

Does Organisational Commitment Mediate the Relationship Between Communication Satisfaction and Employee Turnover Intention?

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An extensive body of literature has studied the costs related to employee turnover. These studies mainly discussed the cost related to losing productivity, recruiting processes for the new individual, and finally costs related to providing training courses. An employee's intention to quit can be influenced by several behavioural, individual, and organisational variables. This paper aims to provide greater understanding of the organisational factors that might affect an employee's intention to quit. Specifically, this paper will try to find the effect of the communication satisfaction system and organisational commitment on the intention to quit. This paper is using social exchange theory as the underpinning theory to explain the principles of reciprocity between the organisation and the employee. It was proposed that employees are more likely to develop lower levels of commitment and consequently they will have higher levels of intent to quit when they perceive an unfavourable working environment. The results of this study show that two dimensions of communication satisfaction (supervisory communication and corporate communication) influence positively organisational commitment. Furthermore, four dimensions of organisational commitment (personal feedback, supervisory communication, corporate communication and media quality) have a direct negative relationship with turnover intention. Results also show that there is a significant negative relationship between organisational commitment and turnover intention. And finally, the mediating effect of organisational commitment is to partially mediate the relationship between communication satisfaction and turnover intention.

Key words: *Communication satisfaction, organisational commitment, turnover intention.*

Introduction

Turnover is a very costly event and has received much attention in the literature of HRM. Turnover intention is the direct predictor of actual turnover because employees with high turnover intention affect other employees and their work performance in a negative manner (Hancock, Allen, Bosco, McDaniel, & Pierce, 2013; Harris, Kacmar, & Witt 2005; Hom & Griffeth, 1991).

Employees are the most important resource because an organisation's success often depends on the commitment of the employees (Dhar, 2015; Farooqui, & Nagendra, 2014; Kehoe & Wright, 2013). Strong employee commitment in an organisation will thus result in low worker turnover (Ahmad & Rainyee, 2014; Jehanzeb, Rasheed, & Rasheed, 2013; Welty, Burton, & Wells, 2014; Zopiatis, Constanti, & Theocharous, 2014).

Important organisational variables including leadership, compensation systems, job satisfaction, and alternative job opportunities have been studied in relation to turnover and turnover intentions (Abbasi & Hollman, 2000; Alexandrov, Babakus, & Yavas, 2007; Amankwaa & Anku-Tsedee, 2015; Griffeth, Hom & Gaertner 2000; Wells & Pearchey, 2011).

It is through communication of one kind or another that employees learn what is expected of them, find out how to do their jobs, and become aware of what managers think of their work (Jackson & Schuler, 1995). As communication plays such an important role in organisational life, effective communication may be related to favourable organisational commitment and low intentions to quit (Ballard & Seibold, 2006; Kim & Lee, 2014).

Literature Review

Turnover Intention

Turnover intention has been defined as one's behavioural attitude to withdraw from the organisation (Aydogdu & Asikgil, 2011). For the purpose of this study intention to quit and turnover intention were defined similarly. Numerous researchers have attempted to answer the question of what determines the intention to quit by investigating possible antecedents of employees' intentions to quit (Cohen, Blake, & Goodman, 2016; Jehanzeb, Rasheed, & Rasheed, 2013; Kalliath & Beck, 2001; Matz, Wells, Minor, & Angel, 2013; Tnay, Othman, Siong, & Lim, 2013).

Some researchers view employee turnover as dysfunctional behaviour (Carson, Shanock, Heggstad, Andrew, Pugh, & Walter, 2012; Nadiri & Tanova, 2010). Such dysfunctional behaviours have affected the organisational level, and there is strong evidence that higher

turnover has replacement and recruitment costs (Deery & Iverson, 1996; Duffield, Roche, Homer, Buchan, & Dimitrelis, 2014; Katsikea, Theodosiou, & Morgan, 2015).

Intention to quit the organisation is related to actually leaving the organisation. This is based on the theory of reasoned action which links attitudes, behavioural intentions, and behavioural action. This theory assume that the best predictor of actual behaviour is intention which is determined by attitude and social normative perception regarding the behaviour (Fishbein & Azjen, 1975).

Previous scholars argued that intention to quit can be affected by many factors, including job satisfaction, organisational commitment, role conflict, role ambiguity, organisational citizenship behaviour, and perceived organisational support.

