Abstract

In Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE), the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in the context of the construction sector have a shortfall of 500,000 skilled employees because of the lack of job satisfaction and top management support, which prompt workers to leave their places of employment. Thus, this research examined the influence of top management support (TMS) as an organizational factor on the relationship between job satisfaction and the intention to leave among the middle-level managers in the construction sector of Dubai, UAE. To evaluate the relationship between the variables, this research adopted a quantitative approach, and data was secured from 120 middle-level managers of SMEs. The Partial Least Squares – Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) method was used in the data analysis. The outcome indicates the relationship between 4 facets of job satisfaction and the intention to leave within the middle-level managers of SMEs was established. The study also found statistical support for the moderating effect of TMS on the relationship between 2 facets of job satisfaction and the intention to leave among the middle-level managers of SMEs. The findings of the research demonstrated the management practices of the organization, particularly the SMEs in the construction sector of Dubai. The findings indicate that the following implications or suggestions are made at an organizational level in the construction sector.

Keywords: Intention to leave; management support; job satisfaction; SMEs; Dubai.

JEL Classification: D43, L12, G32
INTRODUCTION

In UAE, 92 percent of registered firms are categorized as SMEs (Department of Economic Development-Dubai SME, 2013). While looking at the different components that may influence employees' intentions to leave, many research findings affirmed that job satisfaction caused the most astounding difference in leaving intentions in the context of a job (Shropshire & Kadlec, 2012; Chen, 2007; Böckerman & Ilmakunnas, 2007; Randhawa, 2007; Liu, Zhu, Wu & Mao, 2019). To get a more profound investigation of job satisfaction and its effect on workers' intentions to leave, several researchers contended that numerous job satisfaction features might cause the leaving intention. Consequently, job satisfaction has been viewed as a factor that consisted of many influencing factors (Westlund & Hannon, 2008).

From the academic discourse up until this point, it is evident that there are many investigations had been led to analyze the connection between job satisfaction and employees' intention to leave. In any case, relatively few of these studies have been completely done in SME firms of UAE employment setting, while a greater part of these researches concentrated in developed economies (Ghani, 2014; Murrar & Hammad, 2013; Chan & Morrison, 2000). Therefore, the study is motivated by the desire to fill a gap in the literature and investigate the relationship between job satisfaction and intention to leave in SMEs' context in the construction sector of Dubai, UAE. Alam and Jamilah (2009) identified that many factors influence job satisfaction.

Consequently, Kemelgor (2002) asserted that a firm's management needs to find ways to manage job satisfaction issues and improve employees' overall satisfaction level to achieve organizational objectives and sustain competitive advantage. However, there are very limited empirical studies on how organizational issues, such as top management support, impact job satisfaction (Cortese, 2012; Maqbali, 2015). Thus, this research is designed to investigate top management support's influence as a moderating variable on the relationship between employees' job satisfaction and intention to leave.
LITERATURE REVIEW

Small and Medium Size Enterprises (SMEs) in the UAE

Ninety percent of the workforce is crucial for the economic development of the UAE, according to the (SMEs Report, 2013). Furthermore, innovation includes the utilization of social media, which is crucial for SMEs. Social media enhances the SME sector’s development and triggers several advantages and challenges in which SME’s may need to be alerted and deal with it efficiently (Ahamat et al., 2017).

However, recently, firms in the construction industry of UAE experienced a massive shortfall of the workforce to complete their construction and other projects in the Emirates (Workforce Planning Study, 2014). According to Zurn et al. (2005) and Bouyamourn and Sahoo (2014), shortages of workers in a specific industry are significant reasons for the unjustifiable work stack dispersion and an uncalled-for remuneration and reward framework in the general business. Similarly, Zurn et al. (2005) contended that a free labor market job is also the "urgent indicator factor for job satisfaction, and may lead the workers to leave their place of employment or movement. Consequently, this study investigates middle-level managers' attitudes towards job satisfaction and intention to leave in the construction sector.

