Determinant Factors of Labor Turnover- A New Perspective

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Author's contribution

The sole author designed, analyzed, interpreted and prepared the manuscript.

ABSTRACT

Purpose: The study aims to develop a conceptual framework based on the existing labor turnover model and test it empirically. The model tested how dissatisfaction with government rules and regulations, work environment, social environment, and shock to the system and demographic factors impact turnover.

Design/Methodology/Approach: This is a cross-sectional study conducted based on data collected from 384 employees who have left the garment industry in Sri Lanka. Data were analyzed through Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and Multiple Regression Analysis.

Findings: The results indicate dissatisfaction with government rules and regulations, work environment, social environment, a shock to the system, age, service, and income significantly influence labor turnover.

Research Limitations/Implications: The scope of this study did not cover factors that can affect employees' turnover, such as dissatisfaction with low performance, voice, and neglect of work, high absenteeism, and grievances.

Practical Implications: Policy-makers can use the tested model to determine the causes of the existing issue of labor turnover and intervene to formulate strategies/policies, devise solutions for the same. Management intervention would be effective to help handle and minimize problems associated with the existing issue of labor turnover.

Originality/Value: To date, previous studies are based on the existing employees' intention to quit. However, the present study considers employees who have already quit the industry; thus, the study fills the empirical gap in the area of research on labor turnover.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The problem of labor turnover has continued to affect organizations for many decades adversely. The loss of losing skilled employees and those experienced can be irreparable, especially for a manufacturing firm. The impact of these may rarely be justified in numbers; therefore, its gravity is hardly noticeable and reach the formal discussion level. On the other hand, training a new employee will involve costs and time, slow down production speed, and impair productivity. Besides, the garment industry is one of the key export income earners in Sri Lanka's economy. In light of the above, addressing determinants of labor turnover is critical. Many studies focus on identifying the root causes of labor turnover. Most of these studies do not go beyond employee satisfaction and find other social, economic, and political factors impacting turnover.

The research on voluntary employee turnover has two primary roots or approaches. The first is the traditional approach, concerned with researching the intermediate relationship between job satisfaction and employee turnover. This approach states that employee turnover has been determined with multiple phases and survey data sources and analyzed with structural equations.

However, the traditional turnover model focuses only on explained only part of the employee withdrawals. Generally, the theories of voluntary turnover depend on management and personal concepts. To date, many empirical researchers have conducted research based on the above-mentioned labor turnover models. The results of these studies, therefore, described in-depth the underlying factors in those models. Zimmerman, and Darnold [1], by conducting a meta-analysis, reported the supervisor behavior has a strong relationship between employee turnover (p=.16), self-rating (p=0.014), objective measures (p=.02). In short, most of the previous studies prove that traditional models ignored a holistic view of employee withdrawals.

Park, & Min, [2], in their study “Turnover intention in the hospitality industry: A meta-analysis,” updated an earlier meta-analysis of turnover antecedents by Zimmerman and Darnold [1]. This study revealed that “work attitudes, job strains, and role stressors/inter-role conflicts” significantly affect employees’ intention to quit. It is proof that not only management or personal matters but also many other factors affected employees' migration, which many previous researchers did not propose.

The second approach is Hulin's [3] concept about turnover. He advocated expanding variables in the traditional models and focused on employee attitudes and perceptions. He revealed that employee behavior might be a cause for the withdrawals. In addition, such findings can offer an underlying psychological mechanism, which could support the researchers in this discipline to concern how psychological aspects influence employee withdrawals.

Most of the models introduce have not empirical validity. However, many researchers developed conceptual models to determine real causes for employee withdrawals, even though not tested empirically. The Effort–Recovery Theory explained how presentism affects satisfaction by mediating employee engagement [4]. There is a debate on How Hulin’s propositions and the effort-recovery theory. The research studies that emphasized the employees’ satisfaction with their job vary with the organization and job itself.

The major weakness of these concepts and models of labor turnover is the lack of empirical validity of the causal relationship. Studies in this sphere of research are limited at the local level. The shock to the system model refers to uncertainties and risks triggered by the covid-19 pandemic outbreak in the year 2020. Hence, the pandemic was a recent occurrence that gave rise to a series of adverse events and consequences, whereas reliable data on its magnitude is not yet documented. Also, the social and economic consequences of the pandemic may outweigh those related to health concerns. In this scenario, it is reasonable to assume that empirical studies addressing determinants of the labor turnover issue with special reference to shock to the system amidst the covid-19 pandemic is very limited in the Sri Lankan setting. This paper fulfills the existing knowledge gap by conducting the present study, thus identifying determinant factors of labor turnover to add a new model to the theory.