Given the fact that job satisfaction is a result of communication satisfaction (Den Hartog, Boon, Verburg, & Croon, 2013; Men, 2014), organisational commitment is a positive outcome of an employee for being satisfied (Giauque, Resenterra, & Siggen, 2014; Leite, Rodrigues, & Albuquerque, 2014). It is possible to theoretically suggest that employees who are happy with their organisation will be less likely to have intention to quit their jobs.

While actual quitting behaviour is of primary interest to employers and researchers, intention to quit is argued to be a strong surrogate indicator for such behaviour. Organisational commitment and communication satisfaction are among the factors that contribute to people's intention to quit their jobs (Firth, Mellor, Moore, & Loquet, 2004).

Communication satisfaction

Downs and Hazen (1977) defined communication satisfaction as a "summing up" of an individual's satisfaction with information flow and relationship variables. Communication satisfaction also has been generally defined as "an individual's satisfaction with various aspects of communication in his or her organisation" (Crino & White, 1981). According to Hetch (1978), communication satisfaction refers to "the affective response to the fulfillment of expectation-type standards" in message exchange processes and "symbolizes an enjoyable, fulfilling experience."

Studies find that satisfaction with co-workers fulfils an employee's emotional needs in the organisation (Baranik, & Eby, 2016; Humphrey, Ashforth, & Diefendorff, 2015) and feelings of attachment to others in the organisation (Wahyuni, Christiananta, & Eliyana, 2014). Moreover, an employee who is less satisfied with co-workers tends to find a workplace less enjoyable (Chancellor, Layous, & Lyubomirsky, 2015; Sherony & Green 2002; Tews, Michel, Xu, & Drost, 2015) and feels less obligated to the organisation (Burt 2001).

Empirical research indicates that communication satisfaction can be multidimensional (Bakanauskienė, Bendaravičienė, & Krikštolaitis, 2015; Crino & White, 1981; Dawson, Madera, Neal, & Chen, 2014; Downs & Hazen, 1977; Hartog et. al, 2013). Research found communication satisfaction to be positively related to outcomes such as job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and job performance and negatively related to the intent to leave one's organisation (Clampitt & Downs, 1993; Hartog et. al, 2013; Men, 2014; Pincus, 1986; Rings, Stinson & Johnson, 1979; Varona, 1996).

The most popular multidimensional measure of communication satisfaction is based on the work of Downs & Hazen (1977). They originally found eight factors within their scale.

Supervisory communication refers to upward and downward communication with immediate supervisors. Subordinate communication focuses on both upward and downward communication with subordinates. Thus, the three dimensions (personal feedback, supervisory communication, and subordinate communication) represent communication outcomes in interpersonal contexts. Co-worker communication includes the flow of horizontal and informal communication (e.g., grapevine). Organisational integration involves information that employees receive within their immediate work environments or units. Co-worker communication and organisational integration dimensions reflect communication experiences in group contexts. Corporate information relates to the overall functioning of the organisation (e.g., governing action, organisational changes, company financial information, and organisational goals). Communication climate is another broad dimension that reflects the level of satisfaction with personal and organisational issues (e.g., attitudes problem understanding, motivation, identification).

Another multidimensional measure of communication measured different perceived qualities of communication (e.g., trust, overload, direction) and concluded with a one item measure of satisfaction with communication in the organisation (Roberts & O'reilly, 1974). Researchers have generally measured communication satisfaction and job satisfaction using distinct scales (Downs & Hazen, 1977, Gregson, 1990). The current study will use the dimensions constructed by Downs and Hazen (1977).

Organisational Commitment

Organisational commitment is defined as the degree to which a person identifies and is involved with an organisation (Steers, Mowday & Porter 1979). Commitment involves an active relationship with the organisation such that individuals are willing to give something of themselves in order to contribute to the organisation's well-being (Steers, Mowday & Porter 1979; Mowday, Steers, & Porter's, 1977). Another definition was developed by Mowday, Porter, and Steer, (1982): "the relative strength of an individual's identification with and

involvement in a particular organisation ... can be characterized by a strong belief in and acceptance of the organisation's goals and a strong desire to maintain membership of the organisation.”

There have been two major attempts to provide a theoretical framework of organisational commitment. The first of these was the multivariate predictive framework that consisted of two parts: (a) the antecedents of commitments, and (b) the outcomes of commitment (Steers, 1977). Research on organisational commitment shows that study designs draw heavily on the multivariate predictive framework (Eisenberg, Monge, & Miller, 1983; Leiter & Maslach, 1988).

