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TURNOVER INTENTION AND QUALITY OF WORK LIFE: EVIDENCE FROM MOROCCO

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Quality of work life, Turnover intention, PLS approach, Covid-19.





ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to identify the quality of work life factors that affect employee turnover intention in Morocco, in a context of Covid-19 pandemic, a source of massive layoffs and labor market disruptions. The data were collected using a questionnaire filled in by employees working in the health, call center, information technology and journalism sectors. The overall results show that, contrary to the existing literature, only organizational factors have a negative impact on turnover intention, however, this impact is not significant. Therefore, we can conclude that the Covid-19 pandemic and its repercussions on the Moroccan labor market have led to a low employee turnover intention.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The 21st century organization is characterized by a constant pace of change. Added to this attribute are the challenges of rapid technological movement, global competition, workforce diversity and organizational restructuring, which most organizations face in today's business world. The year 2019 was characterized by the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic, which had a severe impact on the labor market and whose fallout continues to this day.

Although organizations may differ in the priority they give to the human resource component in their efforts to achieve high productivity and competitive advantage, they all recognize the value of a skilled, motivated, stable and responsive workforce (Huselid, 1995). Yet, a specific challenge faced by most organizations, given the high uncertainty of retaining skilled employees, is the issue of employee turnover intention (TI), especially in a crisis context.

It is suggested that organisations with better quality of work life (QWL) will have less turnover and systematically less turnover intention (Almalki et al., 2012; Astrianti et al., 2020; Savic Tot et al., 2022; Abudaqa et al., 2021).

This leads to the question of the variables of quality of work life that can affect the choice of employees to stay or leave their organization, which has been the subject of several studies for many years in order to define a framework that allows employees to flourish but also to prevent turnover, the effects of which are not only limited to economic costs but also to indirect costs (Dess and Shaw, 2001).

Turnover is therefore an undesirable event in the organization's management process, which is why several researchers have been interested in the variables that can induce turnover in order to remedy it.

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Our research becomes more interesting because of the lack of such a study in the Moroccan context. Indeed, a survey by the Moroccan Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs on labour movements in the organized private sector, published in 2004, shows that the turnover rate in the private sector is 7.7%. This turnover rate is considered to be low and is attributed by the investigators either to the rigidity of the organized sector or to the scope of the survey, which was limited to entities with 10 or more employees, excluding agriculture and the informal sector.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows: Section 2 presents a review of the literature on quality of work life and turnover intention to introduce our conceptual model and associated hypotheses. Section 3 presents the research methodology covering data collection instruments, sample selection, variables used and data analysis. Section 4 describes the research results and the section 5 discuss the results, and Section 6 provides conclusions, limitations, suggestions for further research and recommendations that could improve the quality of work life of Moroccans and reduce turnover intention as well as actual overall turnover.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Despite extensive research on QWL variables and their impact on turnover intention, to our knowledge, few literature reviews have addressed this relationship (Berguig and Abdelbaki, 2021). The results of this literature review, which examined articles published between 2007 and 2020 dealing with this relationship, led to the identification of 42 QWL variables with an impact on turnover intention, divided into four factors: organizational factors (OF) (12 variables); job-related factors (JRF) (18 variables); environmental factors (EF) (6 variables); and psychological factors (PF) (6 variables).

Being the core of this research, it is therefore appropriate to review the two notions of our relationship which are quality of work life and turnover intention.

2.1 Quality of work life

The origins of QWL-related research are not well defined. Indeed, in the 1920s-1930s, the term "Quality of Working Life" was not yet in use (Leal et al., 2021). According to the evolution of human resource management, the concept of QWL emerges from the post-industrial revolution thanks to the contribution of some eminent management thinkers such as Owen, Babbage, Taylor or Mayo (Patil & Swadi, 2014).

Morocco, as a developing country, is not excluded from this wave of movements. In recent years, human resource practices have undergone considerable evolution. The term "Quality of work life" does not appear in any study or survey conducted in Morocco, however, this notion is replaced by "Conditions of work life" or "Well-being at Work". Indeed, Morocco has the

National Institute for Working Life Conditions (INCVT), which is a public interest group with legal personality and financial autonomy.

