

# THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CO-WORKER SUPPORT, SUPERVISOR SUPPORT, ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT AND EMPLOYEE TURNOVER INTENTION OF OPERATIONAL LEVEL EMPLOYEES IN APPAREL SECTOR, CENTRAL PROVINCE, SRI LANKA

*Kularathne HMRD<sup>1</sup>, Senevirathne YY<sup>2</sup>*

<sup>1</sup>Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka

<sup>2</sup>Department of Management Studies, Faculty of Management, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka

## Abstract

***Human Resources become the bottom line of any organization. Generating and retaining a talented and satisfied workforce is challengeable for current organizations. The feeling to exit from the organization arises due to many reasons and employee turnover intention is highly related by various support sources. The main objective of this study was to find & reveal the relationship between co-worker support, supervisor support, organizational support and turnover intention of operational level employees in apparel sector, central province, Sri Lanka. Data gathered through a five-point likert type questionnaire were analysed using SPSS Data Analysing Package. As Findings of the study, there was a negative relationship between support sources and employee turnover intention of operative level employees.***

***Keyword: Co-worker support, Supervisor support, Organizational support, Turnover intention, Apparel Sector***

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Employee turnover has always been one of the severe challenges faces by most of organizations. Employees who leave on the organization's request as well as those who leave on their own intention can cause interruptions and costs in operations, work team

dynamics and unit performance and low organizational productivity. [1] [3] highlighted that employees are considered as major contributors for overall organizational success.

The Sri Lankan apparel industry has begun in 1960s, manufacturing garment for home country market. But in 1970, the export leaning manufacturing of readymade garments has begun in the industry and around 300-350 number of apparel manufacturers contribute to Sri Lankan economy. Sri Lanka has become a world class apparel manufacturer supplying to global super brands. The industry upholds high ethical practices, eschews child and forced labour thus being known to the world as a producer of "Garments without Guilt". A substantial growth levels has been recorded by apparel industry over the past four decades and is currently the country's leading export, accounting for approximately 44 percent of total exports, and providing about 33 percent of the manufacturing employment in the country. .

[1] published that the reasons given by employers on deciding the recruitment of female employees. It figured that higher labor turnover of females was considered as a major concern made by employers when hiring females.

In Sri Lankan apparel sector, female machine operators are one of key players whose continuous physical presence is essential to achieve daily and monthly Targets especially in export garment manufacturing organizations. Therefore, it is needed to develop a thorough understanding of the employee turnover from

the perspective of sources of support within the organization in Sri Lankan Apparel m Sector.

## **2.LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. Turnover Intention**

Deliberate willingness and voluntary conscious of the employee is considered as the intention to quit from the organization [2] [3] [4]. Johanson and Guchait, 2009; Mobley et al., 1978). The conscious to seek new job opportunities as alternatives is the intention to voluntarily withdraw from the organization permanently [2] [5].

### **2.2. Co-Worker Support**

Assisting others at the workplace by knowledge sharing and providing support as well as encouragement is considered as co- worker support [6],[7][8] mentioned that colleagues share their expertise knowledge with one another when that particular person is in a new situation or an issue where solutions or procedures are not readily available.

### **2.3. Supervisor Support**

[9] defined supervisor support as the supervisors behave in helping their employees to demonstrate the skills, knowledge, and attitudes collect from the training program

### **2.4. Organizational Support**

Organizational support can be denoted as the extent which organizational workers perceive that their organization cares about them and values their contributions, services while facilitating to the well-being of workers [10]. Further, employees who have a sense of organizational membership as a part of employee self-identity have a feeling that organization supports them. [11] emphasized that organization support may take several aspects such as compliance support, financial support, career support.

### **2.5. Co-worker support and turnover intention**

Frone et al. (1997) [12] found a negative relationship between coworker support and work distress. Coworker support has been identified as a characteristic that affects employee retention (George, 2015). Thompson and Prottas (2006) found that coworker support had a favorable relationship with turnover intention. In addition, Chiaburu and Harrison (2008) found that there was a negative relationship between coworker support and intention to quit. Conversely, Mossholder et al. (2005) found that coworker support did not predict turnover. Given the confused research findings that exist on the relationship between social relationships and turnover intention (Felps et al., 2009), the following hypothesis was proposed to consider influence between coworker support and turnover intention.