The second theoretical framework proposed by Reichers, (1985) suggests that organisational commitment can be accurately understood as a collection of multiple commitments to the various groups that comprise an organisation. These multiple identifications with various groups, both inside and outside the organisation, constitute multiple commitments.

Hypothesis Development

Communication Satisfaction and Intention to Quit

Job satisfaction affects the determination of whether one stays or leaves the organisation (Abdul Rub, El-Jardali, Jamal & Al-Rub, 2016; Biegger, De Geest, Schubert, & Ausserhofer, 2016).

In a similar vein, scholars argued that employee satisfaction is a primary factor that influences employee turnover. Interestingly employee job satisfaction was influenced by five factors including pay, integration (the process of achieving a unified effort among various organisational units), instrumental communication (coordination of efforts among employees or work groups in the performance of tasks), formal communication (providing feedback on the performance of the organisation's different operational parts), and centralisation (transmitting information about the goals of the organisation or specific directions about tasks to be performed) (Steers, Mowday & Porter 1979).

It has been indicated in the literature that organisations that are practicing good communication can help their employees to successfully complete their tasks, create a groovy work environment, and increase job satisfaction, which can decrease the turnover intention (Ballard & Seibold, 2006). Based on the above arguments the following hypothesis was developed.

H1: Communication satisfaction is negatively related to intention to quit.



Communication Satisfaction and Organisational Commitment

The construct of organisational commitment has been researched extensively in the past. Some of these studies have demonstrated the relationships between commitment and several organisational variables. However organisational processes have been ignored as potential determinants of commitment (Putti, Aryee, & Phua, 1990). One of these organisational processes that have been ignored is member satisfaction with organisational communication practices. In particular, there is a lack of research on the relationship between communication satisfaction and organisational commitment.

Until now, few studies have supported a relationship between communication satisfaction and organisational commitment (Downs, 1991; Putti, Aryee, & Phua, 1990). Putti, Aryee, and Phua (1990) explored the impact of communication on organisational commitment in an engineering company in Singapore. Potvin's (1991) study addressed the relationship between communication satisfaction and organisational commitment in three US organisations.

Downs (1991) studied the relationship between communication satisfaction and organisational commitment in two Australian organisations. She found that a positive relationship existed between communication satisfaction and organisational commitment.

Downs and his colleagues conducted a study on cross-cultural comparisons of relationships between organisational communication and organisational commitment (Downs, Downs, Potvin, Varona, Gribas, & Ticehurst, 1995) by comparing the results obtained in American, Australian, and Guatemalan organisations. Satisfaction with supervisory communication was a much greater predictor than that of any other factor.

H2: Communication satisfaction positively related to organisational commitment.

Organisational Commitment and Intention to Leave

Even though there is an overwhelming amount of research supporting organisational commitment as antecedents of turnover, to date, the strongest and most direct precursor of turnover has been found to be the intention to quit (Tett & Meyer, 1993).

Martin and Hafer (1995) examined how the multiplicative interaction of job involvement and organisational commitment predict turnover intentions differently between different categories of employees. In a study Yang, Wan, and Fu (2012) found that that in order to predict whether employees will leave an organisation it is necessary to identify their commitment to stay. Organisational commitment's role as a predictor of turnover intention also informed the work of Joo and Park (2010).

Research indicates that an employee's tendency to leave an organisation can be represented as a general tendency that consists of different facets of withdrawal intentions (Jaros, Jermier, Koehler, & Sincich, 1993). There is a relatively high correlation between organisational commitment and behavioural intention, which represent the actual turnover. Mathieu and Zajac (1990) found average correlations between commitment and intention to search, intention to leave and turnover behaviour. On the basis of the above theoretical elements the following hypotheses is proposed:

H3: Organisational commitment is negatively related to intention to quit.

Relationship between Communication Satisfaction and Employee Intention to Leave Through Organisational Commitment

There are some factors with the relationship between satisfaction and turnover intention, e.g. commitment and general economy. The personnel who are committed to the organisation and believe that they cannot find any other job because of bad general economy prefer to stay in the organisation.

Studies suggested organisational commitment moderates the relationship between communication satisfaction and the intention to quit (Naz, & Gul, 2014). Naz and Gul conducted study at Pakistan and the results gathered among nurses suggested that organisational commitment moderates the relationship between job satisfaction and intention to quit.

