# Relationship between Job Embededness and Employees' Turnover Intention: A Study on Private Airlines in India

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## Abstract

*Job embededness is recognized as important factor in turnover literature in retaining valuable talented employees and develop a sustainable edge of the organization. Job embededness is taking centre stage in analyzing employees' turnover intention as individual's decision to leave an organization is highly shaped by the work environment in which the employee is embedded, in addition to the job per se. Using a sample of 416 employees belonging to 4 renowned organizations of Indian Airlines Industry namely Indigo, Spice Jet, Go Air and Jet Airways, in this study an attempt has been made to find out the relationship between job embededness and turnover intention of Non technical employees in Airlines Industry in India. Through, the results an important relationship between these two variables, can be seen substantiating available literature. However, this study disaggregates job embededness into its components Link, Fit and Sacrifice, to assess their impact on turnover intention, separately. In the results it is revealed that the participants having lower job embededness tend to have a higher turnover intention. Control for age, gender, education and experience it is found that Link and Fit have been significant influencers on turnover intention.*

***Keywords:*** *Fit, Job embededness, Link, Sacrifice, Turnover intention*

## 1. Introduction

With the Global economy alarmingly becoming knowledge driven, intellectual capital as a resource offers a competitive edge to organizations. Therefore, managers across industries are focused on retaining the best talents and reducing turnover of the employees. Individual's decision to leave an organization is highly shaped by the work environment in which the employee is embedded Mitchell and Lee (2001). Thus, job embededness takes centre stage in analyzing employees' turnover intention. Job embededness is a combination of social, psychological and financial forces that encourages an employee to stay and continue in a particular job. In simpler words, job embededness attempts to capture various attachments of an employee with his organization or community. Attrition is an alarming problem in Indian companies in general and the service sector in particular. In this study, we have analyzed a sample of 416 employees working in 4 premier airlines companies namely Indigo, Spice Jet, Go Air and Jet Airways across India with an objective to assess the impact of job embededness on employees' turnover intention in Indian airlines industry.

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## 2. Review of Literature

During the last few decades, scholars from different disciplines have been trying to identify the causal factors behind employees' turnover and bring forth various models, theories and vast empirical case studies on employee turnover. Most of the turnover models have established that job satisfaction plays a major role in the turnover process. Employees' level of job satisfaction is often found to influence important outcomes (like job performance, absenteeism and employee turnover). It is argued that once an employee is dissatisfied, which may be reflected in his intention to quit, a sequence of events may occur such as reduced organizational commitment, stronger intention to quit, more job search, and result in a higher probability of employee turnover (Lee and Mitchell, 1994; Mobley, 1977). Studies also reported evidences like work overload, role ambiguity, role conflict and job stress in determining turnover decisions (Ivancevich *et al.*, 1983; Weiss, 1983; Goldstein and Rockart, 1984; Li and Shani, 1991; Sethi *et al.*, 1999).

Later Mitchell *et al.* (2001) developed Job Embededness employee turnover model combining forces that keep an individual from changing the employer. Mitchell *et al.* (2001a) pointed out that job embeddness models differentiate from traditional models of employee turnover as in former primary focus was on employee retention rather than turnover. Mitchell and Lee (2001) supported this view and found that employee turnover is better predicted by the job embededness models in comparison to the traditional models of job attitude. Hence, the main focus of the job embeddedness is to keep employees in the organization, rather than focusing on turnover (Mitchell *et al.*, 2001a).

The main aim of this study is to examine the relationship between the job embededness and turnover intention of the employees in private Airlines Industry in India. This study may prove valuable in exploring a relation between these variables by keeping in mind the importance of retaining valuable talented employees in airline industry. For retaining valuable talented, Employees' job embededness is highly recognized as important factor in turnover literature and often seen to offer a sustainable edge. Significant associations have been observed between these variables in the present study, which will lead to further scope of more expanded studies in the airlines industry. The results of the study could then also be compared with employee turnover studies in other sectors. Considering that link, fit and sacrifice these three job embededness variables are deeply associated with employees' turnover behavior, the following hypotheses are formulated in the present study.