1.1 Existing Models of Labor Turnover

Barnays [5] paid attention to employee withdrawals and researched this area,
considered one of the first studies in turnover. Since then, Barnad (1938), Simon (1945), March, & Simom (1958) [5] are also contributed to this doctrine. Among them, Lefkowitz's [6] study was critical. Lefkowitz [6] explained four main factors from observations related to labor turnover. The first factor is the length of employment. Most turnovers occur during the beginning stages of employees' job lives. Moreover, the rate of turnover sharply declines the longer an employee has been on the job. Thus, one of his propositions is that turnover is inversely related to the length of employment. The second is that turnover rates are rarely uniform throughout an organization. The third is that turnover is inversely related to the local unemployment rate. Under conditions of relatively full employment, turnover increases. Last is that turnover is positively related to absenteeism. Further, Lefkowitz [6] highlighted three leading causes for the turnover, such as inability to do the job, dissatisfaction with the job, and dissatisfaction with pay.

In 1958 [7], March and Simon developed a model to determine employee turnover. March and Simon identified that employee withdrawals depend on their perception. He has developed a model concentrating on "Equity Theory." It is based on equity, or how organizations can motivate their employees equally. March & Simon have developed conceptual models for labor turnover [8]. This model is the earliest model of employee turnover (March & Simon, 1958, quoted in Mobley, [7]). This model consisted of two phases: (a) "the perceived desirability of movement from the organization" and (b) "the perceived ease of movement from the organization."

The model was concerned with different psychological factors related to individual turnover and economic, organizational, and demographic variables. It recommended that employees leave because of their perception and attitude towards the job or an organization. Even though it provides little help to use as a subject, it has provided a solid foundation for the concept of labor turnover for an empirical study. Mobley [7] has reviewed this model and cited that this model has generated various hypotheses, taking help from earlier research. Thus, this approach is suitable for model generation, but it is not a substitute for subsequent, direct evaluation. In this model, there are many two-variable relationships. However, these relationships have given little help to evaluate turnover and its determinants.

Pettman [5] reviewed this model and concluded the following. Concerning the first part of the model, "perceived desirability of movement," he mentioned that job satisfaction is a sufficient but not necessary condition for high turnover. There is a hypothesized relationship between the predictability of instrumental relationships and satisfaction. Further, he concluded that the congruence of work-time patterns and other roles with satisfaction and, consequently, turnover. The hypothesis that conformity of the job concerning self-concept is associated with satisfaction and, subsequently, turnover. Further, the hypotheses involving workgroup size, rewards, education, and perception of internal job rotations.

With the second part of the model, "perceived ease of movement," he concluded a significant correlation between unemployment levels and turnover rates. Thus, according to Pettman [5], some of the hypotheses of this model have been proved. Further, there is support for the age, experience, specialization hypotheses, and equivocal support for the sex and social status hypotheses.

Schwab & Dyer (1974, quoted in Mobley, [7]) has reviewed this model and concluded that turnover is related to the desirability of movement, as indexed by the satisfaction measures, but not to ease of movement, as indexed by the perception of available job opportunities, and the individual characteristics affecting job change.

Mobley [7] suggested that even though empirical data was consistent with many of the hypotheses, there have been direct microscopic evaluations of the multiple and sequential determinants of turnover suggested by this model. However, this model has contributed to labor turnover by giving attention to an individual, organizational, and market conditions related to employee turnover.

Horn & Griffith [8] supported Mobley's [9] "intermediate linkages model." However, Peters, Jackofsky, & Salter (1981) [10] showed that five determinants from Mobley, i.e., "job satisfaction, thoughts of quitting, an expectation of finding an alternative job, search behavior, and intention to quit" has an impact on employees' withdrawal behavior.
James L. Price first published the Price's model in 1977 in his book, "The Study of Turnover" [7]. He identified determinants and intervening variables of turnover. Labor turnover depends on pay levels, integration, communication, and centralize decision-making. Job satisfaction and chances for finding another job are intervening variables between the determinants and turnover [7]. Price identified internal organizational factors and excluded external factors from the model. Moreover, this model has not paid attention to employee perception regarding withdrawal intention.

Bluedorn [7] revised this model and found no hypothesized interaction between satisfaction and opportunity. According to Bluedorn, another five empirical studies also obtained the same results. Bluedorn concluded that these empirical studies support the treatment of opportunity as a direct influence on turnover instead of intervening between satisfaction and turnover.

This model also has not explained the effects of other demographic variables such as social and cultural factors. Mobley [7] highlighted that satisfaction could be a direct casual factor rather than mediating variable. The model was reanalyzed in 1989. The analysis considered four propositions: administrative staff, formalization, integration, and innovation. However, the model remains as it existed in 1977 [11].

Mobley has presented the Intermediate Linkages Model, whose central theme focuses on the decision-making process for labor turnover. [7] It presents potential intervening factors for job satisfaction that affect turnover. In particular, Mobley theorized that job satisfaction has the following linkages. First, job satisfaction influence withdrawals, then employees evaluate expected utility by analyzing chances to have another job and the cost-benefit of the withdrawal. If they realized that withdrawal is more beneficial than the present situation, employees would analyze existing opportunities to leave. If it is more beneficial than existing benefits, they determine to leave.