Concept of Top Management Support

Top management support demonstrates to the top management’s facilitation for the growth of corporate enterprises. Hence, it is the top management that chooses job satisfaction (Kim, 2015; Agho et al., 1993; Welsch & LaVan, 1981; Dewi & Ahamat, 2018). It is evident in this research that three main variables, namely, work satisfaction, intention to leave, and top management support, were integrated with one hypothetical model (see part 3 for subtle elements). Hence, the current model concurred with Wong, Wong, and Wong (2015) and Boles et al. (2003) that job satisfaction is the mental assessment of how much the workplace finishes and satisfies the employees’ needs. Signifying that the employees' evaluation of specific job or errands, general workplace, top management support in coasting thoughts, self-rule at work, diverse advantages and openings gave, are probably the most prerequisites or necessities a worker may see apparent towards work satisfaction.
Similarly, the current model concurred with Zembylas and Papanastasiou’s (2004) suggestion that job satisfaction refers to a behavioral cycle. Contending that the relationship between job satisfaction and employees’ intention to leave is to a greater degree confusing process, in a typical circumstance in the workplace, a worker may leave his organization when he is disappointed. Strangely, in a typical schedule, a man is probably going to leave his organization when he is disappointed. In any case, it is not as basic as it is ordinarily seen because the estimation of disappointment may rely on the access conditions and shift from nation to nation and even organization to organization (Balabanova, Efendiev, Ehrnrooth & Koveshnikov, 2016). Thus, unfolding the need for further research investigation on job satisfaction and intention to leave, and the influence of top management support on this issue.

Job Satisfaction and Intention To Leave

Equally, from the organizational point of view, the need for employee satisfaction can result in improved employee retention, enhanced productivity, improved customer satisfaction, reduction in turnover, decreased in costs, wastages and breakages, diminished mischance, lessened non-attendance, upgraded consumer loyalty, and dedication, more lively workers, enhanced collaboration, higher quality items as well as managements because of more capable, invigorated workers, and enhanced corporate picture (Singh & Jain, 2013). Hence, job satisfaction is of immense significance in retaining both the bottom-line employees and middle-level corporate firms’ managers.

Determinants of Job Satisfaction

According to Churchill (1974), to measure job satisfaction, researchers should pay attention to various authoritative attributes in assessment to get the more extensive and exact measure of worker convictions and states of mind. Hence, these attributes or qualities of job satisfaction identified with the individual has its relative significance, while, if a worker may say that they are extremely upbeat and happy with his/her salary, workplace, advancement and so forth yet is disappointed with some other part of work, for example, the real work itself (Minakshi & Jain, 2013). Equally, Boles, Wood, and Johnson (2003) have suggested for the investigation of multidimensional facets of job satisfaction, to reverse the past trend of investigating a singular aspect of employee satisfaction. Thus, variables
that bring job satisfaction and disappointment from the job for workers are broadly examined in the two-factor hypothesis (1959) and work qualities hypothesis (1976).

Accordingly, Sawatzky and Enns (2012) asserted that other components affecting job satisfaction were proficient practice, management, resources, and move work. Yet still, different factors such as individual elements (Mustapha, 2009) and work-family help (Aziri, 2011) were discovered as causes of job satisfaction. Also, Pasaoglu and Tonus (2014) examined the medical attendants’ job satisfaction at a decreasing level amid the initial 5-years. The findings indicated that medical workers’ job satisfaction for the most part is increment alongside their expanded working background in healing facilities.

Wood et al. (1986) and Ghani (2014) clarified the measurement of job satisfaction that decides the stage of employment satisfaction based on workers’ recognition of what amount is they happy with the data or rules are given to them by their managers to complete their job. Similarly, in their study, Narayanan and Zafar (2014) presumed that the main considerations impacting job satisfaction are treatment by employers, workplace, and passionate insight. Satisfaction with variety is another measurement of job satisfaction, whereby workers see the level of satisfaction by having an assortment of errands, for example, testing yet not standard (Kim, 2015). This additionally encourages the workers to see that there are many chances accessible for them to develop in the organization. Besides, this measurement likewise measures the worker’s view of employee satisfaction through the level of apparent flexibility in work.

