

# The Influence of Job Stressor on Organizational Loyalty and Intention to Quit among Health Care Staff

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## Abstract

Job stressor has been taken seriously by the health care organizations because of its effect on employees' behaviours at the workplace. This study was conducted to identify the influence of job stressors on organizational loyalty and intention to quit. This study approach was quantitative with cross-sectional research design. The instruments used were Job Content Questionnaires, Organizational Loyalty Questionnaires, and Intention to Quit Questionnaires. A total of 340 health care staffs in several public hospitals and clinics in Malaysia were involved in the study. Descriptive statistic and multiple regression were used to analyse the data. It was found that job stressors have significant influence on organizational loyalty and intentions to quit. The findings proposed that the management of health care organizations should focus more on managing job stressors in order to increase organizational loyalty and reduce employees' intentions to quit among public health care staffs.

**Keywords:** Job demand, job control, organizational loyalty, intention to quit.

## Introduction

Nowadays, the intention to quit and the lack of organizational loyalty are among the critical issues in human resources management<sup>1</sup>. Every large organizations have tendency to lose an average of 20 employees a year<sup>2</sup>. That means most of the employees in various industries and organizations especially in health care sector have a tendency to quit their current job and looking for another job. It is expected to be almost 76 percent of employees in various industries and organization will tend to look for another job and will leave the organization when better job opportunities are available<sup>3</sup>.

Although employees quit their work due to many factors, research evidence indicates that the intention to quit and the lack of loyalty are important indicators for the loss of workers in an organization<sup>4,5</sup>. This problem will cause organizations to spend a lot of money to find, recruit and train new employees. The estimated costs could be double the amount of the employees' annual salary<sup>6</sup>. It will undermine the organization overall performance and productivity, thus contribute to the low morale and motivation among the colleagues<sup>7,8</sup>.

The intention to quit refers to the tendency of workers to think and plan to leave the organization for a variety of reasons. Whereas, the organizational loyalty refers to the employees' tendency to stay in an organization. Many studies have been conducted to identify the causes of employees' problematic behavior, which characterized by high intention to quit and low organizational loyalty as it could interfere with overall achievement of an organization.

One of the main reason for organizations to lose their employees is job stressor<sup>9,10</sup>. The United Nations has

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labeled job stressor as a “worldwide epidemic” as it has been recognized as one of the major global challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century<sup>11,12,13</sup>. All employees experience stress and there is no way for them to avoid job stressor at workplace<sup>14,15</sup>.

Previous researchers studied the association between job stressor and intention to quit<sup>16,17</sup>. However, most past studies only focused on general effect of job stress and lack of explanations on the effect of specific job stressor towards the workers’ intention to quit especially in the context of public health care staff.

Other than that, there is also limited research on the causal relationship between job stressor and organizational loyalty<sup>18,19</sup>. Despite loyalty can contribute to the organizational achievement, but it is often overlooked by most organizations because they focused more on the quality of service which is expected to influence customer loyalty<sup>20,21</sup>.

Therefore, this study conducted to fill the research gap in the context of health care organization as it striving to increase loyalty and reduce intention to quit among employees<sup>22</sup>. There are two objective of this study, first to identify the influence of job stressor on organizational loyalty and second to identify the influence of job stressor on intention to quit.

**Literature Review:** The concept of organizational loyalty and intention to quit can be understand through the Social Exchange Theory which proposes the element of retention (loyalty) and dissolution (quit) as a process that occurs in the social exchange relationship between employer and employees<sup>23,24</sup>. The theory also explained that the social exchange imbalance could create job stress, which in turn reduces employees’ loyalty to the organization. It indicates that there is a connection between job stress, organizational loyalty and intention to quit.

Job stress exists due to the combination of job demands and job control<sup>25</sup>. High job demand with a combination of low job control creates a high stress work environment. Job control refers to the potential and the ability of the employee to control and make decisions about the task they performed<sup>25</sup>. Whereas, job demands refers to the burden such as unexpected tasks, time pressures, physical and psychological workloads<sup>24</sup>.

Past researchers support the relationship between job stressor and organizational loyalty in the context

of health care staff<sup>26,27,28</sup>. Previous study also support the association between job stressor and intention to quit<sup>29,30,31</sup>. Excessive workload and low authority to make decision will contribute to the increased intention to quit among health care staffs<sup>32,33,34</sup>. Based on the support from previous studies, this study will test four hypotheses.

H1 There is a significant negative influence of job demand on organizational loyalty

H2 There is a significant positive influence of job control on organizational loyalty

H3 There is a significant positive influence of job demand on intention to quit

H4 There is a significant negative influence of job control on intention to quit

## Material And Method

The population of this study were public health care staff which consist of trained nurses and medical assistant officers in several public health clinics and hospitals in Malaysia. Previous study showed that employment in the health care sector is among the high stress occupations in Malaysia<sup>34</sup>. In addition, past researchers also often associate health care staff with a high desire to leave the organization<sup>10,36</sup>.