According to Mobley [7], if turnover is to be treated as a process, it is necessary to use research designs that trace changes in many variables over time. However, that kind of research design has not been found. Another problem is the uncertainty of the hypothesized internal relationships involving the probability of finding a suitable alternative. This model explained that if employees get a chance, they may pay attention to withdrawals rather than wait to search for a job and quit.

Coverdale & Terborg (1980, quoted in Lee and Mitchell, [12] cited one of the failures of this model is these hypotheses. According to him, an employee will attempt to withdraw if they feel unhappy and might not wait for a suitable alternative. Miller [13], quoted in Lee and Mitchell, [12] explained that they might not know they have chances for withdrawals until they search for an alternative. Further, he concludes that the measurement of the variables may be relatively unreliable, inconsistent, or unstable. Another issue of these hypotheses is employees' attitude towards the labor market. According to the model, the labor market affects only in a risky situation. Miller [13], quoted in Lee & Mitchell, [14] mentioned that only when there is little chance of finding an alternative do such perceptions constrain negative job attitudes that lead to turnover.

The model is presented as a process, and it is not easy to use to test practical research problems. Most research on causes of turnover is cross-sectional rather than longitudinal. In 1979 Mobley, Griffith, Hand, & Meglino (quoted in Mobley, [7] revisited the model and added several causes for turnovers such as organization, job, and personal variables. Accordingly, organizational, occupational, personal, and economic labor market factors influence turnover through employees' perceptions.

The expanded model adds external environmental factors to the model. However, job satisfaction and job alternatives also consider as major determinants. However, this model was not tested empirically. Not only had that because of complexity many researchers were not tested this model for their studies. Thus, there is no empirical support for the model. This conceptual framework highlighted that satisfaction, expectations, and employees' value propositions could be managed if managers can diagnose the turnover. Youngblood, Mobley, & Meglino [15] stated that this model had many hypotheses that can be used for researches.

The Simplified model explains four types of primary determinants of turnover. They are external economy, internal organizational factors, family and social influence, and job satisfaction.
These determinants directly, indirectly, causally, or correlationally relate to labor turnover. Comparing other turnover models, this general model explains more determinants of turnover. However, these four general classes of determinants focusing on any one of them will lead to an incomplete and perhaps inadequate understanding of turnover. This model explains that turnover is ultimately an individual behavior.

Steers & Mowday’s multi-route model is another comprehensive model for turnover. This model has developed by Steers & Mowday [16], considering many factors. The first segment is the individual’s value system. This model emphasized that how employees’ value system influence their behavior regarding the job. Also, demographic factors and family responsibilities also major influencing factors of the turnover. A positive first impression can change employees’ values regarding the organization and reduce their intention to quit.

Lee & Mitchell [14] introduced the “Shocks to the System” model. It is a new concept on employee turnover. The shock might be positive or negative would be a caused to leave the job. “Shock to the system” depends on how far employees can understand the working environment. They highlighted that employees’ perception of the external environment would significantly cause employee withdrawal intention, and many previous turnover theories often ignore this phenomenon. Moreover, many external factors such as industry life cycle, job market, and government policies are also ignored from most of the theories. Lee & Mitchell explained three types of shocks, personal job related and non-job related and work-related factors, can be caused for the shock and influence withdrawal even though they are negative or positive.

Hom & Griffith [17] developed another model by incorporating all the theoretical perspectives. The rationale behind the model is that poor attitudes stimulate the termination process. Traditional thinking asserts that job satisfaction prompts turnover cognition, presuming that a dissatisfying work environment motivates the desire to escape. Considering all the empirical studies, Hom & Griffith’s [8] model specified a reciprocal influence between withdrawal cognition.

Hulin and colleagues [8] acknowledged that job alternatives and satisfaction positively correlate with turnover among each level of employees. They also recognized that the perception of employees is a significant cause of this behavior. Hulin [8] further highlighted that luck is another cause for turnover but does not explain how luck directly influences this behavior. Besides, Hulin [3] suggested that future researchers consider this a significant cause for turnover. Hulin [3] further mentioned that turnover correlates with employee behavior patterns. Griffith [18] identified eleven demographic predictors by conducting a meta-analysis with the published voluntary turnover researches.

Zheng & Lamond [19] indicate that training, size, the length of operation in local subsidiaries, and the nature of the industry are correlated with turnover. Wöcke & Heymann [20], doing cross-sectional studies with 1000 managers, revealed that demographic variables (age, race, and gender) and education impact employee quit. Generation Y and Generation X has different work values. Generation Y is different from Person–Organization (P–O) fit values than Generation X and Baby Boomers and affected their turnover intention [21].

Asimah [22] identified six (6) factors: “job insecurity, job dissatisfaction, lack of organizational commitment, poor working conditions, better job options, job stress, and unfair treatments” that have a strong influence on labor turnover with a predicted rate of 70.31%. The factors determining labor turnover in New Zealand are the “type of job, satisfaction, and employer commitment to staff retention and development” [23].

