

Predictors of intention to stay for employees of casual dining restaurant in Klang Valley area

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Article history

Received: 20 September 2013

Received in revised form:

15 February 2014

Accepted: 18 February 2014

Keywords

Intention to stay

Perceived organisational support

Perceived supervisor support

Organisational commitment
KL restaurant industry

Abstract

Employees are an asset to an organisation where they could be the determinant behind organisational's success or failure in an industry. In this study, the relationship between perceived organisational support (POS), perceived supervisor support (PSS), and organisational commitment (OC) with employee's intention to stay with their current jobs were studied. For that purpose, 717 questionnaires were collected among casual dining restaurants employees in Klang Valley area and analyses Pearson correlation and multiple linear regression were run by using SPSS version 21. The results suggest that POS, PSS, and OC were positively correlated with employee's intention to stay with their current job. Furthermore, OC was also found to be the most influential factor in affecting employees' staying intention. The finding is hoped to have important implications where the management can formulate strategies to retain employees in restaurant industry in Malaysia.

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Introduction

As a competitive and multi-cultural industry, food service continues to expand both in size and diversity (Ingram and Jones, 1998) and experiences continuous growth throughout the year here in Malaysia (Kueh and Boo, 2007). Unfortunately, general public view this industry poorly because working in food service industry is always associated with low pay, long working hours, menial work, lack of benefits, hard work, physically exhausting, and underappreciated (Ingram and Jones, 1998; Wildes, 2005). Psychologically, the job image that the restaurant industry suffers from is 'servitude' perception, which in restaurant industry it is pointed to the social stigma or stereotype attached to the job of serving others (Wildes, 2005). These images and perception eventually lead to the negative view of food service work and as a consequence, restaurants face difficulties in attracting new employees. To make matter worse, the rate of employee turnover and job mobility is generally high that it became one of the prominent natures of food service industry (Ingram and Jones, 1998).

Turnover is defined as the movement of people in and out of employment within an organisation (Rahman *et al.*, 2010). Employee turnover is a major cost for food service industry (Ingram and Jones, 1998; Ahmad, 2001; Wildes, 2005; Guchait, 2007; Kahumuza and Schlechter, 2008; Moncarz *et al.*, 2009; Tuzun and Kalemci, 2012). It is a threat to the company's success (Mansfield, 2007). Although

employee turnover is widely accepted as being inevitable, progressive managers still put efforts on reducing turnover. For example, they allocated certain level of budget in order to handle the problem (Hinkin and Tracey, 2000). In Malaysia, according to Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF), Hotel/Restaurant industry is placed third as the industry with the highest annual average turnover rate at 32.4 percent only behind IT/Communication (75.72) and Associations/Societies (33). Regionally, study by Aon Hewitt, a human capital consulting and outsourcing firm, placed Malaysia as the sixth in Asia-Pacific for staff turnover in 2011 at the percentage of 15.9 (Goh, 2012). Another example for Malaysian fast food industry, it is reported that turnover rate for non-managers was 100 percent (Ryan *et al.*, 2011).

Hospitality operators are constantly struggling with maintaining stable workforce (Deery, 2008). This results in the high rate of employee turnover and remains as one of the most challenging features of the industry (Ahmad, 2001; Moncarz *et al.*, 2009; Rahman *et al.*, 2010). Although a lot of studies focused on employees leaving the organisation, there has been an increase in the interest of employee retention since mid-1990s, especially on the factors that influence employee retention as well as the benefits (Moncarz *et al.*, 2009). The key for organisations' success and domination in their respective industries is the attraction and retention of talented employees with desired attributes and skills (Kahumuza and Schlechter, 2008). Organisations that value their human capital and are able to design policies and

