

Examination of stress–turnover relationship through perceived employee's exploitation at workplace

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Abstract

Purpose – In the purview of stress–turnover relationship, the present study aims to explore the endogenous and exogenous aspects of stress and employees' turnover intentions. Further, it also intends to evaluate the mediating role of perceived employee's exploitation between stressors and employee turnover intentions. For that matter, antecedents of stressors were identified and classified into endogenous and exogenous stressors: endogenous stressors relate to the employees' negative psychological contact within an organization and exogenous stressors are various macro-economic factors which have a considerable influence on employees' workplace behavior.

Design/methodology/approach – For the purpose of this study, this study chooses private school teachers as respondents working in the economically depressed state of India. Thus, data for the present study has been collected from 628 private school teachers of J&K (India) which were randomly selected. In order to ensure valid and reliable statistical inferences from the study, data collected has been validated using confirmatory factor analysis and hypothesis testing has been carried out through structural equation modeling.

Findings – It was found that both types of stressors were contributing negatively toward employee's psychological state resulting in undesirable employee organizational relationships manifested as turnover intentions among employees. Moreover, perceived employee's exploitation was found to intensify the relationship of employee turnover as a dependent variable regressed on endogenous, exogenous and occupational stress by fully mediating the stress–turnover intricacies.

Research limitations/implications – The implications of the study include the identification of employees' stressor needs in order to gauge the understanding of the mechanism by which employees react to their environment and develop attitudes toward their jobs. The present study includes a small sample size obtained from private educational institutions only. Therefore, there is a need to take a geographically diverse sample that is inevitable for universal inferences and validity.

Originality/value – Very little research has been conducted to explore endogenous, exogenous and unique stressors such as economic stress and perceived external opportunities which constitute the overall stress. Moreover, to the best of the authors' knowledge, this is the first study which tests the model empirically that examines the effect of stress–turnover relationship through perceived employee's exploitation in the teaching and educational sector.

Keywords Endogenous stressors, Exogenous stressors, Perceived employee's exploitation, Employee turnover intentions

Paper type Research paper



Introduction

Due to the globalization of the Indian economy and government policies related to service sector, service sector has got a remarkable boost which provides strong demand over the past few years and thus it has positioned India among the fastest-growing service markets all over the world (Deepali and Luthra, 2018). In the service sector, continuous pressure can be seen among professionals to provide effective services efficiently and in a cost-effective manner (Hobfoll *et al.*, 2018). This increasing work-related stress can have serious consequences portrayed as a “silent killer,” which has been reported as the root of depression and workplace anxiety with specific reference to India (Menon and Priya, 2019). The concept of stress has increasingly attracted the attention of theorists and researchers across the world. In this era of technological advancement, innovations and global competition due to the economic environment put more pressure on businesses to succeed and so competition becomes fierce (Livingston, 2015). Business owners may face brutal burdens to keep their companies functioning at a profit, and a trickle-down effect can occur resulting in the creation of employees’ stress. Cosmos Institute of Mental Health and Behavioral Sciences, a top provider of employee-assistance programs to companies, shows a jump in depression and anxiety-related disorders and stress-related complaints from employees have doubled from previous year to 16% in 2019. With the changing socio-economic conditions and increasing unemployment rate at 8.4%, according to the Center for Monitoring Indian Economy, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Indian government, and research from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). The values of employees and their professional concerns associated with the job have undergone a change (Biglan and Embry, 2013), resulting in an increasing level of stress and hassle among the employees. These stressful employees can no longer contribute toward the achievement of organizational goals. Consequently, these employees are always compelled to operate in an undesirable work environment characterized by heavy workload, less administrative support and job insecurity. In other words, when an employee is confronted with unexpected or unfamiliar situations, he/she exhibits a deviant behavior, i.e. a behavior that violates the standards of conduct or expectations of a group or society (Sverke and Hellgren, 2002). This happens due to the arousal of nervous and insecure feelings with declining positive attitudes.

Furthermore, mass joblessness, unemployment and scarce job opportunities exert pressure on the employees to retain their organizational membership even in undesirable working conditions and reduce the employees’ turnover intentions by the compelling forces. However, an employer exploits the vast pool and takes the leverage of prevailing conditions in the state of a depressed economy where the unemployment rate is as high as 194% (Ahmad, 2018) resulting in compulsion upon employees to remain within their organizations, even in adverse conditions, irrespective of their choice (Bhat *et al.*, 2021). In the present study, understanding the intervening variable “perceived employee’s exploitation” in relation to stress–turnover model becomes unique and interesting. Unfortunately, research remained very limited due to the lack of coverage of the subject by all media and other professional platforms. Therefore, there is a need to probe and identify the determinants of stress to enable the adoption of appropriate preventive measures. The present study was conducted against this background and was prompted by the fact that little is known about the nature of stressors with perceived employees’ exploitation and employees’ turnover intentions.