1.2 Excluded and Included Determinants

Authors draw references from the literature of previous empirical studies to develop a conceptual framework, i.e., proposed model, for the current study. Adopting this approach, authors have referred to research papers and publications from reputed journals. The variables that are considered to have good empirical support are included in the proposed model. Moreover, variables deemed to be confirmed but not supported by empirical evidence are also included in the proposed model.

Nevertheless, the variables discussed under the March & Simon (1958, quoted in Mobley, [7] model are excluded from the proposed model because of insufficient empirical evidence. March and Simon (1958, quoted in Mobley, [7]
suggested that intra-organizational transfer, satisfaction with the job, and extra-organizational alternatives will relate directly and negatively to employee turnover. However, empirical tests conducted later by Pettman [5]; Schwab and Dyer (1974, [14]; Fossceem, Keaveny, & Jackson (1977, quoted in Lee & Mitchell, [14] and Mobley [7] found no significant relationship between these variables and labor turnover.

Mobley's Intermediate Linkages Model [9], which presents a decision-making process for labor turnover, is also excluded from the proposed model. Similar to the model discussed earlier, and with several weaknesses, the empirical validity of this model is also very weak. Coverdale & Terborg (1980) conducted empirical tests of this model but failed to prove the proposed hypotheses. Tests carried out by them provide a good picture of the psychological decision-making process on labor turnover. However, Mobley [9] pointed out poor empirical validity; as such, these independent variables were excluded from the model proposed for this study.

According to Price's model [24], "pay" was one of the independent variables for the proposed model. Four other independent variables, namely "integration, instrumental communication, formal communication, and centralization," were excluded from the proposed model. According to empirical studies, these four variables were considered factors related to the organizational structure, showing lower significance on labor turnover. Therefore, those four structural factors are excluded from the proposed model.

Steers and Mowday [16] is mainly concerned with how employees' value systems affect their behavioral intention. Mobley [7] explained the weaknesses of the predictive power of this model. He argued that the proposed model does not take into consideration employees' value systems. Due to these reasons, variables of this model are excluded from the proposed model.

Lee and Mitchell's [14] Unfolding Model of Turnover was based on the concept of "shock to the system." This model is a new phenomenon to labor turnover theories. The proposed model concerns employees' satisfaction or dissatisfaction towards various aspects of the system. Therefore, this model provides the necessary information to determine the sewing machine operator's dissatisfaction with the system. Accordingly, this model is included in the proposed model. In this study, 'shock to the system' refers to the Life Threat (LT) and organizational changes imposed by employers triggered by the covid-19 pandemic. It can be noted that 'social mobility restrictions further influenced shock to the system.' At the same time, garment factories were identified as emerging clusters in the second wave reporting a high number of covid-19 patients.

The "Integration of Empirical Findings and Turnover" model by Hom and Griffith [17] was excluded from the proposed model. The rationale behind this model is employees' expected utility of withdrawal. It depends on antecedents of satisfaction, antecedents of commitment, and labor market through job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and withdrawal cognition. The proposed model is not concerned with the expected utility of withdrawal. Thus, all the variables of this model are excluded from the proposed model.

1.3 The Proposed Model

The proposed model developed is based on Mobley [9], Steers & Mowday (16), and Hulin [8]. These models have different propositions. Mobley [9] accepted thoughtless resigning, while Steers & Mowday [16] identified the dual turnover process. Hom & Griffith [17] and Hom et al. [25] state that some employees' behavior matches Mobley's intermediate linkages, but for some employees' not.

The dependent variable, labor turnover, was drawn from Mobley's [7] model. Remarkably, the variables of the working environment for the proposed model: organizational practices, rewards, supervision, and working conditions were drawn from those discussed under the "organizational" factors of Mobley's model [7]. Age, education, family income, and marital status were drawn from this model's "individual" factors [7].

Mobley's [7] model was concerned with individual value systems and perceptions for behavioral intentions. Even though Mobley's [7] model has less empirical validity, it is assumed that these variables are to be confirmed by future research. Hence, these factors are included in the proposed model for the present study. However, this relationship was not considered relevant due to its poor empirical validity, hence excluded from the proposed model.
The fifth demographic factor, "experience," is taken from Lefkowitz's [6], which was supported by Gray, & Phillips [26]; David [27]; Ji, & Kim [28]; Su (2021); and Wang & Wang, [29]. In line with prior literature, three other factors, local unemployment, absenteeism, and uniformity of labor turnover rates, are excluded from the proposed model.

Dissatisfaction with government rules and regulations and dissatisfaction with social environment variables are drawn from empirical studies. This selection depends on Hulin's proposition of adoption/withdrawal behavior. Hulin's central proposition indicates that several other factors could affect employees' withdrawals in addition to job satisfaction. Even though he did not propose the other factors, the central proposition provides a sound background to researchers to identify factors related to different employees. Based on this proposition and empirical findings, Hulin has identified the variables related to dissatisfaction with government rules and regulations and dissatisfaction with social environment variables. It can be noted that many other empirical studies related to labor turnover also recommend selecting these factors. Based on this rationale, the variables related to dissatisfaction with government rules and regulations and dissatisfaction were included in the proposed model.