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practices for the sake of employee retention would have the competitive advantage in their industries. Successful employee retention programs might result in increased employee tenure. Tenured workforces will not reduce the costs caused by turnover but over time it will benefit the organisation where it results in higher competitiveness and profitability (Moncarz *et al.*, 2009). Intention to stay is the tendency of employees to retain their membership in their current organisations (Currivan, 1999). Together with intention to leave, intention to stay has been found as indicator for near-term and distant turnover action (Ghiselli *et al.*, 2001). It also affects negatively towards actual turnover. Employee retention could determine an organisation's success. Therefore, it has become employers' major goal. Concern about the employee turnover, researchers and management professionals have made progress in the field in discovering useful retention methods (Mayfield and Mayfield, 2007; Ghosh *et al.*, 2013). However, compared to intention of leaving, the number of studies done on intention to stay is rather limited especially in restaurant industry (Kim and Jogaratnam, 2010). Among the antecedents for intention to stay that has been studied by scholars are perceived organisational support (POS), perceived supervisor support (PSS), and organisational commitment (OC). Therefore, this research investigated how these predictors affect job staying intention of employees of casual dining restaurants in Malaysia's key region, the Klang Valley area. Casual dining restaurant is a moderate-upscale dining that provides relaxed atmosphere and food items with reasonable price. It focuses on themes in menu, service, and décor and offers full service to the diners (Brizek, 2003; Madanoglu *et al.*, 2007; Rivera *et al.*, 2008; Barrows and Powers, 2009; Lynn, 2009). Thus, the main objective of this study is to identify the influence of POS, PSS, and OC on intention to stay in employees' current job.

Literature review

Perceived organisational support

Perceived organisational support (POS) holds that in order to meet socioemotional needs and to assess the benefits of increased work effort, employees form a general perception concerning the extent to which the organisation values their contributions and cares about their well-being (Eisenberger *et al.*, 1986). To reciprocate the perceived support, employees would increase their performances, loyalties, and commitments towards the organisation (Kahumuza and Schlechter, 2008). Eventually, it leads to positive outcome for the company because employees with

high POS have better motivation in helping the organisation to achieve their goals as well as less likely to look for and accept alternative jobs (Allen *et al.*, 2003; Arshadi, 2011). Moreover, they are found to be more committed to their organisation, have strong sense of belonging to the organisation, more satisfy with their jobs, enhance employee's positive moods, increase their interest in work, less likely to be tardy, absent, or resign, and have higher in-role performance (Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002; Arshadi, 2011).

Employees are more committed and likely to stay with the organisation if they feel that the organisation acted positively towards them and less likely to remain with the organisation if they do not feel the positive act of the organisation (Perryer *et al.*, 2010). One of the significant consequences of POS found by Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) in their meta-analysis is desire to remain or intention to stay in the organization. Cho, Johanson, and Guchait (2009) found that the increase of POS also increases the employees' intention to stay in their studies among non-managerial employees of restaurants and hotels in the U.S. In fact, they discovered that the effect of POS on intention to stay is twice as much as the effect of POS on intention to leave. Unfortunately, there are not many studies done to find the relationship between POS and intention to stay. Therefore, this study will investigate more on the direct relationship between these variables, whether intention to stay would increase or decrease if POS is enhanced or lowered. By following the same logic of the effect of POS on leaving intention, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 1 (H₁): POS is positively related to employee's intention to stay with their current jobs.

Perceived supervisor support

Perceived supervisor support (PSS) is the global perceptions that the employees have regarding to the extent to which supervisors value employees' contributions and care about their well-being (Eisenberger *et al.*, 2002). Compared to the company, employees work closer to their supervisors thus it gives the staffs the opportunities to get more personal with the supervisors regarding work matters like job performances and salaries (Shanock and Eisenberger, 2006; Tuzun and Kalemci, 2012). It is important for the supervisors to give fair treatments because they could affect the work performances of their subordinates. Moreover, supportive supervisor is effective in managing subordinates' emotions, which would be essential in managing organisational commitment (Dawley *et al.*, 2008). For example, rather than only criticising on bad work performances,

superiors could give more complements on good jobs too (Harbourne, 1995).

Cho *et al.* (2009) found in their studies that there is no increment in employees' intent to stay as PSS increases. With the lack of researches between PSS and intention to stay in neither restaurant industry nor hospitality industry, hypothesis will be proposed based on studies done on other industry. Studies found that low level of supervisor support are related to turnover. In studies done among child welfare workers, the role of supervisor support is important to employee turnover. Poor supervision was found to contribute to the decision of leaving the workplace and supportive supervision helps to retain the employee. Thus, supervisor support is positively related to intention to stay (Smith, 2005). Hence:

Hypothesis 2 (H_2): PSS is positively related to employee's intention to stay with their current jobs.