There have been many attempts to define quality of work life in the past. However, none has resulted in a definition that has achieved universal recognition and acceptance. Quality of work life is, in essence, a complex notion and a concept with multiple variables. Despite widespread acceptance in academia of Walton's (1973, 1974) QWL criteria, "there is no formal definition of quality of work life" (Sirgy et al., 2001). However, we note that several researchers have attempted to define QWL by considering several variables that vary according to countries or industries. (Storman et al., 2022; Fakhri et al., 2020; Dhamija et al., 2019; Leitão et al., 2019; Yadav and Naim, 2017).

2.2 Turnover intention

Turnover intention refers to the employee's subjective estimation of the probability of leaving the organization in the near future (Carmeli and Weisberg, 2006). It is a conscious and deliberate intention to leave the organization (Tett and Meyer, 1993). Furthermore, it is the final stage of the departure cognition process, which includes thoughts of leaving and the intention to seek another job.

The concept of turnover intention differs from turnover. Turnover refers to the act of actually leaving the organization, whereas turnover intention is the perception of leaving the organization. Thus, the actual behaviour of the employee may be different from the intention (San Park and Kim, 2009). Yet, most researchers have examined turnover intention (turnover intention, intention to quit, intention to leave, anticipated turnover) as the best accurate predictor of actual turnover across all sectors (Kovner et al., 2009; Liu and Onwuegbuzie, 2012).

The literature review confirms that the aspect of employee turnover has been analysed for a long time (Hom et al., 2017) due to the fact, that employee turnover is an integral part of human resource management (HRM) in an organization (Listwan, 2010). High voluntary turnover has a negative influence on organizational effectiveness (Palich et al., 1995).

Turnover intention is defined as "the (subjective) probability that a person will change job within a certain period of time". Unlike actual turnover, turnover intention is not definitive (Sousa-Poza and Henneberger, 2002).

Unlike actual turnover, turnover intention is not overt. Intention, as a psychological construct, is "a statement about a specific behaviour that arouses interest or curiosity" (Berndt, 1981). Tett and Meyer (1993) defined turnover intention as the conscious willingness to seek alternative employment opportunities in other organizations. Similarly, turnover intention is defined as

the voluntary intention of an employee to leave an organization (Saks, 2006). In other words, it is a conscious and deliberate intention of an employee to leave an organization.

Thus, we propose the following hypotheses:

H1: Quality of work life has a negative impact on turnover intention.

The four QWL factors chosen for this study are organisational factors, environmental factors, job-related factors and psychological factors.

H1a: Organizational factors have a negative impact on turnover intention;

H1b: Environmental factors have a negative impact on turnover intention;

H1c: Job-related factors have a negative impact on turnover intention;

H1d: Psychological factors have a negative impact on turnover intention.

Figure 1 shows the relationship between QWL and turnover intention.

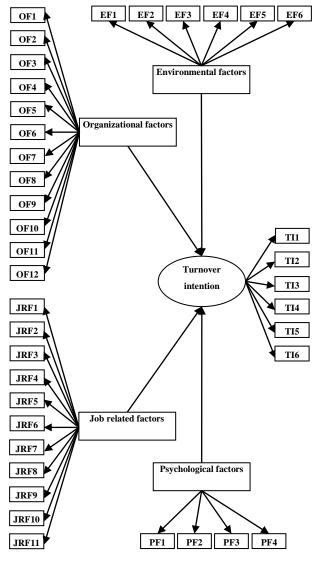


Figure 1. The relationship between quality of work life and turnover intention

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to verify our hypotheses, it is important, according to the research paradigms in social and economic sciences, to conduct an empirical investigation. To do this, we need to define, in a rational way, a set of parameters.

3.1. Data collection instruments

In order to collect the data useful for our empirical study based on structural equations, we resort to the questionnaire.