1.4 Hypotheses

With the purpose of empirically test the proposed model, as shown in Fig. 1, it is intended to test the validity of the following hypotheses derived from it.

H1: “Labor Turnover mainly depends on three factors: dissatisfaction with government rules and regulations, dissatisfaction with the working environment, and dissatisfaction with the social environment.”

H2: "Dissatisfaction with government policies is determined by four main factors: Security of Employment (SE), Wages and other(WA) statutory allowances, annual Leave and Holidays (LH), and labor union rights(LR) have a significant impact on labor turnover.”

H3: "Dissatisfaction with the working environment is determined by organizational practices (OP), rewards and welfare (RW), working conditions (WC), and supervisory style (SS) have a significant impact on labor turnover.”

H4: “Dissatisfaction with the social environment is determined by sexual harassment (SH), housing facilities(HF), transportation facilities (TF), and social acceptance (SA) have a significant impact on labor turnover.”

H5: “Labor turnover depends on when employees shock to the environmental changes such as life threat (LT) and organizational changes (OC) due to Covid-19 pandemic.”

H6: “Labor turnover depends on such demographic factors as age, marital status, experience, education, and family income.”

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is a cross-sectional study and it is based on the data collected through the questionnaire. In order to analyze the data, different statistical methods were used. The Population of this study are sewing machine operators who have already left the garment industry in Sri Lanka. Main focus of the study is to develop a conceptual framework and test it empirically. The snowball sampling method is used to identify employees who have already left the industry. Nevertheless, the snowball method entails risk because it can be changed during the sampling process; however, this sampling method represents the population. Thus, it was considered appropriate to use in this study. Employees who left one factory to join employment in another were excluded from the sample. The total sample size was targeted as 384 respondents based on the sampling frame of Krejcie & Morgan [30].

To maintain content validity of the variables included in the questionnaire, which have been resultant from literature in prior empirical studies related to labor turnover theories and practices. Cronbach Alpha was conducted to test reliability. All variables exceeding the 0.7 Alpha value indicated that the questionnaire is reliable to collect data. The research hypotheses were tested using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and Multiple Regression Analysis.

3. RESULTS OF THE STUDY

3.1 Respondents Profile

The general characteristics of the respondents indicate that 82 percent of respondents are less than 27 years old, and the majority of sewing machine operators who resigned from the job are
young women. In terms of marital status, 91 percent are unmarried. Thirty-one percent have less than one year of service in the industry, while 41 percent earned less than US$20. Moreover, 72 percent have completed grade 10, and 19 percent have passed grade 12.

Overall, these demographic data show that most employees who left the industry are young, unmarried, less educated, and lower-income family groups with less than two years of service. Most of them are Y generations; generally, less responsible might be caused for this behavior. This condition positively causes higher labor turnover.

3.2 Results of the Regression Analysis and Discussion

The current study concludes that all hypotheses developed for this study were accepted. Table 01 presents regression results from H1 to H5, and Table 02 presents ANOVA results of the H6. The linear regression results are shown in models 1-5 in Table 01.

H1: “Labor Turnover (LT) mainly depends on three factors: dissatisfaction with government policies (GP), dissatisfaction with the working environment (WE), and dissatisfaction with the social environment (SE).”

In model 01, dissatisfaction with government policies, working environment, and social environment was regressed on labor turnover by causing a variance of 59 percent (R² = 0.587, P = 0.000). It was found (β values for GP= 0.437, WE= 0.443 and SE = .324) GP, WE, and SE to have a positive and significant impact on labor turnover by 59 percent. Hence, H1 can be accepted. Mobley [7] described how organizational variables, individual variables, and economic labor market variables affect job satisfaction and lead to quitting. March & Simon (1958, quoted in Mobley, [7] and Price [24] described how job satisfaction affects employee turnover. Finally, years later, Hom & Griffith [17] explained how job satisfaction affects labor turnover. Hence, the result of the present study is supported by and aligns with previous scholarly findings. The research hypothesis derived from this literature relies on three major dominant factors: dissatisfaction with government rules and regulations, dissatisfaction with the working environment, and dissatisfaction with the social environment, positively impacting labor turnover.

H2: “Dissatisfaction with government policies is determined by four main factors: security of employment (SE), wages and other (WA) statutory allowances, annual leave and holidays (LH), and labor union rights (LR) have a significant impact on labor turnover.”