Organisational commitment

Organisational commitment (OC) is one of the most highly studied areas of human resource (HR) efforts and behavioural outcomes (Chew and Wong, 2008). By definition, OC is described as the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organisation (Mowday *et al.*, 1979). It is a multidimension construct influenced by three different commitments. The commitments are between (1) affective commitment, where the employees themselves have the desire to remain in the organisation; (2) continuance commitment in which the employees recognition of the costs for leaving would be high; and (3) normative commitment where the employees have the feeling of obligation to stay and be loyal to the organisation (Meyer and Allen, 1990). Between the three commitments, affective commitment is favoured by the managements where they hope can be developed and possessed by their staffs (He, 2008).

Employees who possess higher level of OC tend to stay with their current organisations despite competing attractions, attend work regularly, protect company assets, and share the company's goals (Chew and Wong, 2008). Currivan (1999) stated that numbers of empirical evidence proposed that with greater OC, employee's intention to stay is higher and thus lower the turnover. Cho *et al.* (2009) proposed in their studies that if the employees have high OC, it will motivate them to be more attached towards the organisation and thus increasing the employees' intention to stay. The high commitment was achieved when employees felt that they were being accepted and supported by the supervisors and co-workers and thus increasing their intentions to stay and become

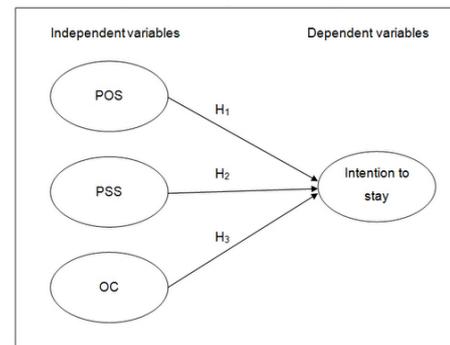


Figure 1. Conceptual framework

part of the organisation's brand (Crick and Spencer, 2011). In a more recent work, affective commitment and normative commitment were found to be the best predictor of employee's intention to stay (Ghosh *et al.*, 2013). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 3 (H_3): OC is positively related to employee's intention to stay with their current jobs.

Conceptual framework

This research is conducted by following the conceptual framework as shown in Figure 1. POS, PSS, and OC are listed as independent variables whereas intention to stay made up the dependent variable.

Methodology

Sample

The participants of this research comprised the employees of casual dining restaurants in Klang Valley area. 106 casual dining restaurants outlets agreed to take part in the survey. The outlets belong to different companies that run chained restaurants around Malaysia. The number of employees ranged between 8 and 26 at the time of data collection depending on the size of the outlets. The restaurants offered affordable to slightly above affordable food prices. For example, restaurants offered lunch set that comprised a main course, a cup of soup, and a glass of carbonated drink starting from RM16.90 and could get as high as RM49.90. The locations of the outlets covered the urbans to suburbans area around Klang Valley. These outlets located in various locations including shopping malls, housing areas, and shop lots around business area.

Data collection

Prior to conducting actual data collection, pilot test was done in order to test the reliability of the constructs in the questionnaire. 30 sets of complete questionnaires were collected from employees of three different outlets of casual dining restaurants.

All of the responses were used for reliability analysis measured by Cronbach's alpha using SPSS 21. From the result, all of the constructs reached Cronbach's alpha 0.6 and above which is the acceptable level for reliability (Hair *et al.*, 2006). Hence, all of the constructs were included in the questionnaire for the actual data collection.

Under permission of the managements, a self-administered questionnaire was distributed to 855 employees of casual dining restaurant outlets. The questionnaire is bilingual, where it consists of both English and Bahasa Malaysia. All the constructs were originally developed in English and were translated to the closest possible meaning into Bahasa Malaysia. Bilingual questionnaire was used to enhance the respondents' understanding of the statements. It was also utilised to encourage the respondents to answer the survey forms, thus increasing the number of response rate. Depending on the timing when the researcher came to conduct the survey, some of the managers of the outlets let the questionnaires to be answered right away, while others asked to collect on other available time. This is done in order to let the employees answer in their most convenient time. The employees were advised that their participations are voluntary and their identities will be kept anonymous. Convenience sampling was used as sampling technique. Out of 855, a total of 717 responses were used for further analysis, which gives the response rate of 84%. All variables were measured using constructs adopted from previous researches. Responses to all the items for each construct were indicated on 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree). Table 1 showed all reliability of every construct and all of the items.

Perceived organisational support

POS was measured using the 16-item scale developed by Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, and Sowa (1986). The reliability of this construct measured by Cronbach's alpha was 0.88.

