfunctional, and organizationally avoidable (Griffeth & Hom, 2001) can be very costly for work organizations. The cost of recruiting, selecting, and developing replacements is estimated to be more than 200% of annual pay of the employee (Allen, Bryant, & Vardaman, 2010). In addition to the tangible costs, there are intangible or hidden costs, which may include loss of social capital; adverse publicity and reduced customer satisfaction; loss of morale, motivation, and efficiency in the stayers; and turnover contagion. Retaining qualified personnel is a main concern for military organizations

because of both the scale of investments made in attracting, selecting, and training members as well as the context-specific need for preserving morale, motivation, and unit readiness. Hence identifying critical organizational, job, and individual factors in the turnover process has obvious utility implications for military organizations.

Early models of turnover, mostly capturing civilian turnover process, were relatively simple, relating turnover directly to job attitudes like satisfaction and commitment (Mobley, 1977; Mobley, Horner, & Hollingsworth, 1978; Newman, 1974). Later models were more complex, yet still attitude centered (Griffeth & Hom, 2001; Hom & Griffeth, 1991; Hom, Griffeth, & Sellaro, 1984). Griffeth and Hom (2001) proposed satisfaction and organizational commitment as the major mediators in the turnover process. In their model, job satisfaction, which is influenced by job (e.g., job complexity and group cohesion), individual (e.g., negative affectivity), and labor market-related factors, affects turnover through perceptions of the costs and benefits of job seeking and turnover, job search, and finally evaluation of alternatives. Organizational commitment, on the other hand, is influenced by job- and organization-related (e.g., procedural justice and job security) and individual-related (e.g., commitment propensity) factors. Effects of commitment on turnover behavior are mediated by thoughts of quitting.

In a recent all-inclusive review of the turnover literature, Rubenstein, Eberly, Lee, and Mitchell (2015, 2018) meta-analytically examined a long list of frequently studied constructs in the turnover literature for both their predictive strength and generalizability and tested a meta-analytic path model of voluntary turnover. They reported that among the four exit/turnover route alternatives, the route with the strongest support was the one linking job attitudes or perceptions about the job to turnover via withdrawal cognitions. Furthermore, withdrawal behaviors (i.e., lateness and absenteeism) failed to mediate the relationship between withdrawal cognitions on actual turnover, suggesting that quitters quit without necessarily withdrawing from work. Finally, although this meta-analytic study introduced some new variables critical in the turnover process (e.g., job engagement, emotional stability, fit, and rewards), it still yielded strong support for the attitude-intention-behavior-centered nature of the turnover process.

Some researchers have argued against the idea that accumulated job dissatisfaction is the major and immediate cause of voluntary turnover (Holtom, Goldberg, Allen, & Clark, 2017; Holtom, Mitchell, Lee, & Inderrieden, 2005; Lee & Mitchell, 1994; Zimmerman, 2008). Holtom et al. state, “organizational leaders ... must develop clear strategies for attracting and retaining good employees. However, these plans must move beyond methods to combat job dissatisfaction if they expect to be effective. They also must systematically address shocks and the critical role of these shocks in the voluntary turnover process” (2005, p. 337–338). Lee, Mitchell, and colleagues proposed the “unfolding model,” which basically states that unexpected life events, or shocks, cause voluntary turnover more often than accumulated job dissatisfaction. The model proposes four potential courses of actions or paths leading to turnover. Three of these paths involve some type of shock, positive or negative, leading to a quitting decision, whereas the last path involves job dissatisfaction as the main cause of turnover. Therefore, the model does not deny the role of job attitudes altogether in the voluntary turnover process, yet it acknowledges external events as one of the critical factors that influence employees’ decision to leave.