The respondents were chosen using simple random sampling technique. The total samples obtained in this study was 340 public health care staffs. Overall, the majority of respondents were nurses (76%), female (66%), between 20 and 29 years old (49%) and have less than 5 years working tenure (42%). This study uses cross-sectional research design with quantitative data approach.

The Job Content Questionnaire used in this study to measure job stressor<sup>37</sup>. It has high reliability with Cronbach’s alpha value of 0.71 to 0.86. Furthermore, the Organizational Loyalty Questionnaire used to measure organizational loyalty<sup>38</sup>. The 7 items questionnaire have high reliability with Cronbach’s alpha of 0.84.

As for the intention to quit, this study used 3 items from Intention to Quit Questionnaire<sup>39</sup>. The instrument have high reliability with Cronbach alpha 0.92. All of the questionnaires were measured using 5 point Likert scales ranging from 1 “strongly disagree” to 5 “strongly agree”. Simple linear regression analysis was conducted to identify the influence of job stressor on organizational loyalty and intention to quit.

**Findings:** This study found that there is a significant influence of job stressors on organizational loyalty. Both job stressors explain 14% variance of organizational loyalty among health care staffs. Specifically, the findings showed that job demands negatively influence organizational loyalty. On the contrary, job control was found to be positively influence organizational loyalty. Therefore, the findings of this study accept hypotheses H1 and H2.

This study also found that job stressors were significantly influence the intention to quit. Both job stressors explain 13% variance of intention to quit among health care staffs. Specifically, it was found that job demand influence the intention to quit positively, whereas job control predicts the desire to quit negatively, thus accepting hypothesis H3 and H4 in this study.

**Table 1: Regression Analysis**

Model	Organizational Loyalty		Intention to Quit	
	$\beta$	t	$\beta$	t
Job Demand	-0.29**	-3.69	0.75**	5.89
Job Control	0.42**	7.01	-0.51**	-5.21
R	0.37		0.37	
R <sup>2</sup>	0.14		0.13	
F	27.21**		25.90**	

\*\*Significant at the level of two-tail( $p < 0.01$ )

**Discussion**

This could be one of a very few study that examine the causal relationship between job stressors and organizational loyalty especially among health care staffs in Malaysia. Based on the results of regression analysis, this study found that the presence of job stressors in the workplace can cause changes in the workers’ intention to stay in the health care organization. The findings of this study was consistent with the findings of previous research<sup>40</sup>.

Specifically, this study shows that higher job demands will contribute to a lower organizational loyalty. The finding is in line with previous study which shows the negative association between job demands and organizational loyalty<sup>42,43</sup>. Health care staffs who are often overworked and overwhelmed with task will tend to leave the organization.

On the contrary, this study found that job control will increase the organizational loyalty. The results support

previous study which found that job control positively related with organizational loyalty<sup>26,28</sup>. Hence, when a health care staff is given freedom to make decisions about his appointed tasks, the staff tends to help organizations to succeed and continue to stay in the organization in the future. This is probably because the staff felt that the authority given to them reflects the employers’ trust in them, so they tend to be more committed in their work.

Other than organizational loyalty, this study also found that job stressors influence the intention to quit among health care staffs. Specifically, this study found that the increase in job demand will increase the employees’ intention to quit. This finding supports previous studies that positively associated job demands with intention to quit among health care staffs<sup>10,31,36</sup>.

The findings also showed that the health care staffs who often work hard to complete their task within a limited time will tend to think of quitting their current job. Basically, high job demands can increase employees’ emotional, mental and physical fatigue. Therefore, to avoid being constantly confronted with the situation, the employees tend to think about leaving the organization in the future.

Furthermore, this study found that employees who have higher job control, will less likely to quit their job. This finding supported previous studies that found significant association between job control and intention to quit<sup>10,31,34</sup>. When employees are given less freedom to make decisions regarding their assigned task, they will feel dissatisfied with their work and as a result, they tend to think about quitting their current job. It is because individuals’ perceptions of their ability to manage and controlling their work is what predicts their actions to quit.

**Conclusion**

This study provide the additional value in literature by expanding the causal relationship between job stressor, organizational loyalty and intention to quit in the context of health care staffs. However, it would be beneficial for future researcher to expand the research among health care staffs in the private sector too. Job demand and job control was found to be significantly associated with the employees’ workplace behaviour. The findings of this study revealed that managing the job stressor would be beneficial to prevent the loss of employees in the health care organization.

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