Perceived supervisor support

Assesment for PSS was done using 16-item scale developed by Kottke and Sharafinski (1988) ($\alpha = 0.89$).

Organisational commitment

This study used 18-item scale developed by Meyer, Allen, and Smith (1993) to measure OC ($\alpha = 0.77$). The reliability of the OC was taken in a sum of all the items from the three dimensions. Therefore, by measuring the Cronbach's alpha of all 18-items of OC, a sole value was used.

Intention to stay

Intention to stay was assessed using 4-item scale developed by Ma (2010) ($\alpha = 0.75$).

Demographic variables

The respondents were also asked to specify their demographic profiles which were gender, age, marital status, educational level, working position, working hours per week, as well as their working experience in the current restaurant and in the restaurant industry.

Data analysis

Data screening were done in order to get only valid questionnaire to be used in data analysis. Sets of questionnaires with more than 50 percent missing answers of each section were discarded. In order to handle missing value, means was used to replace the missing values. Normality and outliers were also checked. The data showed normal distribution and outliers were discarded. Tests of multicollinearity showed very low level (VIF = 1.922 for POS, VIF = 1.917 for PSS, and VIF = 1.212 for OC) thus indicating no multicollinearity present. Data analyses used for this study were based on the research objectives of this study. Therefore, descriptive analysis, Pearson correlation, and multiple linear regressions were used to test the hypotheses.

Results

Demographic profiles

Table 2 shows the demographic profiles of respondent for this research. Male respondents were the dominant gender in this research, with 62.5 per cent whereas female employees made up another 37.5 per cent. Respondents' average age was 24.1 years. In regards of marital status, 81.3 per cent were still single while the rest are already married. More than half of them were either still studying in or just finished their secondary school (54.4%), followed by STPM, matriculation, or A-level certificate holders (21.9%), bachelor degree holders (18.8%), and a handful of them specified primary school and master degree or PhD as their highest educational level. Non-managerial employees made up of 72.4 per cent of the respondent compared to managerial employees (23.4%). The respondents' average working hour per week was 54.3 hours, the average of 17.4 months of working experience in the restaurant they were working for, and the average of 35.3 months of restaurant industry's working experience.

Interrelations between variables

The results of correlations as well as the means

Table 1. List of items and Cronbach's alpha for every variable

Variables	Reliability (Cronbach's alpha)
Perceived organisational support (POS)	0.88
1. The company values my contribution to its well-being	
2. If the company could hire someone to replace me at a lower salary it would do so	
3. The company fails to appreciate any extra effort from me	
4. The company strongly considers my goals and values	
5. The company would ignore any complain from me	
6. The company disregards my best interests when it makes decisions that affect me	
7. Help in available from the company when I have a problem	
8. The company really cares about my well-being	
9. Even if I did the best job possible, the company would fail to notice	
10. The company is willing to help me when I need a special favour	
11. The company cares about my general satisfaction at work	
12. If given the opportunity, the company would take advantage of me	
13. The company shows very little concern for me	
14. The company cares about my opinions	
15. The company takes pride in my accomplishments at work	
16. The company tries to make my job as interesting as possible	
Perceived supervisor support (PSS)	0.89
1. My supervisor values my contribution to his well-being	
2. If my supervisor could hire someone to replace me at a lower salary he would do so	
3. My supervisor fails to appreciate any extra effort from me	
4. My supervisor strongly considers my goals and values	
5. My supervisor would ignore any complain from me	
6. My supervisor disregards my best interests when he makes decisions that affect me	
7. Help in available from my supervisor when I have a problem	
8. My supervisor really cares about my well-being	
9. Even if I did the best job possible, my supervisor would fail to notice	
10. My supervisor is willing to help me when I need a special favour	
11. My supervisor cares about my general satisfaction at work	
12. If given the opportunity, my supervisor would take advantage of me	
13. My supervisor shows very little concern for me	
14. My supervisor cares about my opinions	
15. My supervisor takes pride in my accomplishments at work	
16. My supervisor tries to make my job as interesting as possible	
Organisational commitment (OC)	0.77
1. I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organisation	
2. I really feel as if this organisation's problems are my own	
3. I do not feel a strong sense of "belonging" to my organisation	
4. I do not feel "emotionally attached" to this organisation	
5. I do not feel like "part of the family" at my organisation	
6. This organisation has a great deal of personal meaning for me	
7. Right now, staying with my organisation is a matter of necessity as much as desire	
8. It would be very hard for me to leave my organisation right now, even if I wanted to	
9. Too much of my life would be disrupted if I decided I wanted to leave my organisation now	
10. I feel that I have too few options to consider leaving this organisation	
11. If I had not already put so much of myself into this organisation, I might consider working elsewhere	
12. One of the few negative consequences of leaving this organisation would be the scarcity of available alternatives	
13. I do not feel any obligation to remain with my current employer	
14. Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel it would be right to leave my organisation now	
15. I would feel guilty if I left my organisation now	
16. This organisation deserves my loyalty	
17. I would not leave my organisation right now because I have a sense of obligation to the people in it	
18. I owe a great deal to my organisation	
Intention to stay	0.75
1. I would turn down a job offer from another company if it came tomorrow	
2. As far as I can see, I intend to stay with my current company	
3. It is very important for me to spend the rest of my career in this company	
4. I will stay at this company even if other companies offer me higher pay and position	