Although job attitudes are still an important predictor of turnover intentions in the military context (Knapp, McCloy, & DiFazio, 1993; Smith, Holtom, & Mitchell, 2011), there seems to be a growing convergence on the idea that most models developed for civilians fail to capture the essence of the process for military members (Capon, Chernyshenko, & Stark, 2007). Accordingly, a number of researchers attempted to explore how turnover unfolds in the military taking the unique aspects of the context into account. For example, both Kerce (1992) and Wilcove, Schwerin, and Wollosin (2003) proposed models where quality of life perceptions have

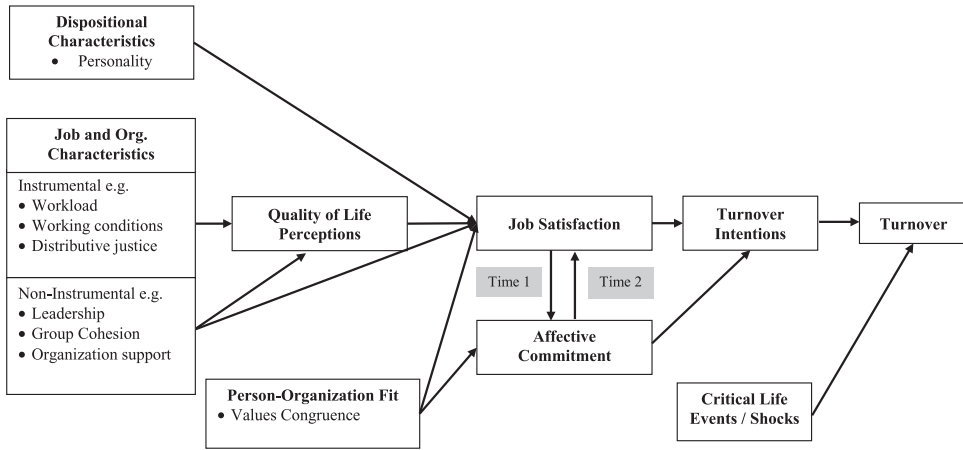


Figure 18.1 Structural model of military turnover.

precedence over factors frequently explored in the civilian models. Yet the literature on both civilian and military voluntary turnover is still largely descriptive in nature and fails to offer decision-makers the longed-for prediction power concerning a member's decision to stay or leave. Our purpose is to propose a model that establishes the temporal nature of the turnover phenomenon in the military context.

The proposed model classifies the factors expected to play a role in military turnover under three categories: distal (i.e., *dispositional* and *job and organizational characteristics*), intermediate (i.e., *person-organization fit*, *quality of life perceptions*, *job satisfaction*, and *affective commitment*), and proximal factors (i.e., *turnover intentions* and *shocks*). Figure 18.1 depicts how these factors are proposed to be related to one another in the military withdrawal process.

Distal factors

Dispositional characteristics

Although not directly included in most models, personal dispositions are acknowledged in the literature as critical factors in the process of turnover. For instance, Griffeth and Hom (2001) included negative affectivity, the tendency to perceive oneself and environment negatively, among the factors contributing to job dissatisfaction in employee turnover. Similarly, in his conceptual model of quality of life (QoL) outcomes, Dowden (2000) proposed that personal dispositions are likely to influence three organizational outcomes (retention, absenteeism, and individual performance) through their effects on attitudinal factors, morale, motivation, and perceived stress.

Criticizing the dominance of attitudinally based models, Zimmerman (2008) argued that “researchers need to consider whether some individuals have a propensity to quit regardless of having a work environment designed to increase their job satisfaction, whereas other employees may be more likely to stay even under less-than-ideal circumstances” (p. 310). In his meta-analysis, he examined correlations of Big Five personality factors and trait affect with both intentions to quit and actual turnover. Furthermore, he tested a theoretically developed dispositional model of turnover. He found that, while negative affect ($\rho = 0.31$) and emotional stability ($\rho = -0.29$) were stronger predictors of intentions to quit, conscientiousness ($\rho = -0.22$) and agreeableness ($\rho = -0.27$) were stronger predictors of actual turnover. Personality traits had direct effects on

intentions to quit (emotional stability) and turnover (conscientiousness and agreeableness) along with their indirect effects through job satisfaction. Results of this meta-analysis simply showed that employees may develop turnover intentions or may quit their jobs without necessarily being dissatisfied with them. Zimmerman's findings also indirectly support the role of impulsivity in unplanned quitting as described in the unfolding model (Lee & Mitchell, 1994) because conscientiousness and agreeableness are argued to represent impulsivity as the higher-order trait (Clark & Watson, 1999). Further support for the role of personal dispositions in the turnover process comes from a recent meta-analysis by Rubenstein et al. (2018). These authors found that emotional stability ($\rho = -0.19$), conscientiousness ($\rho = -0.16$), internal locus of control ($\rho = -0.10$), and internal motivation ($\rho = -0.16$) were predictive of turnover.