Literature review and hypotheses development

Previous studies have sought to identify the positive relationship between occupational stress and turnover intentions (Applebaum *et al.*, 2010). Employees who work in the service industry are more likely to face uncertain situations and thus can be exposed to more occupational stress (Jogarathnam and Buchanan, 2004; Bhat, 2013, 2019). Many researchers

have clearly found that the greater the amount of stress, the higher the turnover intention among employees (Chen *et al.*, 2011; Mosadeghrad *et al.*, 2011; Fong and Mahfar, 2013; Arshadi and Damiri, 2013). The literature regarding turnover intentions suggests that pertaining to work-related factors particularly conditions of employment (e.g. salary, career opportunities) are important causes of turnover intentions (Houkes *et al.*, 2003). Turnover intentions were clearly and mainly determined by the unmet career expectations like higher salary and more responsibility and to a lesser scope by the quality of job content (Houkes *et al.*, 2003). Therefore, almost each factor that affects employee stress is closely related to the intention to quit. However, the main element of employees' exploitation is the suppression of legitimate demands on the part of employees. It is also associated with the undue power dynamics of the employer, who takes leverage of the poor labor market conditions by paying employee's low and providing a meager resource for maximizing their profits. Many negative characteristics of the current workplace environment, including the recent recession and poor economic conditions have increased the level of stress for a variety of occupations (Leiter, 1997).

H1. Occupational stressor leads to employee's intentions to leave their organizations.

H1a. Perceived employees' exploitation acts as a mediator between occupational stressors and employees' turnover intentions.

Endogenous stressors and employees' turnover intentions

Endogenous stressors are those facets which relate to the employee's negative psychological contact within an organization. Such kind of stress may arise from a perceived lack of support and recognition, professional isolation and difficult interpersonal interactions (Burke *et al.*, 1996). Collegial support can buffer the impact of stress (Greenglass *et al.*, 1997) and is associated with fewer negative psychological health outcomes (Griffith *et al.*, 1999). Hashim *et al.* (2019) have found the top two main sources of stress, viz inadequate financial support and work overload. It has been observed by Olivier and Venter (2003) that employees feel their salaries are insufficient which could explain why many employees take on a second occupation for additional income. Even in the private sector, school employees receive relatively insufficient salaries (Jack and Punch, 2001) with poor job security which consequently leads to low organizational commitment, performance and organizational support and an increased tendency to quit (Cheng and Chan, 2008; Rainayee *et al.*, 2013). Further, revealed by Al-Mohannadi and Capel (2007) and Punch and Tuetteman (1996), lack of administrative support is one of the key reasons for higher employees' turnover from their profession, stress arising from poor administration support and unpleasant climate at the workplace. In consonance, Luekens (2004) has found that nearly 40% of employees who left their job mentioned poor administrative support as the main reason for their departure. However, Murphy and Sauter (2003) found professional distress is often associated with the issues of insufficient working time, inadequate resources at job place as well as it affects individuals' physical, mental, spiritual aspects and their social relations. Zaheer *et al.* (2016) found a strong positive correlation between workload, professional stress, working conditions and interpersonal relationships which are considered as the critical factors creating feelings of stress with the turnover intentions. Mostert *et al.* (2008) found that employees under stress were also facing problems in their personal and family life. Zaheer *et al.* (2016) also found a strong positive relationship between occupational stress and job insecurity and inadequate financial support of employees.

Furthermore, it was also revealed that the influence of workload, poor working conditions, support from management and human resource management practices on employees' stress with a view to assess the extent to which the lack of service is a result of employees' stress

(Herminingsih and Kurniasih, 2018). However, a strenuous working environment is associated with increased rates of employees' dissatisfaction (Ghazali *et al.*, 2020). Poor working conditions are negatively correlated with occupational stress (Kyriacou *et al.*, 2003). Many researchers found working longer hours to achieve targets and however for the additional hours of input, most often the workers are not entitled to extra payment (Singh *et al.*, 2011). It is also found that employees tend to earn relatively low compared to similarly qualified individuals in other professions. Insufficient remuneration causes frustration among employees. Workers are struggling financially, and they do have a huge responsibility toward their families (Grayson and Alvarez, 2008). There are many researchers (such as Noor and Maad, 2008; Sheraz *et al.*, 2014; Mxenge *et al.*, 2014) who have identified that there is a significant impact of stressors on turnover intentions. Many researchers (such as Khan *et al.*, 2014) suggest that if organizations are willing to retain their employees to maximize profits, some organizations have resorted to unlawful business practices like "casualization" of workers that harshly hurt workers' interests and violate some fundamental labor laws (Okafor, 2007). Moreover, the perceived employees' exploitation has a large influence on individual perceptions and has a strong negative impact on measures of life satisfaction (Winkelmann and Winkelmann, 1998). Our study attempted to extend the current literature about the mediating effects of the meaning of perceived employees' exploitation and about the consequences of adverse endogenous stress on employees' outcomes particularly on turnover intentions. Accordingly, we hypothesized that increased levels of adverse endogenous stressors would lead to increased levels of turnover intentions. In the light of above discussion, the following hypotheses have been proposed:

H2. Endogenous stressors lead to employees' intention to leave their organizations.