**H<sub>1</sub>:** There is a negative significant relationship between co-worker support and turnover intention of operational level employees in apparel sector, central province, Sri Lanka

### **2.6. Supervisor support and turnover intention**

[18] found that supervisor support is negatively related to employee turnover. A high-quality relationship between supervisors and employees was cited as motivation for employees to stay at the organization (Ballinger et al., 2010). However, Teoh et al. (2016) found that supportive management behaviours did not reduce turnover intention. Supervisor support has been identified as a characteristic that affects employee retention [13]. When considering federal employees, Pitts et al. (2011) suggested that supervisor support is more important than co-worker support related to turnover intention As Hammer et al. (2011) noted, more research is needed to examine how employee perceptions of family-specific supervisor support link to organizational change initiatives. Therefore, the following hypothesis was proposed to consider influence between supervisor support and turnover intention:

**H<sub>2</sub>:** There is a negative relationship between supervisor support and turnover intention of operational level employees in apparel sector, central province, Sri Lanka

### **2.7. Organizational support and turnover intention**

Previous studies have found that Flexible Work Arrangements are negatively related to turnover

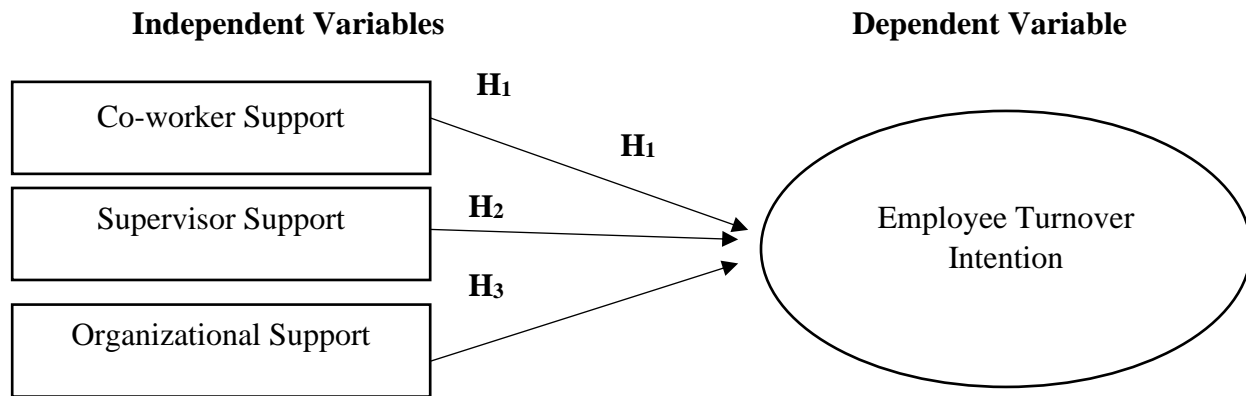
intentions [23] [ McNall et al., 2010). However, [18] found that organizational support was not a significant determinant when employees considered whether to leave the organization. In addition, Hill et al. (2016) found that family supportive organization perceptions were unrelated to turnover intention. Drawing on a sample of employees from multiple organizations (N = 135), Marchand & Vandenberghe (2016) found that Perceived Organizational Support to be negatively related to turnover intention. Employees who perceive less support from the organization may be more likely to leave the organization [27]. As a result, the following

hypothesis was proposed to consider influence between organizational support and turnover intention:

**H<sub>3</sub>:** There is a negative relationship between organizational support and turnover intention of operational level employees in apparel sector, central province, Sri Lanka.

Conceptual framework for this study is shown in figure 1 and it was developed by the author by referring the research model of Conservation Research Theory built by [28].

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



Source: Author Developed

### 3.METHOD

#### 3.1. Study Design

Quantitative research design was used to conduct this study. This study examines the relationship between co-worker support, supervisor support, organizational support and turnover intention of operational level employees in apparel sector, central province. According to Sekaran & bougie (2010), studies conducted to establish cause-and-effect relationship using the same natural environment in which employees normally function. Therefore, this is a correlational field study. Since no any factors were controlled or manipulated in this study, non-contrived settings were used to conduct this study where events

were naturally occurred with minimum researcher interference. This study is considered as a cross sectional study since data were gathered once through a questionnaire in a specific period of time (three weeks). The targeted population for this study was 650 working operative level employees and 242 operative level employees were selected as the sample according to the Morgan table through simple random sampling method. All operative level employees have almost similar job descriptions and job specifications to perform their jobs. Therefore, the sample was homogeneous and directly could be used to examine the whole population of this study.