Fig. 1. Proposed Model for Labor Turnover
Source: Authors’ Illustrations
### Table 1. Regression results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th>Model 3</th>
<th>Model 4</th>
<th>Model 5</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Labor Turnover (LT)</td>
<td>Government Policies (GP)</td>
<td>Working Environment (WE)</td>
<td>Social Environment (SE)</td>
<td>Shock to the System (SS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Beta</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Item</td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
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<td>SE</td>
<td>.017*</td>
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<td>.094</td>
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<tr>
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<td>LR</td>
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<td>.344</td>
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<td>F</td>
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<td>149.204</td>
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Notes:* denotes Not significant; Source: Author illustration
The results of the Model 02 shows that there is no significant correlation between dissatisfaction with the security of employment and employee turnover means that employees agree with their security of employment in the garment industry. In contrast, the other three variables have a strong positive impact on labor turnover. Beta values for WA = .351, LH = .393, and LR = .908 mean that if employees have received at least the minimum statutory wages and allowances, they are satisfied with their job. This situation can decrease labor turnover. These results are consistent with that of Faroque, Rahman, & Rahman [31] regarding non-practice of government rules and regulations; Similarly, findings of Kweka & Sedoyeka [32]; Mani [33]; Alam, Alias, & Hassan [34] regarding statutory payments. In addition, sewing machine operators are highly dissatisfied with their statutory leave and holidays. If these employees have been allowed to utilize their leave on time, they are satisfied with their employment, would not be quit. These results are consistent with the findings of Martin and Martin [35]; Islam [36]; Christian Welz, Timo Kauppinen [37]; Al Mamun, & Hasan, [38]; Rahman, [39]. Sewing machine operators also show a positive relationship about dissatisfaction with labor union rights. The result of this study is supported by previous empirical studies regarding trade union rights. The labor union may be capable of providing a harmless environment by negotiating with management [40]; Islam & McPhail, [41]; Hossain, Ahmed, [42].

H₃: “Dissatisfaction with the working environment is determined by organizational practices (OP), rewards and welfare (RW), working conditions (WC), and supervisory style (SS) have a significant impact on labor turnover.”

The findings of hypothesis 3 are presented in model 3. The results revealed that factors related to working environment significantly affect labor turnover by a variance of 28.2 percent (Beta = 0.282, P = 0.000) on organizational practices (OP); 32.8 percent (Beta = 0.328, P = 0.000) on rewards and welfare (RW), and 27.8 percent (Beta = 0.278, P = 0.000) on working conditions (WC), and 29 percent (Beta = 0.291, P = 0.000) supervisory style (SS). Hence, hypothesis 3 is accepted.

Mobley [7] reveals that more rigid rules and internal organizational practices significantly impact job dissatisfaction, finally heading to labor turnover. There is some evidence that more extended working periods or shifts may lead to higher labor turnover. Porter and Steers [43] in the labor turnover models and Rahman, & Hossain, [44]; Asimah, [22]; Alam, Alias, & Hassan, [34]; Rahman, [39]; Hamja, Maalouf, & Hasle, [45] in their empirical studies, highlighted that these organizational practices have a significant impact on job satisfaction.

March and Simon (1958, quoted in [7]; Lefkowitz [6]; Price [24]; Mobley, [9,7]; in the labor turnover models; Asimah, [22]; Alam, Alias, & Hassan, [34]; Kweka, & Sedoyeka, [32] within the empirical studies supported the notion that employees pay considerable attention to salaries and wages.

Poor working conditions, such as excessive noise, heat or cold, poor ventilation, inadequate lighting, and safety, have directly affected the employees’ job satisfaction [7,16,8]. Many researchers, such as Asimah [22]; Kweka & Sedoyeka [32]; Islam [36]; Rubel & Kee [46]; Harhara, Singh, & Hussain [47], emphasized that working conditions have a significant relationship with job satisfaction.

Supervisory style has become another vital determinant of employees’ organizational commitment (March & Simon, 1958 (quoted in [7]. Many surveys have highlighted that supervisory style has a more significant influence on employees’ job satisfaction Tuzun and Kalemci, [48]; Alam, Alias, & Hassan, [34]; Lee, Idris, & Tuckey, [49]; Afzal, Arshad, Saleem, & Farooq, [50]; van Jaarsveld et al. [51]. Research Hypothesis 03 derived from this study demonstrated that organizational practices, rewards and welfare, working conditions, and supervisory style positively influence labor turnover.

H₄: “Dissatisfaction with the social environment is determined by sexual harassment (SH), housing facilities(HF), transportation facilities (TF), and social acceptance (SA) have a significant impact on labor turnover.”

The findings of hypothesis 4 are presented in model 4. The results revealed that factors related to social environment significantly affect labor turnover by a variance of 6.8 percent (Beta = .068, P = 0.000) on sexual harassment (SH); 26.1 percent (Beta = .261, P = 0.000) on housing facilities (HF); 15.6 percent (Beta = 0.156, P = 0.000) on transportation facilities (TF); and 21.4 percent (Beta = 0.214, P = 0.000) social
attitudes towards the job (SA). Therefore, hypothesis 4 is accepted.

Researchers have highlighted that many women workers have experienced unwanted sexual attention [52]. The impact of harassment on job satisfaction is highlighted by Kane [53]; Videla [54]; Malagi & Chachadi [55]; Tangem [56]; Shaw, Hegewisch, & Hess, [57]; Rajapakshe, [58]. Zhang [59]; Rubel & Kee [46]; Harhara, Singh, & Hussain [47]; Rajapakshe [58] identified housing facilities as one of the significant causes for labor turnover. Further, Rajapakshe [58] explained that one of the significant problems of female turnover is the lack of transportation facilities. Many scholars like Chowdhury & Ullah [60], Rubel & Kee [46]; Al Mamun & Hasan [38]; Zhang, Y. [59]; and Park & Min [2] also proved these findings.