**Hypothesis1:** A statistically significant association exists between employees' link with the organization and turnover intention.

**Hypothesis 2:** A statistically significant association exists between employees' fit with the organization and turnover intention.

**Hypothesis 3:** A statistically significant association exists between employees' sacrifice within the job and turnover intention.

**Hypothesis 4:** Lower link with the organization positively influences employee turnover intention.

**Hypothesis 5:** Lower fit with the organization positively influences employee turnover intention.

**Hypothesis6:** Greater sacrifice within the job positively influences employee turnover intention.

## 3. Methodology

A cross-sectional survey design was employed in the study where self-administered questionnaire were used to collect quantitative primary data. This approach is identical with contemporary literature (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005; Takawira, 2014).

## Table 1: Different Category Wise Description of the Sample (No. of Employees)

| Age | No | Gender | No | Education Level | No | Marital Status | No | Orga-nization | No | Experi-ence | No |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **3 Below 20** | 10 | Female | 165 | 12th class | 43 | Married | 155 | Go Air | 57 | Less than 12 months | 62 |
| **21-25** | 151 | Male | 251 | Graduate | 281 | Unmarried | 261 | Indigo | 180 | 13-24 months | 73 |
| **26-30** | 165 | | | Post Graduate | 92 | | | Jet | 89 | 25-36 months | 38 |
| **Above 30** | 90 | | | | | | | Spice Jet | 90 | 37-48 months | 61 |
| | | | | | | | | | | 49-60 months | 48 |
| | | | | | | | | | | Above 60 months | 134 |
| **Total** | 416 | Total | 416 | Total | 416 | Total | 416 | Total | 416 | Total | 416 |

As illustrated in Table 1, the present study utilizes a sample of 416 employees belonging to 4 renowned organizations of Indian Airlines Industry namely Indigo, Spice jet, Go Air and Jet Airways. Indigo employees dominate the sample with 43.27% of representation, with the rest of the sample comprising Spice Jet (21.63%), Go Air (13.7%) and Jet Airways (21.4%) people. Participants are mostly between 21 and 30 years (almost 76%) and 58% of them have at least three years of similar job experience. Overall, 63% are unmarried and 60% are male. 68% employees of the sample are Graduate while 22% are post graduate. 45% people of the total sample are primary financial provider for their family.

The job embeddedness here is captured by self-reporting instrument that includes three variables, namely link to organization i.e. respondents feeling about benefits of employees in similar organization, fit to organization i.e. respondents' feeling about their skills and talents being utilized properly in the organization, and lastly sacrifice within the job i.e. employees feeling about their investment in the present job. A5 point Likert scale varying between degrees of intensity was used for capturing employee response, for example, response 1 signifies 'strongly agree' to the statement where as response 5 signifies 'strongly disagree' to the statement. Lower link is observed when an employee scores1 (SA) to the statement "employees in similar organization get more benefits than myself". Similarly, lower fit is observed when an employee responds with 1 (SA) to the statement "my skills and talents are not optimally utilized by this organization", and high sacrifice is observed when an employee scores 1 (SA) to the statement "I feel I have invested too much in the organization to think of leaving".

Self-reporting instrument that includes ten items is used to measure the turnover intention. The response was captured on a five-point Likert scale varying between degrees of intensity; for example, response 1 signifies 'strongly agree' to the statement whereas response 5 signifies 'strongly disagree' to the statement. For instance a statement from the Turnover Intention is 'I am actively looking for a new job'. Internal consistency reliability coefficient as measured by Cronbach's alpha is reported as .852. This approach is consistent with contemporary literature like Takawira (2014).

## 4. Results

### Table 2: Descriptive Statistics- Variables

| Measuring instrument sub scale | Mean | SD | Internal Consistency |
|---|---|---|---|
| Job Embededness | 2.497596 | .7813040 | .796 |
| Link | 2.384615 | .9705370 | .711 |
| Fit | 2.189103 | .9354130 | .706 |
| Sacrifice | 2.919071 | 1.0169222 | .564 |
| Turnover Intention | 2.751202 | .8799225 | .852 |

Table 2 exhibits the mean, standard deviation and internal consistency reliability coefficients for the job embededness and turnover intention variables. Cronbach's alpha, all above 0.70except sacrifice is shown by the results.