Recently, a narrower personality attribute, namely *grit*, emerged as a noteworthy and functional predictor of turnover. Grit refers to the extent to which an individual shows persistent interest, passion, and effort towards a long-term goal, and it distinguishes outstanding performers in many occupations (Duckworth, Peterson, Matthews, & Kelly, 2007). Empirical evidence suggests that grit is associated with higher educational attainment and retention (Credé, Tynan, & Harms, 2017; Duckworth & Quinn, 2009). Duckworth et al. (2007) conducted six consecutive studies to establish both a partial nomological network of the construct as well as to examine its predictive ability. They found that although grit showed some conceptual overlap with conscientiousness, it appeared to be conceptually distinct from it. They also found that military academy cadets with a grit score one standard deviation above the mean were more than 60% likely to finish the three-month summer training. Similarly, Eskreis-Winkler, Shulman, Beal, and Duckworth (2014) reported that *gritty* trainees were more likely to complete a 24-day Army Special Operations Forces selection course. These results offer grit as a critical individual difference variable in military retention.

Among the reviewed dispositional factors, the three Big Five dimensions (conscientiousness, agreeableness, and emotional stability) emerge to be critical for the attitude-centered turnover process and/or unplanned quitting that may result from unexpected turn of events. In addition to these relatively broad personality factors, grit, a narrower trait, seems to be important in the military turnover process. Hence, in the proposed model conscientiousness, agreeableness, emotional stability, and grit play a role in the development of military turnover intentions directly and through their influence over job satisfaction.

Job and organizational characteristics

It needs to be emphasized at the outset that in the proposed model, job and organizational characteristics refer to the perceptions of the person rather than the actual characteristics. Job and organizational characteristics cover a broad range of factors. A distinction can be made between instrumental (e.g., workload) and non-instrumental (e.g., work group cohesion) job and organizational characteristics relevant for the military turnover. Instrumental characteristics refer to observable, quantifiable, and measurable aspects of conditions of employment, whereas non-instrumental characteristics refer to intangible, unquantifiable, and mostly relational aspects of one's work environment.

Instrumental characteristics

There exists empirical and/or theoretical evidence concerning the role of instrumental factors in the development of negative work attitudes, which are well-established antecedents of turnover in both general and military contexts. Our literature review suggested criticality of three groups of instrumental factors: workload related factors (Dunn & Morrow, 2002; Sanchez, Bray, Vincus, & Bann,

2004; Stetz, Castro, & Bliese, 2007), working conditions or tempo (e.g., Castro & Adler, 1999; Dunn & Morrow, 2002; Huffman, Adler, Castro, & Dolan, 2000, Huffman, Adler, Dolan, & Castro, 2005), and distributive justice (McIntyre, Bartle, Landis, & Dansby, 2002, Suurd Ralph & Holmval, 2016).

Using qualitative methods, Dunn and Morrow (2002) examined members' reasons for leaving the Canadian Forces (CF). Workload as it related to *perstempo*¹ and *opstempo*² was identified to be the second most commonly mentioned reason for leaving the CF. In another study conducted with 288 U.S. soldiers deployed in Europe, it was found that the decision to leave the military was influenced by perceptions of role overload (Huffman et al., 2005). Using a comprehensive database collected from 24,881 members of the Active Duty and Reserve/Guard components, Sanchez et al. (2004) reported job pressure as the most important predictor of job satisfaction. Another study with the U.S. Army reservists demonstrated that higher workload perceptions were linked with lower psychological well-being and higher intentions to leave (Stetz et al., 2007).