Table 2. Demographic characteristics of respondent

Demographic characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	448	62.5
Female	269	37.5
Marital Status		
Single	583	81.3
Married	134	18.7
Educational Level		
Primary School	23	3.2
Secondary School/SPM	390	54.4
STPM/Matriculation/A-level	157	21.9
Bachelor Degree	135	18.8
Master Degree/PhD	3	0.4
Unspecified	9	1.3
Work Position		
Managerial	168	23.4
Non-managerial	519	72.4
Others	25	3.5
Unspecified	5	0.7
Working Hour per Week		
Less than 48 hours	94	13.1
48 to 60 hours	423	59.0
More than 60 hours	195	27.2
Unspecified	5	0.7
Average age : 24.1		
Average working hours per week : 54.3		
Average working experience in current restaurant (months) : 17.4		
Average working experience in restaurant industry (months) : 35.3		

and standard deviations are shown in Table 3. The mean scores were found to be above the midpoint of 7-point Likert scale for POS, PSS, and OC at 4.70, 4.82, and 4.39 respectively. On the other hand,

intention to stay scored slightly below the midpoint at 3.95. Interestingly, despite the positive average score of its antecedents, intention to stay scored at negative range.

For analytical purpose, Pearson correlation was used to test hypotheses 1, 2, and 3 because it measures the association between variables. The pattern of the correlations was consistent with the hypothesised relationships. The correlation between intention to stay and POS showed positive relation at the level of 0.272. With the result showed positive association, it is therefore supported hypothesis 1 (H₁). In other words, if an employee had high level of POS, their tendency to stay in the restaurant they currently employed is increased and vice versa.

In regards to intention to stay-PSS relationship, it showed positive association at the level of 0.236. Therefore, hypothesis 2 (H₂) which proposed that intention to stay and PSS were positively related is accepted. It means that employees who perceive to

Table 3. Means, standard deviations, and correlations of variables

	Mean	SD	Correlation coefficient			
			Intention to Stay	POS	PSS	OC
Intention to Stay	3.95	1.42	1			
POS	4.70	0.94	.272**	1		
PSS	4.82	0.97	.236**	.679**	1	
OC	4.39	0.78	.497**	.385**	.382**	1

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

have greater support from their immediate supervisors were more likely to have staying intention.

Lastly, OC also showed positive relation with intention to stay ($r = 0.497$). This association exhibits the highest magnitude compared to the other two relationships thus indicates that intention to stay-OC has the strongest connection. Employees with higher OC tend to consider on staying with the restaurants they were working for and vice versa. Since the result showed positive correlation between intention to stay and OC, hypothesis 3 (H_3) is therefore accepted.

Multiple linear regression

Multiple linear regression was also done as part of the analyses to further analyse the research hypotheses. The analysis was done to assess the relative predictive power of all the independent variables on the dependent variable. POS, PSS, and OC were employed as joint predictors of intention to stay. From Table 4, it can be seen that about 25.5% of intention to stay can be explained by POS, PSS, and OC when multiple determination coefficient ($R^2 = 0.255$) is considered. In other words, the independent variables effect on intention to stay is 25.5%. This might explain the average score of intention to stay being low despite positive score of the antecedents. Potentially, other factors not measured in this study that made up another 74.5% of effect on retention intention might have stronger influence on such intention compared to POS, PSS, and OC combined. Only POS and OC contribute to the multiple regression model ($p < 0.05$). POS and OC both showed significant positive regression weights, indicating that employees with higher scores on these scales were expected to have higher staying intention, after controlling each other in the model. The beta coefficients of each variable indicates the relative importance of variables in the regression equation. The result showed that OC has stronger effect (Beta = 0.462) on intention to stay compared to POS (Beta = 0.099).