### Table 3: Correlation among the Variables Job Embededness Scale and Turnover Intention

| Correlations | | Sacrifice | Link | Fit | Turnover Intention |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sacrifice | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .592** | .396** | .600** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| | N | 416 | 416 | 416 | 416 |
| Link | Pearson Correlation | .592** | 1 | .397** | .587** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | | .000 | .000 |
| | N | 416 | 416 | 416 | 416 |
| Fit | Pearson Correlation | .396** | .397** | 1 | .304** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .000 | | .000 |
| | N | 416 | 416 | 416 | 416 |
| Turnover Intention | Pearson Correlation | .600** | .587** | .304** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .000 | .000 | |
| | N | 416 | 416 | 416 | 416 |

As illustrated in Table 3, link, fit and sacrifice correlated significantly and positively with turnover intention. The strongest positive significant correlation .60 was observed between sacrifice and the turnover intention. Link with the organization has a positive significant correlation of .57 with turnover intention and Fit with the organization has a positive correlation of .304 with turnover intention.

Regression model is employed keeping the turnover intention as dependent variable. In our model the reference employee is an Indigo employee, who is male, aged below 30 years,

graduate, unmarried, who has less than 3 years of similar job experience and who is primary earning member of the family.

### Table 4: Variables used in Regression

| Variables | Description |
|---|---|
| Sacrifice | Sacrifice within the job"I have invested too much in the job" responded 1 (SA) signifies high sacrifice within the job |
| Link to organization | Link to the organization is represented by response such as "Other companies provide better benefit to the employees". Hence, the sentence in the questionnaire is used as reverse. Therefore, the response '1' (SA) signifies lower link with the organization |
| FIT to organization | Fit to the organization is represented by response such as "Other companies better utilize the same skill". Hence, the sentence in the questionnaire is used as reverse. Therefore, the response '1' (SA) signifies lower Fit with the organization |
| Above 30_dummy | It is 1 if the age of the employee is above 30; otherwise 0 |
| Female_dummy | It is 1 if the if the employee is female; otherwise 0 |
| Post Graduation dummy | It is 1 if the highest qualification of the employee is post graduation; otherwise 0 |
| Married_dummy | It is 1 if the employee is married; otherwise 0 |
| Spice Jet_dummy | It is 1 if the employee works with Spice Jet; otherwise 0 |
| Go Air_dummy | It is 1 if the employee works with Go Air; otherwise 0 |
| Jet_dummy | It is 1 if the employee works with JET; otherwise 0 |
| Total exp Above 3 years dummy | It is 1 if the employee has more than 36 months similar job experience; otherwise 0 |
| Secondary_dummy | It is 1 if the employee is not the prime source of finance to his family; otherwise 0 |

| Model Summary | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
| 1 | .681[a] | .463 | .446 | .6550459 |

a. Dependent Variable: X_TI,

b. Predictors: (Constant), Secondary_dummy, Go Air_dummy, X_JE_LINK, Post Graduation dummy, Female_dummy, Jet_dummy, 12th class dummy, Married_dummy, Spice Jet_dummy, X_JE_FIT, Above 30_dummy, Above 3 years dummy, X_JE_SAC

**Table 5: Coefficients[a]**

| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | T | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| 1 | (Constant) | 1.056 | .144 | | 7.355 | .000 |
| | X_JE_SAC | .329 | .042 | .380 | 7.819 | .000 |
| | X_JE_LINK | .311 | .045 | .343 | 6.976 | .000 |
| | X_JE_FIT | .021 | .039 | .023 | .538 | .591 |
| | Above 30_dummy | .078 | .096 | .036 | .812 | .417 |
| | Female_dummy | .019 | .069 | .010 | .271 | .787 |
| | 12th class dummy | .078 | .113 | .027 | .690 | .490 |
| | Post Graduation dummy | .101 | .084 | .048 | 1.208 | .228 |
| | Married_dummy | -.079 | .085 | -.043 | -.925 | .356 |
| | Spice Jet_dummy | -.043 | .088 | -.020 | -.483 | .630 |
| | Go Air_dummy | -.085 | .103 | -.033 | -.830 | .407 |
| | Jet_dummy | -.278 | .087 | -.130 | -3.215 | .001 |
| | Above 3 years dummy | -.007 | .082 | -.004 | -.082 | .935 |
| | Secondary_dummy | .013 | .070 | .007 | .180 | .858 |