H2a. Perceived employees' exploitation mediates the impact of endogenous stressors on employees' turnover intentions.

Exogenous stressors

To identify and alleviate the exogenous stress at work, tackling such stressors caused by workers is a tougher challenge. This stress is often difficult to identify, as the common causes are the things that employees would rather keep to themselves: family conflict, perceived financial worries and less job opportunities. These stressors are exterior to organization and have an effect which does not stop at the individual level, but it can spill over to damage the organizational morale which has direct implications on employees' attitude. Moreover, worries about how their stressors-related problems will be perceived at work are no doubt a cause of added stress for employees. Although there exists some empirical literature on the effect of economic stress and financial crisis on turnover intentions (Battisti and Deakins, 2017), however, economic stress argues that workers' stress is also likely to be derived from the perception of macroeconomic forces (Shoss and Probst, 2012). A meta-analysis conducted by Allen *et al.* (2000) examined the consequences of work-family conflict and concluded that work-family conflict is significantly related to job/work stress, affective professional stress and negative feelings at work. Furthermore, the nascent research findings and theoretical arguments suggest that the economic situation at organizational, regional, national and international levels can influence workers' perceptions, attitudes, behaviors and general well-being (Tay and Harter, 2013). The incorporation of broader economic pressures into models of workplace stress coincides with the tremendous changes in the labor market and the nature of employment seen over the last few decades. Lifelong job security and careers within a single organization have been replaced with precarious employment and temporary work (Klein Hesselink and Van Vuuren, 1999). Consequently, employability reflects how the individual perceives his or her opportunities in the labor market. An individual with low

employability believes that it is very difficult or even impossible for them to acquire new employment (Berntson and Marklund, 2007). However, perceived external opportunities are not the same thing as actual labour market conditions. Past research suggests that both perceived external opportunities and labour market conditions are positively associated with turnover intentions (Steel and Griffeth, 1989). Contrary, perceived employees' exploitation is suppression of legitimate demands on the part of the employees. It is also associated with the undue power dynamics of the employer who takes leverage of the poor labor market conditions by paying low and providing meager resources for maximizing their profit motives. Job losses and unemployment experiences have been linked to negative health consequences for workers (Burgard *et al.*, 2007). Carsten and Spector (1987) conducted a meta-analysis to examine how the magnitude of the relationship between employees' positive attitude and turnover varied during high and low unemployment rates. They found a correlation that ranged from low to moderate between unemployment rates and the strength of the satisfaction-turnover relationships suggesting that the satisfaction–turnover relationship is moderated by economic opportunity. Therefore, on explaining the magnitude of the variance explained, authors have included some external forces in the formation of employees' unique psychology towards their organization exhibited at the workplace owing to which a number of authors have machinated the model with the inclusion of employees' perception toward the labor market conditions. In this background, we seek to establish mediating role of perceived employees' exploitation by the employees in the relationship between employees' exogenous stressors and employees' turnover intentions.

H3. Exogenous stressors lead to employees' intentions to leave their organizations.

H3a. Perceived employee's exploitation mediates the impact of exogenous stressor on employees' turnover intentions.

Statement of the problem

Occupational stress is a stigma among employees who are facing stress at the workplace. According to Prime Minister of India "Narendra Modi" in his speech through Mann ki Baat Radio on March 27, 2017, urged Indian citizens to talk about depression and seek help if needed. It is not surprising that stress has escalated progressively over the past few decades marking it as a subject hard to avoid. One must give due attention to stress and its negative consequences on workforce. When stress is sustained for a long period of time, the problem becomes significant. Since India is a labor-surplus economy, getting employment is a must for all (Jha and Mohapatra, 2019). According to a study by Optum, a top provider of Employee Assistance Programs to corporate, 46% of the workforce in organizations in India suffers from some or the other form of stress (Attridge, 2012). This shows how much alarming occupational stress is and the urgency to address the issue. However, the worthless position of the present teacher, more so in private schools, has hardly been taken into consideration by the concerned authorities (Kingdon, 2020; Gupta, 2019). Under the contemporary economic conditions where there is a scarcity of jobs which is engulfed by corruption, nepotism and a high rate of unemployment, employer appoints highly qualified and well-trained teachers who are compelled by the prevailing severe social and economic conditions to work in the schools at a very low salary and under huge pressure and responsibilities (Ahmad, 2018). Most of the studies have examined the stress turnover intention model, but meager literature exists analyzing the effect of external factors like perceived employees' exploitation. There is no such research so far and thus the present study has been conducted among teachers in private schools that are exposed to specific endogenous and exogenous stressors. In light of the conceptual and empirical considerations, the present study aimed to broaden the current understanding of teachers' stress by examining the unique stressors like economic stress