Although related to workload, working conditions seem to have a relatively independent impact on the process of work withdrawal. Studies suggest that frequent and long deployments, geographical isolation from family, overnight duty, long work hours, and high tempo, typical of most military jobs (Dunn & Morrow, 2002; Sanchez et al., 2004), play a role in the process of turnover. Demerouti, Geurts, Bakker, and Euwema (2004) examined the effects of rotation and timing of shifts on job attitudes, turnover intentions, work-home conflict, health, and absenteeism among Dutch military police officers. They found that rotating shift workers held less positive attitudes toward their jobs. Those with fixed shifts, however, reported higher levels of job satisfaction and professional efficacy and lower turnover intentions and cynicism. Interestingly, Carboon et al. (2009) reported that increased number of deployments was associated with lower separation risk. However, the authors also noted that the relationship between frequency of deployments and turnover is more complex, such that the nature (e.g., hostile) or length of deployments might influence the direction of this link.

Distributive justice, which basically refers to "fairness of outcome allocation" (Tepper, 2000, p. 179), is the third group of instrumental factors expected to be critical in the proposed model. Using three large random samples from the U.S. Military Equal Opportunity Climate Survey database, McIntyre et al. (2002) found that distributive justice perceptions affected job satisfaction through work group efficacy. In another military study in the CF, Suurd-Ralph and Holmval (2016) reported that distributive justice, along with procedural and interpersonal justice, predicted overall justice perception, which in turn influenced turnover intentions via psychological strain. Furthermore, empirical evidence and the conceptual work on QoL (Dowden, 2000; Kerce, 1992; Schwerin et al., 2006), reviewed below, suggest that instrumental characteristics influence job satisfaction through their effects on QoL perceptions/concerns of military members.

Non-instrumental characteristics

Among non-instrumental characteristics deemed relevant in the military turnover process are leadership and/or leader-member relations (Britt, Davison, Bliese, & Castro, 2004; Eberly, Bluhm, Guarana, Avolio, & Hannah, 2017; Pohl, Bertrand, & Ergen, 2016; Sanchez et al., 2004), group cohesion (Ahronson & Cameron, 2007; Griffeth & Hom, 2001), and organizational support (Dupré & Day, 2007; Jordan, Gabriel, Teasley, Walker, & Schraeder, 2015).

1 *Perstempo*: The pace at which personnel are deployed or are sent to temporary duty.

2 *Opstempo*: The pace of operations as indicated by the number and length of deployments, training exercises, temporary duty assignments, and the like (see Huffman et al., 2005).

Leadership/supervision is critical not only for boosting motivation and performance, but also for improving general adaptation of military members (Britt et al., 2004). Rubenstein et al.'s (2018) meta-analysis suggests a significant negative association between positive leadership and voluntary turnover ($\rho = -0.24$). In a longitudinal study with U.S. Army officers, Payne and Huffman (2005) reported that when received from a supervisor, mentoring significantly predicted affective commitment a year later, which in turn affected voluntary turnover after 10 years. Consistently, Pohl et al.'s (2016) study with 337 Belgian soldiers reported that perceived supervisor support predicted affective commitment, normative commitment, and job satisfaction. Effective leadership was also shown to have a buffer effect against stressful conditions in the military (Britt et al., 2004; Eberly et al., 2017). A recent multilevel study with U.S. soldiers deployed to an active war zone reported that transformational leadership indirectly reduced turnover intentions via on-the-job embeddedness when the soldiers' units were highly exposed to extreme contexts (Eberly et al., 2017).

Another non-instrumental factor that is proposed to be effective in military turnover is group cohesion. Meta-analytic findings by Rubenstein et al. (2018) suggest a significant association between peer/group relations (e.g., cohesion, coworker support) and voluntary turnover ($\rho = -0.14$). In their study with 447 CF employees, Ahronson and Cameron (2007) found that task-related dimensions of group cohesion, namely group integration and individual attraction to the group, significantly predicted job satisfaction.

Organizational support is another non-instrumental characteristic that has a distal effect on military turnover. Rubenstein et al.'s (2018) meta-analytic study reported that organizational support had a negative association with turnover ($\rho = -0.19$). In a study conducted with 450 military personnel, Dupré and Day (2007) reported that both organizational and supervisory support had direct associations as well as indirect relationships with turnover intentions via job satisfaction. Furthermore, Jordan et al. (2015) found that perceived organizational support positively influenced cadets' decision to sign a contract to become officers in the U.S. military.