Nevertheless, Lambert (2006) found that gender, job duration, and training level of workers fundamentally impacted worker intention to leave. Also, Lambert (2006) found that women had a higher intention to leave than men, because of these work attributes which included greater manliness. On the contrary, Becker (1960) expressed that with expanding job duration, worker intentions to leave reduces as workers’ "depressed cost" expanded i.e. workers turned out to be more dedicated to the organization. Hence, the duration of the job has an adjoining organization with age. While individuals with more prominent education level were found to show more noteworthy intention to leave goal than those with lesser education level. An individual with a more noteworthy education level has a higher chance of securing another similar job elsewhere.
Major Studies on Job Satisfaction and Intention to Leave

Correspondingly, Diala and Nemani (2011) investigated the relationship in an endeavor to answer the research question on "the impact of job satisfaction." The study discovered exactly that in white shading/official level jobs, self-governance in job, inspiration, and the opportunity for progression as components with coordinate effect on overall satisfaction. For this situation, it may likewise be contended that employees' tend to be propelled if they would have a chance to develop and have an opportunity at work, in the long run, prompts the more prominent job satisfaction and may lessen their leaving expectation later on.

Also, Moore (2002) recognized that the expansion of job disappointment within workers is the main component of employees' expectations to stop. In the investigation, it was observationally obvious that American experts in IT firms were probably going to stop with two factors: a) on the off chance that they are not happy with Compensation, and b) lack of testing ventures. The discoveries of this examination are likewise bolstered by different before contemplates in a various authoritative setting with the deference of job satisfaction and expectation to stop among employees (Sharma & Nambudiri, 2015; Alam & Jamilah, 2010; Mustapha, 2009; Purani & Sahadev, 2007).

Consistently, Alam and Jamilah (2009) tested the level of satisfaction in different components of job satisfaction among medical caretakers in Malaysia. The study found that attendants offered vital to the view of being given the chance to finish their work from beginning to end effectively. Again the examination additionally utilized the intention to leave as a dependent variable; while, satisfaction to finish the job from beginning to end as the independent variable. The direction and correspondence to finish a specific job if accessible to employees', surely could elevate more amount of employee satisfaction, be that as it may, if association permit hazard accepting open doors while performing employments, that may even increase the value of the level of job satisfaction (Sameen, 2016).

Whereas, Mustapha (2009) identified a negative relationship between firms' HR policies and drive to leave within the administrators in advanced education organizations in Malaysia. Mustapha (2009) discoveries were additionally bolstered by Purani and Sahadev (2007). In their examination, Purani and Shahdev established that workers, who were not happy with the HR approaches and techniques of their organization,
will demonstrate their tension and transparently talk about these challenges inside the company and outside the company. On the off chance that the organization can't tune in to their grievances and don't fathom their HR related matters, it is exceedingly likely they would go to stop (Alam & Jamilah, 2009, Mustapha, 2009; Purani & Sahadev, 2007).

**Top Management Support (TMS) as Moderator**

The study of Aladwan et al. (2013) and Weaver and Franz (1992) only found that entrepreneurs who were believed to be risk-takers appeared to be more innovative, fosters an organizational climate for innovation, and therefore, have higher job satisfaction. In line with this argument, Shropshire and Kadlec (2012) found that organizational support, boss support, and rewards are contrarily identified with job satisfaction and turnover intention.

This discovery additionally buttresses the intention of this study and would further bolster the theory that there is an effect of top management support on the relationship between job satisfaction and employees’ drive to leave. This investigation might confirm the relationship between the six elements of job satisfaction and intention to leave, by analyzing the impact of top management support of the organizations. Hence, it is expected that top management support may upgrade and enhance the level of job satisfaction and decrease employees’ intention to leave (Sharma & Nambudiri, 2015; Hornsby et al., 2002). Therefore, the research examines the moderating effect of top management support on the relationship between job satisfaction and intention to leave within middle-level managers of SMEs in Dubai, UAE.