The mediating effect of organisational commitment in the relationship between communication satisfaction and the intention to quit received less attention. Nevertheless, previous studies indicates that supervisory support and communication satisfaction has a positive effect on organisational commitment (Al-Hussaini, 2008; Chen, Silverthorne, & Hung, 2006). Organisational commitment is a bond or linking between an employee and organisation, when the organisational theme becomes an employee's identification and involvement (Beecroft, Dorey, & Wenten, 2008; Borkowski, Amann, Song, & Weiss, 2007; Chen, Chu, Wang, & Lin, 2008).

Very few studies investigate the mediating role of organisational commitment in the relationship between communication satisfaction and the intention to quit, e.g. (Mustamil, Yazdi1, & Ali, 2014). Other studies look into this relationship by investigating other roles such as human resource development factors, career growth on turnover intentions (Nawaz, & Pangil, 2016). Thus, the next hypothesis is:

H4: Communication satisfaction is negatively related to intention to quit through organisational commitment

Methods

Procedure/ Sample/ Data Collection

Randomly selected employees were invited to contribute in the study by completing the survey questionnaire. Respondents were full-time employees working on a middle-class level. The organisations selected were from the telecommunication sector in Amman, Jordan. The population of this paper is comprised of 540 middle level employees. A total 300 questionnaires were distributed and 213 (71% response rate) were received back. 206 were useful.

Table 1: Participants demographics (n = 206)

Characteristics	Freq.	%
Gender		
Male	133	64
Female	73	36
Education Level		
Less than University degree	0	0
University undergraduate	167	81
Postgraduate	39	18
Experience in the present job		
Less than 5 years	89	43
5 years and above	117	56
Age		
Less than 25	42	22
25 years-35	66	32
Above 35 years	98	47
Marital status		
Single	86	41
Married	120	59

Questionnaire was composed in Arabic for ease of understanding.

Measures

Communication satisfaction was measured by using a scale constructed by Downs and Hazen (1977). This scale measures the employees' perceptions about the communication occurring within the organisation and has eight distinct dimensions. The items are measured by using a

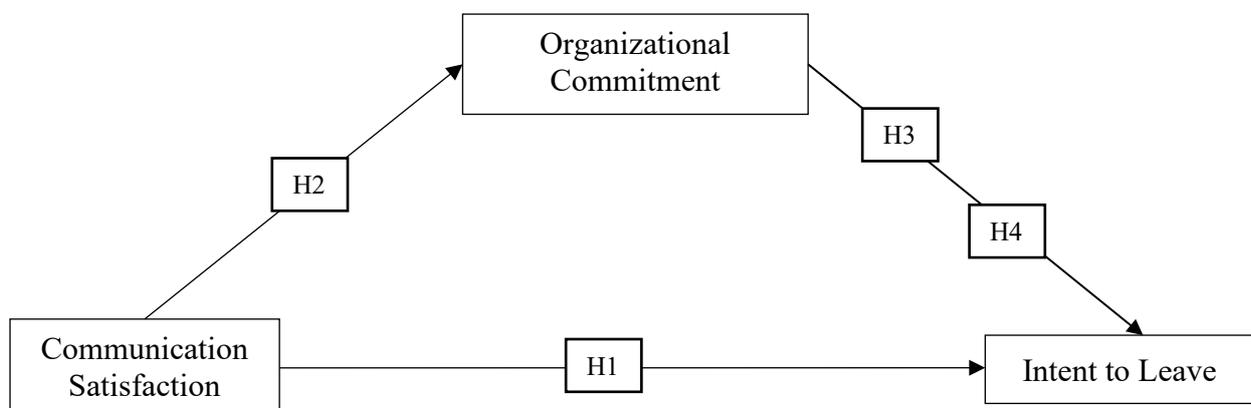
7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = “Very Dissatisfied”, to 7 = “Strongly Satisfied”. This scale is used to measure the extent to which they were satisfied with seven of these eight communication dimensions of their respective organisations, namely communication climate, organisational integration, personal feedback, supervisory communication, media quality, organisational perspective, and co-worker communication. One dimension that is not included is subordinate communication because the respondents will be among subordinates, and they do not have employees reporting to them.

For *Organisational commitment* 15-items were employed to assess organisational commitment. The construction of items was originally derived from Steers, Mowday and Porter’s (1979) Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ). The items are measured by using 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 to 7: 1 = “Strongly Disagree” to 7 = “Strongly Agree.” The Cronbach’s Alpha value of these items ranges from 0.82 to 0.93. Some examples of the questions used were: “I feel very little loyalty to this organisation,” “This organisation really inspires the very best in me in the way of job performance,” “I am extremely glad that I chose this organisation to work for over.”