To summarize, based on the reviewed military and nonmilitary literatures, it is proposed that non-instrumental characteristics influence job satisfaction and affective component of organizational commitment directly. Furthermore, as explained below, they have an indirect effect on job satisfaction through QoL concerns.

Intermediate factors

Person-organization fit

The fit between person and environment can be expressed as the degree of adaptation an individual exhibits with respect to his/her vocational niche (Mumford & Stokes, as cited in Gustafson & Mumford, 1995). Among different forms of P-E fit, person-organization (P-O) fit refers to the extent to which an employee's personal values and the employing organization's values are congruent or compatible (Kristof, 1996; Lauer & Kristof-Brown, 2001).

Several researchers reported P-O fit as being predictive of important organizational outcomes, such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intentions (Arthur, Bell, Villado, & Doverspike, 2006; Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005; Lauer & Kristof-Brown, 2001). In their multiple meta-analyses on different types of fit, Kristof-Brown et al. (2005) found that P-O fit had substantial correlations with job satisfaction ($\rho = 0.44$), organizational commitment ($\rho = 0.51$), and turnover intentions ($\rho = -0.35$). Arthur et al.'s (2006) meta-analysis also reported similar associations where turnover was more strongly associated with value congruence ($\rho = 0.38$) than other types of congruence ($\rho = 0.26$). Arthur et al. also reported a partially mediated relationship between P-O fit and turnover via work attitudes (i.e., job

satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intentions). In short, evidence concerning the primacy of values congruence as a predictor of work attitudes and turnover intentions over the other measures is quite convincing. Hence, in the model, we expect them to influence turnover intentions via job attitudes.

Quality of life perceptions

QoL perceptions could be defined as an individual's global sense of well-being nourished by his/her feelings about various life domains, such as standard of living, job itself, leisure and recreation, health, marriage/intimate relationship, and relations with children (Dowden, 2000). In models attempting to capture QoL in the military, perceptions of global QoL are assumed to have significant effects on critical outcome variables such as performance, commitment, and retention either directly or indirectly (Dowden, 2000; Kerce, 1992; Schwerin, 2006; Wilcove et al., 2003). Dowden's QoL model assumes that: (1) QoL domains (e.g., job characteristics, intimate relations, and friendship) are strong contributors of global QoL perceptions; (2) dispositions influence global QoL perceptions; (3) enhancing global QoL perceptions positively influences satisfaction, commitment, and motivation; and (4) global QoL perceptions influence important organizational outcomes (retention, absenteeism, and performance) via satisfaction, commitment, and motivation. The reason QoL appears to be more relevant in a conceptual framework of military turnover is simply that being in the military has an overarching effect on both work and non-work lives of the members (Ryan & Burrell, 2012; Schwerin et al., 2006). According to Morrow (2007), in the CF, QoL variables influence people's retention intentions such that they account for 10%–20% of the variance in stay–leave decisions over and above the influence of other variables.

Wilcove et al. (2003) categorized QoL under two domains: non-work (e.g., marriage, relationship with child, standard of living) and work (e.g., professional development, shipboard life satisfaction). In their model, global QoL perceptions loaded onto the work domain. Furthermore, non-work factors were directly linked with reenlistment intentions, whereas work factors (including global QoL perceptions) were indirectly linked with reenlistment intentions via organizational commitment. When analyzed individually, global QoL perceptions had strong correlations with organizational commitment (0.46), intention to stay at the military at the next decision point (0.31), and intention to stay at the military until retirement (0.28). Similarly, Hindelang and colleagues (2004), who validated Wilcove et al.'s (2003) model in the U.S. Marine Corps, found that work domain factor of QoL was associated with reenlistment intentions via organizational commitment. Global QoL perceptions again strongly correlated with intention to stay for both married (0.38) and unmarried (0.36) Marines. To sum, evidence suggests that QoL perceptions mediate the relationship of environmental and dispositional factors with organizational outcomes. Consistently, in the proposed model, QoL factors mediate the effects of dispositional, job, and organizational characteristics on job satisfaction.