**METHODS**

As the questionnaire components for each construct were employed from a past study by Wood, Chonko and Hunt (1986) for Job Satisfaction (Independent variables); Jenkis (1993) and Kransz et al. (1995) for Intention to Leave (Dependent variable); and Hornsby et al. (2002) for Top Management Support (Moderating variable). The study uses a simple random sampling technique, where SMEs in the construction sector of Dubai was selected to identify the sample size (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). The sampling size is 367.

Since, the study aims to discover the attitude of middle-level managers towards perceived job satisfaction and its likely relation to
motivation to leave, while, perceived top management support by middle-level managers would take into account in the relational hypotheses as a moderating variable, therefore, the individual is the "unit of analysis". The reason for choosing the middle-level managers is because of the belief that senior/middle level managers are involved mostly in policies and decision making of the construction firms. Thus, the middle-level managers of SMEs construction sector of Dubai are to participate in the survey, considering that the most emerging sectors within the SMEs of Dubai have been the construction sector, which contributed around 9 percent alone to the Dubai GDP (Emirate NBD Report, 2013) and this sector had been struggling to retain middle-level managers (Global Workforce Study, 2013).

**Research Framework**

The research model (see figure 3.2 below) proposed the three main variables, which are adapted to show the relationship between job satisfaction, motivation to leave, and top management support.

![Research Framework Diagram]

**Figure 3.2: The Research Framework**

The intention to leave is the dependent variable which is influenced together by six elements of job satisfaction as independent variables, and top management support as a moderating variable. In this model of...
relationship, the dependent variable, intention to leave is expected to be influenced by job satisfaction and the moderator, i.e., top management support. In this context, all variables are connected to demonstrate relationships with each other. Therefore, this investigation aims to test and explore the nature of the relationship among all variables of SMEs in the construction sector of Dubai, UAE. More specifically, this research is designed to examine the direct relationship of job satisfaction to leave and the moderating effect of the top management support on the relationship between job satisfaction and motivation to leave among middle-level managers of SMEs. By using the PLS-SEM analysis tool, this study evaluates a complex model and examining the cause-and-effect relationship among variables.

**RESULTS**

*Assessment of Structural Model*

Hence, the objective is to examine the relationship between the six elements of job satisfaction, namely; satisfaction with supervisor, satisfaction with co-workers, satisfaction with variety, satisfaction with closure, satisfaction with compensation, and satisfaction with HR policies, and motivation to leave within middle-level managers of SMEs. Also, the statistical procedure was employed in this research to examine the moderating influence of top management support on the relationship between the six elements of job satisfaction and intention to leave among middle-level managers of SMEs.

*Testing of Direct Hypotheses*

The first six (6) hypotheses (1-6) were constructed to investigate the relationship between six elements of employees’ perceived job satisfaction and intention to leave. Satisfaction with supervisor, satisfaction with co-workers, satisfaction with variety, satisfaction with closure, satisfaction with compensation, and satisfaction with HR policies and intention to leave within middle-level managers of SMEs. The finding of the data analysis is depicted in figure 4.3 and table 4.19.

Based on the outcomes, H1 suggests that satisfaction with the supervisor is directly related to intention to leave within middle-level managers of SMEs ($\beta = 0.119; t = 1.295; p< 0.098$) is supported. H2 proposes that satisfaction with co-workers is directly related to intention to leave among middle level managers of SMEs ($\beta = 0.100; t = 2.032; p<$
0.021) is supported. While, H3 suggests that satisfaction with variety is directly related to intention to leave within middle level managers of SMEs ($\beta = 0.474; t = 1.254; p > 0.05$) is not supported. Nevertheless, H4 which postulates that satisfaction with closure is directly related to intention to leave among middle-level managers of SMEs ($\beta = 0.188; t = 1.694; p < 0.045$) is supported.