In the light of a review of theoretical and empirical studies of works dealing with our topic, closely or remotely, and by referring to the results of our qualitative study, we were able to define a conceptualisation of our questionnaire. To do this, we started by operationalizing the variables to be measured and then scaled the anticipated responses on the five-point LIKERT scale. This scale is a tool used to determine the opinions, reactions and beliefs of future respondents. The scale is presented as follows: Strongly disagree (1), Somewhat disagree (2), Neither agree nor disagree (3), Somewhat agree (4) and Strongly agree (5).

In this respect, our questionnaire contains 41 questions, which are grouped in two blocks, namely: the personal characteristics of the respondents and the variables that motivate them to leave their current job (if any).

3.2. Choice of sample

The sample is made up of professionals from the health, call center, journalism and Information technology sectors in the Rabat-Sale-Kenitra region who may/or not have intended to turnover. This is an exhaustive sample; we investigated a large number of professionals from the above-mentioned sectors in our study region. To this end, we drew up a questionnaire with simple and clear questions aimed at around 50 professionals from each sector and ended up with a total of 141 responses (a response rate of 94%).

The profile of the respondents is summarized in Table 1 and 2.

3.3. Identification of dependent and independent variables

Consultation of the theoretical literature and the qualitative study enabled us to identify a set of dependent and independent variables that seem to answer our research question.

 Table 1. Profile of respondents to the questionnaire

Demographic variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentage	
Gender	Male	65	46,1	
Gender	Female	76	53,9	
	Not engaged	86	61,0	
Marital status	Engaged	22	15,6	
	Engaged with children	33	23,4	
	Under 30 years old	93	66,0	
Age	From 30 to 40 years old	37	26,2	
	More than 40 years old	11	7,8	
	Bac+2	5	3,5	
Level of studies	Bac+3	44	31,2	
Level of studies	Bac+5	59	41,8	
	Bac +5 and more	33	23,4	
	Under 5 years	80	56,7	
Experiences	From 5 to 15 years	53	37,6	
	More than 15 years	8	5,7	
	Journalism	33	23,4	
A ativity anatom	Health	51	36,2	
Activity sector	Call center	26	18,4	
	Information Technologies	31	22,0	
Sector	Public	71	50,4	
Sector	Private	70	49,6	

Table 2. Profile of respondents to the questionnaire

Variables	Items	Code	Theoretical basis
	Organizational policies	OF1	
	Compensation system	OF 2	- Huang et al. (2007)
	Job promotion	OF 3	ridding et di. (2007)
	Compensation and benefits	OF 4	- Celik and Oz (2011)
	Recognition	OF 5	- Almalki et al. (2012)
Organizational	Job security and stability	OF 6	- Kamel (2013)
Factors (OF)	Human capacity development	OF 7	- Lee et al. (2013)
	Social integration	OF 8	- Mosadeghrad (2013)
	Compliance with the law	OF 9	- Chen et al. (2014)
	Workforce	OF 10	
	Management	OF 11	- Jabeen et al. (2018)
	Work organization	OF 12]
	Working environment	EF1	- Huang et al. (2007)
	Working conditions	EF2	- Almalki et al. (2012)
	Work-life balance	EF3	- Lee et al. (2013)
Environmental	Technological progress	EF4	` ´
Factors (EF)	External employment opportunities	EF5	- Surienty et al. (2013)
			- Zhao et al. (2013)
	Interpersonal relationships	EF6	- Chen et al. (2014)
			- Jabeen et al. (2018)
	Workload	JRF1	- Huang et al. (2007)
	Workplace	JRF2	
	Work content	JRF3	- Celik and Oz (2011)
	Motivation at work	JRF4	- Almalki et al. (2012)
Tob voloted	Communication	JRF5	- Lee et al. (2013)
Job-related factors (JRF)	General well-being	JRF6	- Mosadeghrad (2013)
	Support services	JRF7	- Surienty et al. (2013)
	Stress at work	JRF8	- Zhao et al. (2013)
	Work schedules	JRF9	, , ,
	Autonomy at work	JRF10	- Chen et al. (2014)
	Supervisory behaviors	JRF11	- Parveen et al. (2017)
Psychological	Emotional exhaustion	PF1	- Korunka et al. (2008)
factors (PF)	Need to belong	PF2	- Almalki et al. (2012)
	Job satisfaction	PF3	- Zhao et al. (2013)
	Physical and mental ability to perform the job	PF4	, , ,
		** '	- Jabeen et al. (2018)