Work attitudes: Job satisfaction and affective commitment

In most models of turnover, job satisfaction is assumed to influence turnover behavior largely through turnover thoughts and intentions (Hom et al., 1984; Mobley, 1977; Rubenstein et al., 2015). However, despite this well-theorized and supported indirect effect on turnover, job satisfaction has also been shown to directly influence turnover. For instance, Rubenstein and colleagues' (2018) meta-analysis reported a relatively strong negative association between job satisfaction and turnover ($\rho = -0.28$).

However, meta-analytic findings as well as theoretical arguments suggest that because of contractual obligations, satisfaction may have a weaker (yet still significant) influence on withdrawal cognitions and actual turnover for military samples than for civilian samples (Carsten & Spector, 1987; Farkas & Tetrick, 1989; Hom, Caranikas-Walker, Prussia, & Griffeth, 1992). Carsten and Spector (1987), for example, found that predictability of turnover especially by satisfaction decreased with time, and this decrease was more evident in the military samples. Furthermore, an unfolding model of voluntary turnover suggests that a considerable portion of voluntary turnover is not induced by job dissatisfaction; shocks or significant life events seem to have more explanatory power in the experience of turnover (Holtom et al., 2005; Lee & Mitchell, 1994). Yet, as stated by Holtom and colleagues (2005) themselves, the concept of shocks does not replace job dissatisfaction as an antecedent of voluntary turnover. Even in studies supporting the role of shocks in the turnover experience, dissatisfaction was the major predictor of turnover for some participants. Job satisfaction was found to strongly correlate (0.63) with turnover intentions in a recent study conducted with Swedish Army personnel (Österberg & Rydstedt, 2018). Hence, in the proposed model, job dissatisfaction (along with or irrespective of shocks) is expected to play a critical role in the process of withdrawal.

Organizational commitment, which refers to a relatively stable and more global attitude toward the employing organization, is a frequently studied variable in relation to employee withdrawal. In a meta-analysis, Griffeth, Hom, and Gaertner (2000) reported that organizational commitment predicted turnover ($\rho = -0.23$) better than did overall satisfaction ($\rho = -0.19$). The predictive power of commitment was even larger for military samples ($\rho = -0.28$). As Lytell and Drasgow suggest, this difference may stem from the unique nature of the military context, where “physical risks, lengthy time commitments, and separations from home may require a strong commitment to the military in order for attrition to be avoided” (2009, p. 347).

Meyer and Allen’s (1997) conceptualization of commitment as a three-component structure (i.e., affective commitment – AC, continuance commitment – CC, and normative commitment – NC) offers a framework to explore the nature of the relationships between satisfaction, commitment, and turnover in the military turnover process. Within the military context, AC refers to a soldier’s emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the military service or unit. CC refers to perceptions of the costs associated with leaving the military and taps into perceptions of both available job alternatives and the personal sacrifices to be made by leaving the organization. Finally, NC refers to a soldier’s felt moral obligation to stay with the military (Gade, 2003). In a longitudinal study with U.S. Air Force Academy cadets, Holtom and colleagues (2014) reported that AC was significantly associated with actual turnover after two years, whereas NC and CC were not significant predictors. Similarly, in their study with 462 male noncommissioned members at the CF, Godlewski and Kline (2012) reported that AC ($\beta = -0.50, p < 0.01$) was a stronger predictor of turnover intentions than NC ($\beta = -0.17, p < 0.01$). Turnover intentions predicted actual turnover in turn ($\beta = 0.31, p < 0.01$). Further empirical evidence from the U.S. (Langkamer & Ervin, 2008) and Canadian (Charbonneau & Wood, 2018) military samples suggest that AC is negatively associated with turnover intentions.