Similarly, H5 suggests that satisfaction with compensation is directly related to intention to leave among middle-level managers of SMEs ($\beta = 0.153; t = 1.640; p < 0.051$) is supported. In contrast, H6 which postulates that satisfaction with HR policies is directly related to intention to leave among middle-level managers of SMEs ($\beta = 0.170; t = 0.302; p > 0.05$) is not supported. Also, the standardized beta values in table 4.19 indicate that satisfaction with co-workers is the main predictor of intention to leave among middle-level managers of SMEs ($\beta = 0.100$), then followed by satisfaction with closure ($\beta = 0.188$), satisfaction with compensation ($\beta = 0.153$) and satisfaction with supervisor ($\beta = 0.119$). On the other hand, though, satisfaction with variety and satisfaction with HR policies have beta values of ($\beta = 0.474$) and ($\beta = 0.170$). However, the relationship to leave among middle-level managers of SMEs is not significant. Hence, satisfaction with co-workers and satisfaction with closure are strong predictors of intention to leave among middle-level managers of SMEs.

Table 4.19
Results of Direct Hypotheses Testing (Main Effects)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypotheses</th>
<th>Unst. Beta</th>
<th>Std. Beta</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>Confidence interval 5.0%</th>
<th>Confidence interval 95.0%</th>
<th>P Values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with Closure -&gt; Intention to Leave</td>
<td>-0.319</td>
<td>0.188</td>
<td>1.694</td>
<td>-0.529</td>
<td>-0.031</td>
<td>0.045</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with Co-workers -&gt; Intention to Leave</td>
<td>-0.203</td>
<td>0.100</td>
<td>2.032</td>
<td>-0.365</td>
<td>-0.050</td>
<td>0.021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with Compensation -&gt; Intention to Leave</td>
<td>-0.251</td>
<td>0.153</td>
<td>1.640</td>
<td>-0.507</td>
<td>0.008</td>
<td>0.051</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with HR Policies -&gt; Intention to Leave</td>
<td>-0.051</td>
<td>0.170</td>
<td>0.302</td>
<td>-0.338</td>
<td>0.184</td>
<td>0.382</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with Supervisors -&gt; Intention to Leave</td>
<td>0.154</td>
<td>0.119</td>
<td>1.295</td>
<td>0.010</td>
<td>0.342</td>
<td>0.098</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with Variety -&gt; Intention to Leave</td>
<td>-0.595</td>
<td>0.474</td>
<td>1.254</td>
<td>-1.579</td>
<td>-0.136</td>
<td>0.105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top Management Support -&gt; Intention to Leave</td>
<td>0.525</td>
<td>0.557</td>
<td>0.943</td>
<td>-0.034</td>
<td>1.554</td>
<td>0.173</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This study's outcomes indicate it is clear that managers perceived supervisor, closure, compensation, and co-workers would lead to leaving among middle-level managers of construction SMEs operating in Dubai, UAE.

**Assessment of Coefficient of Determination (R²)**

In the level of to lower satisfaction with the level of intention, Chin (1998) described R2 values of 0.19, 0.33, and 0.69, as weak, moderate, and substantial. Following on the view, the R2 value of this study is crucial, thus, the R2 value is 0.336. The findings are depicted in table 4.20.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Coefficient of Determination - R Square (R²)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intention to Leave</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Assessment of Effect Size (f²)**

As demonstrated in table 4.21, satisfaction with closure has an effect size of 0.041, satisfaction with co-workers has an effect size of 0.042, satisfaction with compensation has an effect size of 0.040, satisfaction with HR policies has an effect size of 0.002, satisfaction with the supervisor has the effect of 0.023, satisfaction with variety has the effect of 0.023 and top management support has the effect of 0.014.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment of Effect Size - f Square (f²)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intention to Leave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with Closure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with Co-workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with Compensation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with HR Policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with Supervisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with Variety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top Management Support</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Assessment of the Moderating Effect**

The second hypotheses (7-12) were constructed to investigate the influence of perceived top management support on the relationship between the six facets of job satisfaction (satisfaction with supervisor,
satisfaction with co-workers, satisfaction with variety, satisfaction with closure, satisfaction with compensation, and on the issues that lead to satisfaction with HR policies) and motivation to leave within middle-level managers of SMEs.