#### 3.2. Measures

Employee turnover intention is the dependent variable and was measured using a 5 likert scale having four

items (Q27, Q28, Q29 and Q30) which were positive statements developed by [30] with Cronbach's Alpha of 0.889 (( $\alpha = 0.889$ ). Co-worker support, supervisor support and organizational support were independent variables and Co-worker support was measured using a 5 likert scale having seven items ( Q6, Q7, Q8, Q9, Q10, Q11 and Q12) which were positive statements developed by [30] with Cronbach's Alpha of 0.946 (( $\alpha = 0.946$ ), supervisor support was measured using a 5 likert scale having seven items (Q13, Q14, Q15, Q16, Q17, Q18 and Q19) which were positive statements developed by [30] Cronbach's Alpha of 0.947 (( $\alpha = 0.947$ ) and organizational support was measured using a 5 likert scale having seven items (Q20, Q21, Q22, Q23, Q24, Q25 and Q26) which were positive statements developed by [30] Cronbach's Alpha of 0.926 (( $\alpha = 0.926$ ).

### 3.3. Validity and Reliability of Instruments

Reliability of the measurement scales was tested by using Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ). As suggested by Bryman and Bell (2011), values of  $\alpha > 0.8$  are typically employed as a rule of thumb for acceptable internal reliability, though many researchers accept slightly 95 lower figures. Table 1 lists the Cronbach's alpha values for each of the study's constructs.

**Table 1 Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients**

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of items
Co-worker Support	0.992	7
Supervisor Support	0.988	7
Organizational Support	0.987	7
Employee Turnover Intention	0.938	4

According to Cronbach's Alpha, an acceptable level of reliability of a variable should be 0.8.

In this study, reliability of all variables is in the acceptable level as reliability of all independent variables and

dependent variable are fallen above 0.9 as well as more are highly reliable as they exceeds 0.8 of reliability.

## 4.RESULTS

### 4.1. Frequency Distribution Analysis for Support and Employee Turnover Intention

**Table 2 Frequency Distribution Analysis for Support and Employee**

		Statistics			
		COWOR KER_SUP PORT	SUPERVI SOR_SUP PORT	ORGANIZ ATIONAL_ SUPPORT	TURNOV ER_INTE NTION
N	Valid	212	212	212	212
	Missing	0	0	0	0
	Mean	4.00	3.99	3.99	1.88
	Median	4.00	4.00	4.00	1.50
	Mode	5	5	4	1
	Std. Deviation	1.002	.986	.985	.836
	Variance	1.005	.972	.970	.699
	Skewness	-1.085	-1.014	-1.026	1.229
	Std. Error of Skewness	.167	.167	.167	.167
	Kurtosis	.945	.733	.725	1.292
	Std. Error of Kurtosis	.333	.333	.333	.333
	Sum	848	846	846	399

According to the table 2, mean value of each independent variable was greater than 3 ( $M > 3$ ) as the mean value of co-worker support is 4.00, mean value of supervisor support is 3.99, mean value of organizational support is 3.99. According to the mean values of types of support (co-worker support, supervisor support and organizational support), it can be statically proved that respondents of the sample were perceiving triple support types within the organization. Mean value of dependent variable which was employee turnover intention is 1.88 which statistically proved most of respondents have responded towards "Disagree".

According to the presented results, standard deviation of co-worker support, supervisor support and organizational support and employee turnover

intention, 1.002, 0.986, 0.985 and 0.836 respectively and the dispersions were in a widely-spread distribution.

Skewness measures the degree and direction of asymmetry. A symmetric distribution such as a normal distribution has a skewness of 0, and the results of this study for independent variables shows negative skewness which is -1.085, -1.014 and -1.026 where the distribution of independent variable data was skewed slightly to the left. It can be further statistically proved that the mean values of independent variables: co-worker, support supervisor support and organizational support (4, 3.99 and 3.99 respectively) were less than median values of them (, but approximately close to the median. Employee turnover intention which was dependent variable has a positive skewness of 1.229 whichi can be statistically explained that data distribution of Employee turnover intention has been skewed to the right where mean value of Employee turnover intention (mean=1.88) is greater than the median value of it (median=1.50).

**4.2. Correlation Analysis between Co-worker Support and Employee Turnover Intention of operative level employees**

**Table 3 Correlation Analysis between Co-worker Support and Employee Turnover Intention of operative level employees**

Correlations		
	TURNOVER_ INTENTION	COWORKER_ SUPPORT
TURNOVER_ INTENTION	Pearson Correlation	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	212
COWORKER_ SUPPORT	Pearson Correlation	-.751**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	212

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

According to the table 3, Pearson correlation between the employee turnover intention of operational level employees and co-worker support is -.751 which is negative and statistically significant at 1% (Significant=0.000).