Researchers in women’s studies have emphasized that negative attitudes towards the job tend to be the leading cause for their resignation. Lobburi [61]; Lee [12]; Nissly, Barak, & Levin [62] revealed that positive social support would influence employee job satisfaction and reduce employee turnover intention. Bufquin et al. [63] supported the result of this study. Researchers discovered that divergent social perceptions influence labor turnover. A negative stereotype of a job will affect the job application process [64]. Thus, the hypothesis derived from this is that sexual harassment, poor housing facilities, inadequate transportation facilities, and social acceptance have a positive relationship with labor turnover.

H5: “Labor turnover depends on when employees shock to the environmental changes such as life threat (LT) and organizational changes (OC) due to Covid-19 pandemic.”

The findings of hypothesis 5 are presented in model 5. The results revealed that factors related to ‘shock to the system’ significantly affect labor turnover by a variance of 5.8 percent (Beta = .586, P = 0.000) on life threat (LT) and 76.6 percent (Beta = .766, P = 0.000) on organizational changes (OC). Therefore, hypothesis 5 is accepted.

Lee and Mitchell’s [14] “shock to the system” model emphasized that unexpected circumstances could lead to quitting the job. Shocks can be positive, negative, or regular events that can be related to employees' perceptions. In this light, the COVID-19 within a few weeks aggravated as a pandemic, and its magnitude is beyond what one could envisage. Amidst overreliance on global trade, especially export sectors such as garments, experienced loss of markets, where some firms were forced to downsize, retrench workforce, shut down permanently, resulting in loss of income and livelihoods. As noted previously, the impact of the pandemic is yet to be estimated. Overall, the covid-19 pandemic was creating waves of uncertainty and fear, thereby resulting in a significant shift in unexpected circumstances, i.e., the shock to the system, within a short period. During the covid-19 pandemic, many employees experienced life threats because of crowding and the congregation of a high number of employees in a limited space. This condition was evident in garment factories and their places of accommodation, commonly known as boarding houses. This scenario has caused such employees to quit their job. In addition, during the pandemic, many organizations amended their work setting to adhere to health authorities' guidelines such as wearing masks, social isolation, social distance, having few employees physically present at a time, and thereby increasing the number of shifts. For the survival of the business, many firms were compelled to reduce extra compensation. These reasons made employees quit their job.

Many other researchers support the results of this study. Some findings of researchers concerning previous ‘shock’ conditions are as follows. Holtom et al. [65] identified that ‘shock’ is an immediate impact on labor turnover by using more than 1,200 employees who have left jobs. In a similar light, WeiBo, Kaur, & Zhi [66] believed that following the 9/11 incident (2011 bomb attack in the USA), there was high turnover among many employees because of life threats. The findings of this study confirm this prior literature. Moreover, Purl et al. [67]; Grant & Wade-Benzoni [68] also supported these findings. Li et al. [69]; Morrell et al. [70]; Baron et al. [71] asserted that organizational changes could be a cause for labor turnover. Moyo [72]; Vaziri [73] revealed that the Covid-19 pandemic situation has led to employee intention to leave. Thus, the finding of hypothesis five is supported by previous literature.

H6: “Labor turnover depends on such demographic factors as age, marital status, experience, education, and family income.”

Table 2 shows the analysis of variance of labor turnover by demographic factors at the 0.05 level
Table 2. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) labor turnover by demographic factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of variation</th>
<th>Sum of squares</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>Mean square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig. F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main Effects</td>
<td>273.365</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>25.638</td>
<td>26.148</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>15.555</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.444</td>
<td>6.508</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td>3.316</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.207</td>
<td>1.533</td>
<td>.196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>133.568</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18.733</td>
<td>18.830</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>98.037</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>34.019</td>
<td>49.487</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of Education</td>
<td>1.493</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.897</td>
<td>1.076</td>
<td>.341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explained</td>
<td>364.379</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16.748</td>
<td>26.147</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>6080.018</td>
<td>7353</td>
<td>.740</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5555.496</td>
<td>7367</td>
<td>.783</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author illustration

of significance. It shows that the demographic factors (main effect) significantly affect the labor turnover at the 0.05 level of significance. However, the individual factors indicate that age, experience, and family income significantly affect labor turnover, whereas marital status and education do not affect labor turnover.

Mobley et al. [9], Porter and Steers [43], and Price [24] supported that there is a significant relationship between age and labor turnover. Singh & Hussain, [47]; Rani, and Samuel, A. [21]; Wöcke & Heymann, [20]; Emiroğlu, Akova, & Tanrıverdi, [74] highlighted that age is a significant factor for labor turnover. Faroque, Rahman, & Rahman [31]; Singh & Hussain [47] identified that employee turnover tends to associate with education positively. Lefkowitz [6] and many other researchers have identified that employees in the probationary period have more intentions to quit than others.