Although both satisfaction and commitment have been identified as critical variables in the turnover process, there seems to be a lack of agreement concerning the nature of the relationship between these variables in relation to employee withdrawal. Some studies suggest that commitment mediates the relationship between satisfaction and turnover intentions (e.g., Heffner & Gade, 2003; Williams & Hazer, 1986). In an old but noteworthy study, Farkas and Tetrick (1989) argued that the relationship between commitment and satisfaction was much more complicated than a simple unidirectional relationship. Results of their longitudinal study on a sample of Navy enlisted personnel suggested existence of a cyclical relationship between the two

variables. Mathieu's (1991) study with 588 Army and Navy Reserve Officer Training Cadets also supported a recursive link between organizational commitment and job satisfaction. Similarly, Tremble, Payne, Finch, and Bullis (2003) emphasized the benefits of longer tracking periods in fully capturing the development of organizational commitment. Van Maanen's study, cited by Tremble et al. (2003), using a sample of police officers, indicated that it was not before the first 30 months of employment that organizational commitment stabilized. Exploring the causal nature of the relationship between job satisfaction and commitment, Huang and Hsiao (2007) found stronger support for the model depicting a reciprocal relationship between the two variables. More recent reviews on turnover also suggest that turnover should be considered a dynamic process and scholars should employ longitudinal methods to understand this process (Holtom, Mitchell, Lee, & Eberly, 2008; Hom et al., 2017; Lee, Hom, Eberly, Junchao, & Mitchell, 2017).

We propose that both AC and job satisfaction contribute to turnover intentions, and the nature of the relationship between these two variables is likely to be cyclical in nature. That is, satisfaction is expected to play a role in the development of AC, but, once established, AC can be expected to influence satisfaction.

Proximal factors

Turnover intentions

In almost all models of turnover (Mobley, Griffeth, Hand, & Meglino, 1979; Mobley et al., 1978), turnover intentions are the most proximal predictors of turnover behavior and they mediate the relationship between job attitudes, mainly satisfaction, and turnover behavior. Rubenstein et al.'s (2018) meta-analysis suggests a strong association between withdrawal cognitions (including turnover intentions, job search intentions, expected utility of withdrawal) and actual voluntary turnover ($\rho = 0.56$).

In an earlier attempt to understand the process of military turnover, Knapp et al. (1993) reported that although predictive ability of satisfaction concerning turnover behavior was weaker, the association between turnover intentions and turnover seemed stronger in the military context. It seems plausible to argue that once turnover intentions grow, the path to turnover seems more definite in the military, most likely because of the contractual nature of the jobs. Accordingly, in the proposed model, turnover intentions, which are directly influenced by satisfaction and affective commitment, are treated as one of the direct determinants of turnover behavior.

Critical life events/shocks

Recently there has been an increased recognition that turnover is not always a "slow burn," deliberative process (Kammeyer-Mueller, Wanberg, Glomb, & Ahlburg, 2005, p. 646). As mentioned before, according to the "unfolding model" of voluntary turnover (Lee & Mitchell, 1994), unexpected life events, or shocks, cause voluntary turnover more often than accumulated job dissatisfaction. Shocks are jarring, usually unexpected, events that prompt thoughts of quitting. They can be positive (e.g., an unsolicited job offer), neutral (e.g., change in supervisor), or negative (e.g., harassment), and also they can be personal, work-related, or professional.

Three of the four paths suggested by the unfolding model involve a shock as the triggering event for turnover. In Path 1, a shocking event (e.g., an irresistible job offer) triggers the realization of a preexisting plan of action, and the person leaves without considering alternatives or his/her commitment to the organization. In this path, job dissatisfaction is basically irrelevant in turnover. In Path 2, the shocking event (e.g., after being passed over for promotion) is negative and leads to a rather quick decision without a search for alternatives. In Path 3, the triggering event (e.g.,

a serious job offer which makes the person compare and contrast it with the current job and other alternatives) can be positive, negative, or neutral, and unlike the first two paths, resulting dissatisfaction initiates a search for alternatives. Although relative dissatisfaction is a possibility in Path 3, the person may be quite satisfied with the current job before the shock. Compared to the first two paths, Path 3 requires considerable deliberation. In Path 4, the turnover process is not initiated by a shock; the decision to quit evolves rather gradually. In this path to turnover, lack of a compatible fit with the organization results in dissatisfaction and reduced commitment, and this in turn leads to quitting with or without searching for alternatives (Donnelly & Quirin, 2006).