3.4. Data analysis

Any analysis requires the choice of statistical tools whose relevance is adapted and proven for the purpose of the analysis. Thus, we used the principal component analysis method to select the items of our model. We then checked the consistency of our measurement scales by means of Cronbach's alpha and the correlation coefficients between items. The unidimensionality of our constructs was also assessed based on the responses obtained. To refine our analysis, we tested the research hypotheses by attempting to measure the relationship that exist between our constructs. We will use partial least squares (PLS) to measure the links between the various latent variables, with the aim of identifying the quality of work life factors that have an impact on turnover intention.

Statistical processing was carried out using SPSS version 22.0 software.

4. RESULTS

Using SPSS version 22.0, we test the validity of our hypotheses. The results of these analyses will allow us to present the evaluation of the measurement model, the evaluation of the structural model as well as the examination of the results at the level of each of the formulated hypotheses.

4.1. Measurement model

The representation of the assumed linear relationships between the latent and manifest variables requires the use of a measurement model, which is also called the external model. The quality of the measurement model is evaluated by the retention of criteria of which the management literature cites three in particular: the reliability of the measurement scales, convergent validity and discriminant validity.

4.1.1. Measurement model

According to Hulland (1999), when multiple indicators are used for an individual variable, the researcher must be concerned with the reliability of the individual measurement indicators, but must also verify the contribution of the items to convergent validity. The latter consists of determining the average variance shared between a variable and its indicators. Cronbach's Alpha and internal consistency, according to Fornell and Larcker (1981), remain the two measures of convergent validity that researchers use in the PLS approach.

Another similar guideline was offered by Nunnally (1978), who considers a threshold of 0.7 as a minimum for composite reliability applied in earlier stages of research.

Table 3. Result of the measurement model

Construct	Measur ement items	Loadin g range	Cron bach' s α	Composite Reliability
Organiza tional factors	OF1 – OF12	0,735 – 0,788	0,922	0,934707
Environ mental factors	EF1 – EF5	0,714 – 0,881	0,870	0,902971
Job- related factors	JRF1 – JRF11	0,683 – 0,835	0,922	0,934308
Psycholog ical factors	PF1 – PF4	0,791 - 0,931	0,884	0,920973
Turnover intention	T1 – T5	0,660 - 0,877	0,815	0,880912

Source: SPSS

Table 3 shows that all Cronbach alpha values are above 0.7. We can therefore conclude that all constructs are reliable.

4.1.2. Discriminant validity of constructs

Discriminant validity represents the extent to which the measurement scales assigned to the constructs differ from other measures of the other constructs in the model (Cheung and Lee, 2010). It consists of demonstrating that the variance shared between a construct and its measures (Average Variance Extracted or AVE) is greater than the variance shared between two constructs (r²ij), the square correlation between two variables (Fornell and Larcker 1981). The only adequate factor for discriminant validity, according to the PLS approach, is that the latent variable should share more variance with its measurement indicators than with the other variables.

As shown in Table 4, all square roots of the average variance extracted were greater than the row and column correlation values, indicating adequate discriminant validity. In summary, the measurement model demonstrated adequate convergent validity and discriminant validity.

Figure 2 represents our measurement model after adjustment.

Table 4. Discriminant validity of constructs

Constructs	AVE	FO	FE	FLE	FP	IT
OF	0,58824	0,766967405				
EF	0,60953	0,683426	0,780724663			
JRF	0,58883	0,675413	0,676443	0,76735324		
PF	0,74514	0,650736	0,62884	0,689847	0,863213763	
TI	0,65166	0,663032	0,729153	0,681982	0,745001	0,80725151

Note: The diagonal elements (in bold) in the construct correlation matrix.