The independent variables are explaining 44.6% (Adjusted $R^2$ = 0.446) of the variance of the total turnover intention. Coefficient of Sacrifice within the job (B=.329; p=.00) and Link (taken as reverse) to organization (B= .311; $p$ = 0.00) emerge as positive and they are significantly explaining the variance in the dependent variable. Though the coefficient of fit (taken as reverse) to organization is positive, it is not significant in explaining the turnover intention. Jet Dummy emerges as negative and significant. It suggests that given the same level of job embeddedness, turnover intention is lower for the Jet Airways employee than his Indigo counterpart who has been taken as referral employee in the regression model. Result of the regression shows that effect of job embeddedness variables on turnover intention are similar across gender, marital status, qualification and age group for this sample.

Relationship between job embededness and turnover intention has been explored in the study. Overall, the results show a significant relationship between these two variables, substantiating available literature. However, this study disaggregates job embededness into its components Link, Fit and Sacrifice. Each of the sub components are considered variables to assess their impact on turnover intention separately. The results showed that employees with lower levels of job embededness tend to have a higher turnover intention. The findings support the argument of Halbesleben and Wheeler (2008) and Mitchell *et al.*, (2001b) who has worked extensively on this subject. Link and Sacrifice are found to have significant positive relation with turnover intention. As discussed earlier, in order to capture employees' link with the organization, the questionnaire is taken as reverse. Therefore, Lower link is observed when an employee scores 1 (SA) to the statement "employees in similar organization get more benefits than myself".

Similarly, lower fit is observed when an employee responds with 1 (SA) to the statement "Other companies better utilize the same skill". The response "Strongly Agree" signifies lower link with the organization. Overall the result shows that higher the link and fit to the organization, lower will be the turnover intention. Also higher level of sacrifice within the job, higher will be the turnover intention.

## 4. Managerial Implications

The findings from the study help in understanding the relationship between job embeddedness and employees' turnover intention in the context of Indian Airlines industry. In order to retain good employees, there is a call for the management of Airlines Industry to initiate programmes for improving the embeddedness. Establishing a stronger link with the employees should be the first step to increase employee embeddedness. Fostering cordial manager employee relationship, clarity in communication and prompt feedback system in operational terms are ways of bringing about positive links of employees with the organization. Very often innovative benefits in the form of flexibility and qualitative compensation act as major contributors to a good fit of the employee to the organization. Management's involvement in developing career plans and providing future guidelines to the employees can work wonders in developing the desired link with the employees Takawira (2014). An employees' skill should be utilized in a best possible way that would provide greater fit to the organization, which will eventually lead to lower attrition. Providing meaningful work activities and opportunity for growth and development by utilizing the skill would facilitate greater fit to the organization. Employees' embeddedness towards job increases if they have to sacrifice less in the job, which in turn decreases turnover intention (Mitchell *et al.*, 2001a). Providing flexible working arrangements or sabbatical leave might be a step to increase employee's embeddedness.

Studies like this promote the idea that personal and professional development through training should be promoted to increase embeddedness. These training programmes should be conducted in line with the employee's personal goal of career development. Since the entry level and supervisory level jobs in the airlines industry are subject to very erratic work schedules and the family life balance is subject to significant challenge, it may be noted that the sample includes most employees in the 21-30 age group. This is not peculiar to the sample, but the population of the airline industry at these levels of jobs are all in the 21-30 age group. Therefore it becomes imperative for the employer to focus on the career path of the employee, to ensure that the employees' working life in the mid twenties and early thirties are given due importance by the employer.

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