To measure ‘Employee’s intention to leave’ this study used a two-item scale to assess intent to quit. The items were measured by using 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 to 7: 1 = “Strongly Disagree” to 7 = “Strongly Agree.” These two items were constructed by Begley and Czajka (1993).. The Items are “As soon as I can find a better job, I’ll quit,” and “I often think about quitting my job.” The Cronbach’s Alpha value of these items is 0.79 and 0.76. Two items measure intention to quit.

Proposed Theoretical Framework

Figure 1. Proposed Framework



Results and Discussion

Hypothesis Testing

H1: Communication satisfaction is positively related to organisational commitment.

Based on the analysed data, the multiple regression results on the relationship between communication satisfaction and organisational commitment revealed that 34.2 percent (R square = 0.342) of the variance in the organisational commitment had been significantly explained by two dimensions of communication satisfaction, which are supervisory communication and corporate communication. Supervisory communication had found to be the most influential factor in explaining organisational commitment as it has the highest β value of 0.629. Therefore, hypothesis 1 is partially supported. The following table 2 illustrates the multiple regression results on the relationship between communication satisfaction and organisational commitment.

Table 2: Multiple regression of communication satisfaction's dimensions and organisational commitment

	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
Personal feedback	0.199	0.178	0.93	1.115	0.267
Supervisory communication	0.629	0.200	0.419	3.154	0.002**
Co-worker communication	0.166	0.180	0.100	0.924	0.358
Organisation integration	0.006	0.164	0.004	0.039	0.769
Corporate Communication	0.546	0.163	0.339	3.342	0.001**
Communication climate	0.108	0.190	0.053	0.566	0.572
Media Quality	0.230	0.184	0.161	0.215	0.214
R Square 0.342; F=8.006; R=0.584; **p<0.01; *p<0.05					

The results from the current study are consistent with the study of Carrière and Bourque (2009), who studied internal communication practices, communication satisfaction, job satisfaction, and organisational commitment. The results of their study found that internal communication practices explained 17.5 per cent of the variation in affective organisational commitment. However, these effects were fully mediated by communication satisfaction when job satisfaction and affective organisational commitment were regressed against both internal communication practices and communication satisfaction.

Downs (1991) studied the relationship between communication satisfaction and organisational commitment in two Australian organisations. She discovered that Supervisory Communication, Personal Feedback, and Communication Climate were the strongest communication predictors of organisational commitment. The result in this study showed a positive relationship between supervisory communication and corporate communication with organisational commitment. However, other dimensions such as personal feedback, co-worker communication, organisational integration, communication climate and media quality does not influence organisational commitment.

H2: Communication satisfaction is negatively related to intention to quit

The multiple regression results indicated that only 9.40 percent (R square = 0.094) of the total variance in intention to quit has been significantly explained by the four dimensions of communication satisfaction, which are personal feedback, supervisory communication, corporate communication and media quality. From the result, these four dimensions were significantly and negatively related to the intention to quit. Media quality had the highest $f^3 = 0.631$. Therefore, hypothesis 2 is partially supported. Table 3 presents the multiple regression results between communication satisfaction and intention to quit.

Table 3: Multiple regression of communication satisfaction's dimensions and intention to quit

Variable Entered	Intention to Quit				
	Un-standardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	sig
Personal feedback	-0.479	0.193	-0.234	-2.485	.014**
Supervisory communication	-0.464	0.216	-0.325	-2.151	0.034**
Co-worker communication	-0.126	0.195	-0.079	-.0647	0.519
Organisation integration	0.005	0.177	0.003	0.027	0.979
Corporate communication	-0.408	0.177	-0.266	-2.308	0.023**
Communication climate	0.369	0.206	0.191	1.794	0.067
Media quality	-0.631	0.199	0.466	3.176	0.002**
R Square = 0.094 F=2.714 R=0.150 **P<0.01 *P<0.05					

The majority of studies that tried to examine the predictors of the intention to quit examine variables such as job satisfaction. To date few studies examine the relationship between communication satisfaction and intention to quit. Hsu (2011), in their study regarding employee job satisfaction, communication satisfaction, organisational commitment, and intent

to quit in the hospitality industry found a negative significant relationship between communication satisfaction and the intent to quit.