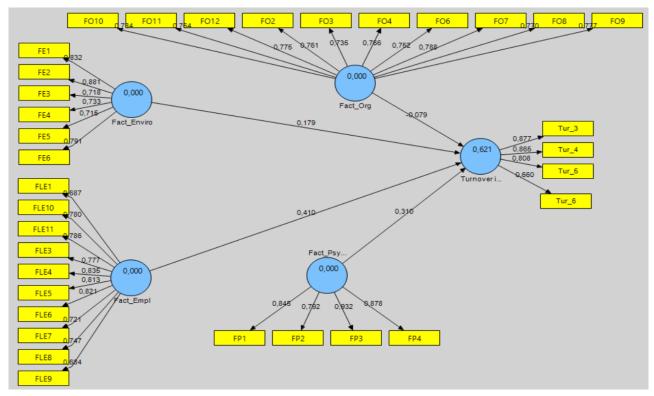


Figure 2. Measurement model after adjustment

4.1.3. Overall quality of the model: the goodness-of-fit test (gof)

The quality of the measurement model can be assessed, in general, on the basis of the model's ability to explain and report. This capacity is evaluated by the coefficient of determination (R^2) of the endogenous variables. Unlike structural equation modeling using maximum likelihood (SEM-ML), PLS modeling does not optimize any scalar function, so it naturally lacks an index capable of providing the user with a global validation of the model (Tenenhaus et al., 2005).

To remedy this problem, Tenenhaus et al. (2005), proposes to use the GoF (Global goodness-of-fit) which provides a solution. The goodness-of-fit index is then obtained on the basis of the average of the different constructs of the explained variance (R^2), the redundancy index and the commonality. For exogenous constructs, redundancy and R^2 are not calculated.

The GoF index can be obtained by the following formula:

 $GoF = \sqrt{(Average\ (R^2)) * (Average\ (Communality))}$

Table 5. Measure of the explained variance of the selected factors

	Explained variance (R ²)	Redundancy	Communality	
Organizational factors		0,588239	0,588831	
Environmental factors		0,609531	0,609531	
Job-related factors		0,588831	0,588239	
Psychological factors		0,745138	0,745138	
Turnover intention	0,620661	0,293796	0,651655	
Total	0,620661		3,183394	
Average	0,620661		0,636678	
GoF		0,619374137		

Source: PLS Output

The results indicate that QWL factors explain 62% of the variance in turnover intention. These results are largely better explanatory than the models tested by Tourangeau and Cranley (2006), Almalki (2012), Shader et al. (2001), Gregory et al. (2007), Sourdif (2004), and Larrabee, et al. (2003), whose models

explain 34%, 32.1%, 31%, 31%, 26%, and 25.5% of the variance in turnover intention.

The value of GoF obtained according to the results in Table 5, is very satisfactory: GoF = 0.619374137 (Recommended threshold is 0.30).

4.2. Structural model

To test the hypotheses, we will first examine the degree of significance of the estimation parameters (path coefficient) of the relationships between the latent variables. Then, in a second step, we will carry out a bootstrap simulation. We used the bootstrapping technique on a sample of 500, as recommended by Chin (1998), in order to test the statistical significance of each coefficient. Table 6 shows the hypotheses, the path coefficients and the t values.

Table 6. Summary of the structural model

Path	Path coefficient	T-value	Signification
H1a: Organizational factors→ Turnover intention	-0,079	0,558932	Not significant
H1b: Environmental factors→ Turnover intention	0,179	1,152995	Not significant
H1c: Job-related factors → Turnover intention	0,410	2,669717	Significant
H1d: Psychological factors → Turnover intention	0,310	2,694845	Significant

Source: PLS Output

Our main hypothesis was that QWL factors would have a significant and negative effect on turnover intention in Morocco. The results did not support H1 (H1a - H1d).

- H1a:"Organizational factors" negatively impact "turnover intention": The estimates obtained show that the relationship between these two variables has a negative coefficient (β = -0.079). Examination of the value of t-value shows that the latter is equal to 0.558932 (<1.96) which implies a non-significant relationship between the two variables.

In conclusion, the hypothesis (H1a) is therefore not validated.