**4.3. Correlation Analysis between Supervisor Support and Employee Turnover Intention of operative level employees**

**Table 4 Correlation Analysis between Supervisor Support and Employee Turnover Intention of operative level employees**

Correlations			
		TURNOVER_ INTENTION	SUPERVISOR_ SUPPORT
TURNOVER_ INTENTION	Pearson Correlation	1	-.746**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	212	212
SUPERVISOR_ SUPPORT	Pearson Correlation	-.746**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	212	212
** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

In the case of Pearson correlation between employee turnover intention of operational level employees and supervisor support, it is -0.746 which is negatively significant at 1% (Significant=0.000).

**4.4. Correlation Analysis between Organizational support and employee turnover intention of operative level employees**

Correlations

		TURNOVER_ INTENTION	ORGANIZATI ONAL_ SUPPORT
TURNOVER_ INTENTION	Pearson Correlation	1	-.766**
	Sig. (2- tailed)		.000
	N	212	212
ORGANIZATI ONAL_ SUPPORT	Pearson Correlation	-.766**	1
	Sig. (2- tailed)	.000	
	N	212	212

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

In the case of Pearson correlation between employee turnover intention of operational level employees and organizational support, it is -0.766 which is negatively significant at 1% (Significant=0.000).

## 5.DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

### 5.1. Hypothesis Testing

#### 5.1.1. Testing Hypothesis 1

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between co-worker support and turnover intention of operational level employees in apparel sector, central province, Sri Lanka.

**H<sub>1</sub>:** There is a negative significant relationship between co-worker support and turnover intention of operational level employees in apparel sector, central province, Sri Lanka.

According to the results of Pearson correlation analysis between the employee turnover intention of operational level employees and co-worker support, correlation coefficient (r) is -.751 which is negative and statistically significant at 1% (Significant= 0.000).

Therefore according to the results of tests, the alternative hypothesis is accepted. Hence the data support the hypothesis that there is a negative relationship between the employee turnover intention of operational level employees and co-worker support in apparel sector, central province, Sri Lanka.

This finding is supported by many studies done in the past. [15] found that there was a negative relationship between coworker support and intention to quit. Coworker satisfaction was found to be a predictor of employee turnover in a meta-analysis of antecedents of turnover intentions (Griffeth, Hom, & Gaertner, 2000). [12] found a negative relationship between coworker support and work distress. [33] noted that little work exists on how social relationships affect turnover.

#### 5.1.2. Testing Hypothesis 2

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is no relationship between supervisor support and turnover intention of operational level employees in apparel sector, central province, Sri Lanka.

**H<sub>1</sub>:** There is a negative relationship between supervisor support and turnover intention of operational level employees in apparel sector, central province, Sri Lanka. According to the results of Pearson correlation analysis between the employee turnover intention of operational level employees and supervisor support, correlation coefficient (r) is -.746 which is negative and statistically significant at 1% (Significant= 0.000).

Therefore according to the results of tests, the alternative hypothesis is accepted. Hence the data support the hypothesis that there is a negative relationship between the employee turnover intention of operational level employees and supervisor support in apparel sector, central province, Sri Lanka.

This finding is supported by literature findings. Dysvik & Kuvaas (2013) found that employees should be more likely to reciprocate towards the organization and have lower turnover intention when they perceive support from their supervisor. Supervisor support is negatively related to employee turnover [18]. A study of hospital employees demonstrated that individuals who shared a high-quality relationship with their supervisor were more likely to stay at the organization [19].

#### 5.1.3. Testing Hypothesis 3

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is no relationship between organizational support and turnover intention of operational level employees in apparel sector, central province, Sri Lanka.

**H<sub>1</sub>:** There is a negative relationship between organizational support and turnover intention of operational level employees in apparel sector, central province, Sri Lanka.

According to the results of Pearson correlation analysis between the employee turnover intention of operational level employees and organizational support, correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) is  $-0.766$  which is negative and statistically significant at 1% (Significant = 0.000).

Therefore according to the results of tests, the alternative hypothesis is accepted. Hence the data support the hypothesis that there is a negative relationship between the employee turnover intention of operational level employees and organizational support in apparel sector, central province, Sri Lanka.