This study found that personal feedback, supervisory communication, corporate communication and media quality negatively and significantly explained an employee's intention to quit. However, there is no significant relationship between co-worker communication, organisational integration and communication climate with the intention to quit. Similar results were found in Moore's (2001) study, which found that low levels of communication between management and subordinates contributed to increase the subordinates' feelings of stress and hence to their intention to quit.

In the same vein, Scott, Connaughton, Diaz-Saenz, Maguire, Ramirez, Richardson, Shaw, and Morgan (1999) examined the impact of several communication variables with multiple targets on the intent to leave. They identified six communication variables and four identification targets in terms of their relationship with the intent to leave and they found that both communication and identification contribute to one's turnover intentions.

H3: Organisational commitment is negatively related to the intention to quit.

Table 4 exhibits the correlation results between organisational commitment and the intention to quit. The correlation results revealed that organisational commitment and the intention to quit are significantly and negatively related. The result show a strong relationship between both organisational commitment and the intention to quit (correlation coefficient, $r = 0.649^{**}$). As such, hypothesis 3 is supported.

Table 4: Pearson Correlation Analysis between organisational commitment and intention to quit

		Organisational Commitment	Intention to Quit
Organisational Commitment	Pearson Correlation	1	-0.649**
	Sig. (2-Tailed)	0.000	0.000
	N	206	206
Intention to quit	Pearson Correlation	-0.649**	1
	Sig. (2-Tailed)	0.000	0.000
	N	206	206
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level			

The relationship between organisational commitment and turnover intention is well established in the literature. The results of the present study were found in the previous literature. Martin and Hafer (1995) examined how the multiplicative interaction of job involvement and organisational commitment predict turnover intentions differently between full time and part

time employees in a Telemarketing Company. The study revealed that work-related attitudes (organisational commitment and involvement) showed full-time versus part-time employment status to be a significant predictor of turnover intentions. Hence, employees exhibiting low organisational commitment and involvement showed higher turnover intentions. Whitener and Walz (1993) assessed the exchange theory determinants of affective and continuance commitment and turnover intentions. It was shown that affective commitment, but not continuance commitment, significantly predicted intent to turnover and actual voluntary turnover. Mathieu and Zajac (1990) found average correlations between commitment and the intention to search, intention to leave and turnover behaviour. In line with existing research, this study also found a significant negative relationship between organisational commitment and the intention to quit. It is worth mentioning that mixed results were found in the recent literature. Tnay, Othman, Siong, and Lim (2013) investigated the influence of job satisfaction and organisational commitment on employee turnover intention in a production industry. The research findings showed that organisational commitment had no significant relationship towards turnover intention among the employees within the organisation.

H4: Communication satisfaction negatively related to the intention to quit through organisational commitment.

Table 5 exhibits partial correlation test results between communication satisfaction and the intention to quit through organisational commitment. The partial correlation test revealed that there is a significant relation between communication satisfaction and the intention to quit through organisational commitment (correlation coefficient, $r = 0.419^{**}$). Hypothesis 4 is supported.

Table 5: Partial Correlation Test between the relationship of communication satisfaction and the intention to quit through organisational commitment

Control Intention Variables		Communication satisfaction (CS)	Intention to quit (ITQ)
Organisational Commitment	CS Correlation	1.000	0.419**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.008
	df	0	167
	ITQ Correlation	0.419**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.008	0.000
	df	167	0

The partial correlation test in this study found a significant relationship between communication satisfaction and intention to quit through organisational commitment. Although there are no previous studies on this relationship, the positive result between the



relationship between communication satisfaction and organisational commitment, as well as the positive result between organisational commitment and the intention to quit is believed to be one factor that contributes to the positive relationship between communication satisfaction and the intention to quit through organisational commitment.

Conclusion and Recommendation

These findings have important practical and theoretical implications. Managers will not be able to foster organisational commitment through internal communication practices unless they recognise and appreciate what information is valued by employees. Furthermore, managers must have a clear understanding of both the quantity and quality of information desired by employees if they are to design internal communication systems that meet the information needs of employees. One must consider the possibility that, for employees, communication satisfaction represents a fundamental yardstick against which all of the organisation's activities and change initiatives are measured. This possibility is supported by research from the field of change management. Furthermore, implementing a comprehensive communication system will help to reduce the intentions of an employee to quit their job and hence will consequently reduce the actual quitting, which, as we stated in the beginning of this study, is an additional cost to the company, causes the loss of talented employees, and curbs the productivity of the organisation.

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