The findings demonstrated, H7 suggests that the relationship of satisfaction with supervisor and intention to leave among middle-level managers of SMEs is moderated by top management support ($\beta = 0.230$, $t = 2.566$, $p< 0.005$) is supported. While H8 demonstrates that the relationship of satisfaction with a co-worker and intention to leave among middle-level managers of SMEs is moderated by top management support ($\beta = 0.330$, $t = 1.233$, $p> 0.05$) is not supported. Surprisingly, H9 suggests that the relationship of satisfaction with variety and intention to leave among middle-level managers of SMEs is moderated by top management support ($\beta = 0.224$, $t = 2.227$, $p< 0.013$) is supported.

However, H10 proposes that the relationship of satisfaction with closure and intention to leave among middle-level managers of SMEs is moderated by top management support ($\beta = 0.167$, $t = 0.872$, $p> 0.05$) is not supported. Likewise, H11 suggests that the relationship of satisfaction with compensation and intention to leave among middle-level managers of SMEs is moderated by top management support ($\beta = 0.286$, $t = 0.591$, $p> 0.05$) is not supported. Lastly, H12 indicates that the relationship of satisfaction with the HR policies and intention to leave among middle-level managers of SMEs is moderated by top management support ($\beta = 0.270$, $t = 0.947$, $p> 0.05$) is not supported.

**PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR BUSINESS**

The outcomes of the recent study contribute to the management implications of the organization, particularly the SMEs in Dubai’s construction sector. This research contributes to the notion of knowledge by suggesting top management support had a moderating effect on the relationship. The findings of recent research provide insights to SMEs in the construction sector of Dubai to utilize top management support as a mechanism to help middle-level managers and ultimately foster a better working environment.

In recent research of several private companies in Jakarta, Indonesia, it is demonstrated that job satisfaction has a good influence on employee retention, and training and development have a positive impact on retention through job satisfaction (Murtiningsih, 2020). Hence,
reflecting the human capital issues of SMEs. While human capital is driven by social equity supported by individuals and the community (local or global), well-being enhances the positive relationship between individuals and institutions (Ahamat, 2017). Ahamat & Chong (2014) propose the notion of institutional assistance element to motivate any new ventures' growth and failures. Yet, this study provides significant contributions to the business organizations that top management support as a mechanism to promote job satisfaction and control and overcome the middle-level managers' motivation to leave.

CONCLUSION

The finding of this investigation demonstrated a crucial and positive relationship between four dimensions of job satisfaction and motivation to leave among middle-level managers of SMEs. Similarly, the study found that top management support had a significant and positive influence on the relationship between satisfaction with supervisor and intention to leave, as well as satisfaction with variety and intention to leave. Thus, the outcome suggests further that in the construction sector of Dubai, firms must adopt top management support as a mechanism that can be utilized to help in enhancing job satisfaction among middle-level managers, reducing the managers' level of intention to leave, and ultimately minimizing the turnover rate (actual leave from the firm).

It is proposed that one unique method to drive management research, is to inquire about the conventional approaches and to employ scientific mode in observing, measuring, analyzing, and approaching management and humanities events (Ahamat, 2014). Furthermore, future research may experiment with the qualitative method by employing interview techniques and personal observation of SMEs in Dubai. Using interviews and observation enriching research leading to the unearthing of major issues, which may not have been identified as clearly if only non-qualitative are used (Ahamat, 2019).
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