Empirical evidence has in general yielded support for the role of shocks in turnover (Holtom et al., 2005, 2017; Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2005; Morrell, Loan-Clarke, & Wilkinson, 2004). For example, Holtom et al.'s (2005) study indicated that in a sizeable proportion of decisions to quit, shocks, but not job dissatisfaction, played a critical role and that Path 3 represented the most widely experienced shock-based pathway to turnover. Kulik, Treuren, and Bordia (2012) conducted exit interviews with 228 employees in an Australian organization. Sixty-eight percent of leavers reported some sort of shock, whereas the remaining 32% reported a history of dissatisfaction with their job prior to leaving. Military studies also support the influence of shocks in the turnover process. Holt, Rehg, Lin, and Miller (2007) tested the unfolding model with a sample of 182 Air Force Officers who voluntarily quit the army. Sixty-two percent of these officers stated that they experienced a type of shock before leaving, and the model accurately classified 47% of the participants' decisions to leave. Based on the reviewed literature, shocks are expected to play a role in the military turnover process, either along with or independently of the progression from dissatisfaction and reduced commitment.

Conclusion

Reviewed evidence suggests unique dynamics of the withdrawal process in the military context. The proposed military turnover model contributes to the existing literature in several ways. First, it represents one of the rare attempts to capture the complex decision-making processes involved in military turnover by focusing mainly on the psychological processes and the individual's subjective experiences. Second, departing from the descriptive approaches conventionally used to understand military turnover, the proposed model presents a comprehensive causal framework that allows for prediction. Third, unlike typical attitude-centered models, this model acknowledges value congruence and especially four context-relevant personality factors (conscientiousness, agreeableness, emotional stability, and grit), as being important in the process of military turnover. Finally, by integrating shocks, this model aims to account for turnover that is not necessarily attitude based.

Overall, we believe that the proposed model is a small step in the right direction. However, we also believe that the model presented here may benefit from some further refinements. Refinement efforts may focus on three issues. First, the proposed model implicitly focuses on late turnover, and factors playing a role in early turnover (e.g., turnover occurring during or right after initial training) are not specifically addressed or separated from the factors critical in late turnover. So, efforts may be directed at identifying antecedents of early turnover and, perhaps, linking them to both recruitment and late turnover processes.

Second, although empirical evidence still supports precedence of both job satisfaction and commitment in the process of turnover, there also exists evidence pointing relevance of other job attitudes, especially job engagement, in this process. Closely connected to the eudemonic tradition of well-being, engagement is defined as "a relatively enduring state of mind referring to the simultaneous investment of personal energies in the experience or performance of work" (Christian, Garza, & Slaughter, 2011, p. 95). In a study conducted in the military, Alarcon, Lyons,

and Tartaglia (2010) found that work engagement was a significant predictor of turnover intentions and it was predicted by work, work-group, and organizational factors directly and leadership indirectly. Rubenstein et al.'s (2018) meta-analysis also indicated that engagement ($\rho = -0.20$) was a substantial predictor of turnover in its own. Hence, it may be wise to include this more relevant and encompassing attitudinal variable in the model, and examine its contribution above and beyond job satisfaction and commitment.

Third, in the proposed model, demographic variables, such as gender and ethnicity, are not directly addressed; they are assumed to have an influence on work attitudes especially through QoL perceptions. However, Rubenstein et al.'s (2018) meta-analysis suggested that demographic factors such as age ($\rho = -0.21$) and having children ($\rho = -0.20$) had relatively strong effects on turnover. Hence, there is a need for a more thorough examination of demographic variables critical in military turnover and the mechanisms through which these demographic variables contribute to employee withdrawal.

We believe, following the finalization of the conceptual framework, the model should be subjected to empirical testing, preferably using a longitudinal approach. Since the proposed model is a generic one, the fit of the model in varying military contexts should be tested and compared. Result of this empirical testing is expected to both contribute to existing knowledge on turnover and have implications for military recruitment, selection, and training practices.

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