Discussion

Overall, the results of this research contribute to the theoretical understanding of the role of POS, PSS, and OC had on casual dining restaurants employees' job staying intention. The results in this study do not differ substantially from findings

Table 4. Multiple linear regression

Variable/Predictor	Unstandardised coefficients		Standardised coefficient (Beta)	t	Sig.
	B	Std Error			
(Constant)	-1.589	1.220		-1.302	.193
POS	.037	.017	.099	2.219	.027
PSS	-.003	.016	-.007	-1.165	.869
OC	.187	.014	.462	12.983	.000

F = 81.407

Sig. = .000

R² = .255

from previous studies. Positive relation was found between POS and intention to stay. It means that staffs with higher POS have higher intention to stay with their restaurants as compared to their colleagues with lower POS level. Employees with higher POS shared the restaurants' targets and goals and are more motivated in helping the restaurant to achieve the goals and targets. It is possibly because they feel the need to help the restaurant due to the benefits that the management had given them in the duration of their employments.

PSS was also found to be positively related to intention to stay. Employees who perceive greater support and care from their immediate supervisors are suggested to have better staying intentions. Some employees tend to be more committed to their immediate supervisors compared to the organisation because they could be more personal to the former. This is because managers or supervisors of the restaurant are usually the first person they referred to if they have favours to ask regarding their works. Therefore, the employees might have stayed with the restaurants because they feel the need to repay their supervisors kindness. However, regression analysis suggested that PSS has no effect on retention intention. Of a few studies in hospitality studies, Cho *et al.* (2009) found that there was no increment in intention to stay as PSS increases. With the lack of studies of PSS-intention to stay relationship neither in restaurant industry nor hospitality industry, it is hard to sum up the relationship between the two variables in hospitality context. As suggestion, future studies might want to consider using other variables as mediator to see if intention to stay can be increased by PSS through a third variable. For example, POS was used as a mediator to study the relationship between PSS and employee turnover (Eisenberger *et al.*, 2002). Eisenberger *et al.* (2002) found that PSS leads to POS which resulted in the decrease of employee turnover due to the strengthening of felt obligation and affective commitment. Therefore, future studies can be done by using POS as a mediator between PSS and intention to stay.

In relation to OC, intention to stay with an organisation showed significance and relate in positive manner. Employees that have better commitment were more likely to have better staying intentions. This is because employees with higher

level of OC have better motivation to perform in the organisation's favour. OC is favoured in achieving long-term organisational goal due to the broader reaching implications it possessed (Perryer *et al.*, 2010). Moreover, in this study, it is found that among the staffs of casual dining restaurant in Klang Valley area, OC is found to be the best predictor of their intention to stay with their current jobs.

Conclusion

In summary, this research provides the managers of restaurant outlets and the upper managements of their branch companies with ideas on what can be done in order to retain their outlets workforce. Since POS and OC contribute to the retention intention, it is suggested for the management to focus on these predictors to improve employee's retention in the organisation, especially OC as it was found to be the most influential factor. While Malaysia continues to expand in its restaurant industry, it is crucial for the management to retain the staffs and at the same time continue to attract best talents to work and contribute in the industry.

Limitations

There are several limitations in this study. First of all, due to the time and money constraint, the research could only be conducted in a specific area, where in this study, Klang Valley was chosen. The results might represent only part percentage of the whole population of casual dining employees in Malaysia. Therefore, the smaller sample size limits the generalisability towards the population. Secondly, correlations showed weak relationships between POS and intention to stay as well as PSS and intention to stay. It indicates that although POS and PSS can be used to measure intention to stay, they are still inadequate as individual predictors. Lastly, this research did not include various demographic to examine the differences between different groups of employees. It would be interesting to study the differences between genders, managerial and non-managerial employees, or level of educations attained by the staffs, which can be done in future researches.

Acknowledgement

The authors wish to thank Universiti Putra Malaysia under Research University Grant Scheme (RUGS), [Vote no.: 9199928] for the financial support.

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