According to the past literature, supported findings were found. [26] found that Perceived Organizational Support to be negatively related to turnover intention. Previous studies have found that Flexible Work Arrangements are negatively related to turnover intentions [23] [24].

## **5.2. Conclusion**

The researcher was able to find out negative relationship between support sources and employee turnover intention of operative level employees in apparel sector, central province, Sri Lanka. There was a significant negative relationship between co-worker support and employee turnover intention of operative level employees, between supervisor support and employee turnover intention of operative level employees and between organizational support and employee turnover intention of operative level employees in apparel sector, central province, Sri Lanka.

## **5.3. Implications of the research**

The results and findings of this study have multiple implications for the field of human resource management in research and practice. Previous gaps in the literature were examined and hypothesized relationships between variables were tested which had not been previously explored in a single study design.

First, research concluded that co-worker support, supervisor support and organizational support were shown to have significant relationships with employee turnover intention where the sources of support increases, employee turnover intentions decreases. Organizations need to focus on strong employee relations while focusing sources of support: co-worker

support, supervisor support and organizational support in order to remain them within the organization.

Second, employee turnover can be costly to organizations and is manifested in areas such as recruitment, selection, training, and implicit knowledge

[33] As a result, it is incumbent upon organizations to make every effort to mitigate turnover. Turnover can also impact the organizational culture as it is more difficult to build trust and support within teams when new employees are constantly being on entered. Human resource managers are often tasked with functional roles to maintain compliance and make personnel decisions. These job demands are often carried out by understaffed HR departments and the resources available to increase employee engagement are often minimal. Therefore, it is important that key resources are deployed to ensure that support is available to employees throughout all levels of the organization.

Third, supervisors should be provided formal training as part of their managerial preparation to reiterate the importance of creating a supportive culture. These training programs should include the implementation of work-family benefit programs across departments so that these are applied on a consistent basis and not subject to the sole discretion of individual supervisors.

Fourth, supervisors should take an active role in promoting positive relationships between coworkers and teams. Supervisors who engage in unsupportive behaviors will likely enforce hindrance culture that discourages employees to support each other. As lower levels of coworker support can also lead to increased turnover intention, supervisor behaviors can be influential on how coworkers treat each other. Supervisors hold a critical role in perpetuating workplace perceptions that become embedded in the organizational culture. Perceptions that discourage participation in work-family programs or support between coworkers can be changed by supportive supervisor behaviors. These actions can be accomplished by allowing employees to have flexibility to balance roles between the work and family domains. Such supportive behaviors signal to employees that managers care about them and provide resources to alleviate stressors that arise between the work and family roles. As a result, these supportive behaviors will help to promulgate a positive workplace culture. Finally, supervisor performance reviews should include

components of supportive activities that can be measured and tied to compensation.

#### **5.4. Limitations and Recommendations**

As is common to all research, limitations were acknowledged. First, this study was conducted based on time constraint and geographical constraint. This research aimed to find out the relationship between sources of support (co-worker, support supervisor and support organizational support) and employee turnover intention of operative level employees in apparel sector, central province, Sri Lanka so that findings were unable to be generalized correctly. Sample was taken by considering only four garment manufacturing firms located in central province so that sample didn't represent whole apparel sector in Sri Lanka.

Second, the results from this study also provide several new pathways for researchers and practitioners to conduct future studies and initiate change within organizations. In addition, various sources of support can impact employee outcomes such as turnover intention. Negative correlations were shown to exist between various support levels and turnover intention.

Third, this study demonstrated that different levels of support in the organization affirms that each can uniquely make a relation on employee turnover intention ultimately on organizational outcomes such as overall productivity. But, this study was unable to explore the relationship of sources of support with employee turnover intention. The current literature has not adequately addressed multiple levels of support simultaneously when conducting organizational research. Therefore, future researches can pay attention on each source of support individually to analyze the relationship that it makes on overall productivity of the organization.

Fourth, this study did not aim to find the impact of sources of support on employee turnover intention. Future researches can be extended to explore the impact of sources of support on employee turnover intention in organizations or industries. Since organizations face highly volatile competitive environment, retaining a talent pool become vital role of the practitioner. Thus, future researches can be done to find out the extent of influence that sources of support generates on employee retention within the organization.

Final limitation can be set those relationships among sources of support that were not considered in this research. It is very important to find out the effect of one source of support on another. For example, organizational support may have an impact on supervisor support or co-worker support. Then, first priority should be the root cause (organizational support in this example) to exist other support levels (Supervisor support and co-worker support in this example).

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