- H1b: "Environmental factors" have a negative impact on "turnover intention": The estimates obtained show a positive correlation between these two variables ($\beta=0.179$). Examination of the value of t-value shows that the latter is equal to 1.152995 (<1.96) which implies a non-significant relationship between the two variables.

In conclusion, the hypothesis (H1b) is therefore not validated.

- H1c: "Job-related factors" have a negative impact on "turnover intention": The estimates obtained show a positive correlation between these two variables ($\beta = 0.410$) with a t-value equal to 2.669717 (>1.96) which implies a positive and significant relationship between the two variables.

In conclusion, the hypothesis (H1c) is therefore not validated.

- H1d: "Psychological factors" have a negative impact on "turnover intention": The estimates obtained show a positive correlation between these two variables ($\beta=0.310$). Examination of the t-value shows that the latter is equal to 2.694845 (>1.96) which implies a positive and significant relationship between the two variables.

In conclusion, the hypothesis (H1d) is therefore not validated.

5. DISCUSSION

Human resources have long been considered a pillar for any organization. Indeed, human capital currently plays a central, even indispensable role in the development of organizations as well as their sustainability.

According to Mbah and Ikemefuna (2012), the issue of attracting and retaining highly qualified employees is more than ever posed from a managerial perspective. Indeed, and in the same sense, turnover is considered one of the most serious obstacles in organizations due to the important position that employees occupy within organizations. Moreover, employees are at the forefront of business agendas, which aim to ensure the sustainability and competitiveness of an organization. Therefore, we considered it important to study the quality of work life variables that may impact turnover intention in the Moroccan context, as this is an area not previously studied.

The overall results show that only organizational factors have a negative impact on turnover intention, however, this impact is not significant. These results are contrary to hypothesis H1 but clearly indicate that organizational factors have some influence on turnover intention.

Previous research has been contradictory regarding the relationship between QWL and turnover intention. Indeed, Lee et al. (2012) conducted a study with the objective of exploring the relationship between QWL and TI among nurses in seven hospitals in Taiwan, and found that QWL negatively affects TI.

Astrianti et al. (2020) analyzed the effect of QWL on IT through the organizational commitment of account executives in a microfinance company in Indonesia. The results indicated that QWL has a significant and positive effect on organizational commitment and organizational commitment has a significant and negative effect on TI. Huang et al (2007) presented an integrated model to investigate the effects of perceived QWL of auditors working in the four largest Taiwanese accounting firms on professional identification, organizational commitment, and their turnover intention. They found that all four QWL factors (Job Characteristics, Compensation and Benefits, Supervisor Behavior, and

Work-Life Balance) were significant predictors of engagement scores and turnover intention.

Also, Jabeen et al. (2017) examined QWL and its influence on job satisfaction and turnover intention of female employees in various public sector organizations in the United Arab Emirates. The results show that QWL has a positive effect on job satisfaction and a negative effect on turnover intention.

We can therefore conclude that the covid-19 crisis has a major explanatory power on these mixed results and contradictory to the literature. Indeed, the disruption of the labor market and mass layoffs during the Covid-19 period pushed employees to maintain their jobs instead of seeking a conducive QWL.

6. CONCLUSION

Employee turnover is a major challenge for many organizations and interacts with employee QWL. In this study, the participants in our study reported satisfaction with their QWL and showed low turnover intention. Therefore, our results support a significant and positive

association between two QWL factors (Job-related and psychological factors) and turnover intention. However, only the organizational factors have a negative impact on turnover intention without this impact being significant, contrary to the results of the existing literature studying the relationship between the dimensions of QWL and TI. We can therefore conclude that the covid-19 crisis has a major explanatory power on these mixed and contradictory results to the literature. Indeed, the disruption of the labor market and mass layoffs during the Covid-19 period pushed employees to maintain their jobs instead of seeking a conducive OWL.

These results are of great importance because our study is the first in Morocco, which pushes other researchers to overcome the limitations encountered in our study and push the analysis to other levels of research.

A more in-depth study is needed taking into account a context that is not disrupted by the occurrence of a crisis, and targeting a more homogeneous sample while exploring other factors that were not considered in this study.

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