Kweller [75]; Faroque, Rahman, & Rahman [47]; Harhara, Singh, & Hussain [47] explained that marriage correlates with employee turnover. Mobley [7]; and Stum [76] highlighted childcare and pregnancy. These tasks are mainly carried out by female workers themselves and cannot handle both work and family commitments. The majority of them need to leave because they might not be able to balance their work-life.

4. CONCLUSION

The study results demonstrate that the proposed model has empirical validity and causal relationships for this study. In addition to the variables related to the working environment, it has been identified that variables related to government rules and regulations, social environment, the 'shock to the system,' and demographic factors such as age, experience, and family income correlated with labor turnover.

These findings suggest that combining external environmental factors and internal environmental factors into the causal model is possible. The statistical significance of the independent variables and dependent variables has been derived according to the results of hypothesis testing. Among the demographic variables, only age, experience, and family income significantly affect labor turnover.

The statistical analysis indicates that three major dominant factors, government rules and regulations, working environment, and social environment, significantly affect labor turnover. However, other than employment security, all other sub-variables of government rules and regulations (wages and other statutory allowances, annual leave and holidays, and trade union rights) significantly affect labor turnover. In addition, all four sub-variables of the working environment have a significant relationship with labor turnover in the garment industry. The specific aspects of the social environment, such as sexual harassment, residential facilities, transportation facilities, and social acceptance, impact quit from the industry. After testing this model empirically, the modified model can be considered to capture much of the richness of employee turnover theories.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Managerial Implications

These policy issues and challenges are not that much get the attention of the policymakers. Therefore, the study would make the following recommendations.

Management of firms needs to formulate a strategy, adopt a strategic perspective, to reduce labor turnover. Such firms need to pay special
attention to adherence to existing government rules and regulations, providing financial rewards, address employee grievances, rewards, and recognition, better accommodation, and transportation. In addition, these firms need to establish counseling units to help employees resolve their personal and employment issues independently and effectively. Such units can help address harassment in the workplace, including fines and punishment, mandatory production targets, and overtime. Having effective two-way communication, transparent employee-related policies that are enforceable, is mandatory in this regard.

Regarding the demographic factors, age, family income, and length of service contribute to the employees’ quit. Marital status and education are not significant at the 0.05 level. Therefore, garment factories should heavily focus on the recruitment processes and pay more attention to these factors.

### 5.2 Implications for the Asian Business

The garment industry is a significant player in the economic activity in Asian counties. Since there has never been a specific 'labor turnover policy' legislated in most of the countries, in its absence, existing laws and regulations have had to be applied by the garment industry for administering their employees. It is necessary to improve the existing laws and regulations to overcome these problems. The policymakers of this country must adopt a strategic approach to formulate such policies on labor turnover. This policy is essential since the garment industry is one of the vital export income earners of many Asian economies. Such policymaking should encompass fundamental human rights, career development, retirement benefits, welfare, and the need to pay special attention to work during a crisis. Additionally, in the wake of sudden severe shocks to the economy, including pandemics and disasters (as noted previously, where ill effects associate with social and economic concerns may outweigh health-related consequences), labor turnover policies need to be flexible and effective. Redressing social recognition and harassment issues while addressing loopholes in a proactive approach is part of the normal process and hence, not exceptional.

Collaboration among stakeholders such as government, management of firms, statutory bodies, chambers of commerce, etc., is crucial. Devising coping strategies proactively, thus increasing resilience and adverse consequences on employees, embedding coping mechanisms to laws, legislation, corporate processes, and procedures are vital in handling employee turnover and their intention to quit.

The questions regarding social attitudes towards the job asked about employees' attitudes towards using degrading words and respect from the community and marriage partners. Employees are highly dissatisfied with social attitudes towards the job. Sewing machine operators have contributed to the leading export-earning sector in Sri Lanka. Their social status, however, provides a bleak picture to the nation. From the analysis results, it is clear that these employees' fundamental human rights are violated knowingly or unknowingly. Is the industry in a position to correct these shortcomings?

Moreover, can it improve the positive social attitudes towards the job? How can government intervene to solve this problem? What is the role of employees in changing these negative attitudes?

### 6. LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

This study measures direct relationships between dissatisfaction of the employees who quit the industry with three causal factors and attitudes towards their quit. Employees show their dissatisfaction through low performance, productivity, voice and neglect of work, high absenteeism, and grievances. However, employee dissatisfaction is not limited to turnover. Therefore, one of the future research needs in employee dissatisfaction and all of these withdrawal behaviors.

This study mainly used quantitative analysis. Qualitative research is needed to discover the insight of the employees' perception correctly.
The qualitative methods will provide a better understanding of labor turnover. Therefore, the final future research need is for qualitative research on labor turnover with an in-depth interview.

CONSENT

There are human subjects in this paper, and informed consent was obtained verbally before performing data collection from each respondent as they are not attached to any organization.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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