and perceived external opportunities which constitute stress. In this backdrop, the present study is a maiden attempt of these works to achieve certain objectives. First, antecedents of stressors were being identified and classified into endogenous stressors and exogenous stressors among private school teachers. Second, the mediating role of perceived employees' exploitation between stressors and employee turnover intentions was evaluated. Finally, the mutual relationship between endogenous and exogenous stressors through perceived employee's exploitation on employee's turnover intentions was assessed.

Materials and methods

Conceptual model

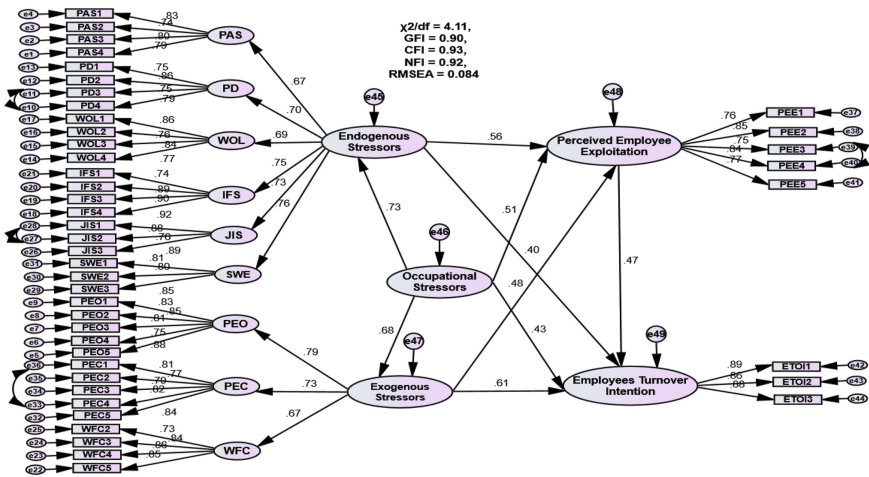
The research model was built based on the literature review and the current scenario of labor market conditions. The nine identified intricacies were divided into endogenous, exogenous stressors of occupational stress and were considered as a proxy to the employees' experiences that have been studied together with other two constructs, i.e. Perceived Employees Exploitation and Turnover Intentions. The variables were measured using self-developed items as well as selected items from different studies. Endogenous, exogenous stressors and second-order occupational stress are presumed as independent variables which can affect turnover intentions. Intervening variable of perceived employee's exploitation is acting as a mediating role between endogenous, exogenous stressors, occupational stress and turnover intentions. Structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to test the various causal relationships between variables in the model. First, the measurement model was developed and validated, then the structural model was evaluated and various path estimates were identified. The hypothesized relationship between the different variables is shown in the model (Figure 1).

Generation of scale items

The methodology adopted for the validation and generation of scale has been recommended by Churchill (1979), Gerbing and Anderson (1988), Hair *et al.* (2006) and Malhotra and Dash (2011). Instruments were developed after in-depth discussions with the respondents regarding the stress they faced at their workplace, causing problems. These problems were identified and converted into statements. After matching these statements with existing literature, these factors were also supported by the existing literature. The theoretical studies were consulted with the purpose to get an idea about the expected items. A comprehensive review was conducted to understand item generation for the identified variables and research studies of Cox (1987), Kopelman *et al.* (1983), Srivastava and Singh (1984), Williams and Cooper (1998), Cartwright and Cooper (2002), Lingard *et al.* (2007), Nixon *et al.* (2011) and Giorgi *et al.* (2015) were consulted for endogenous and exogenous stressors of occupational stress. The second construct, perceived employees' exploitation variable was generated from the research study of Livne-Ofer *et al.* (2019). In addition to this study, some self-developed items were generated and the existing items were modified to suit the respondents and employees' turnover intention were obtained from the research studies of Cammann *et al.* (1979), O'Driscoll and Beehr's (1994) and Nissly *et al.* (2005). Several items were held in negative form to provide internal cross-checking and to ensure the active participation of respondents when the questionnaire was being filled out. All items and variables are given in Appendix.

Pretesting

A thorough list of items representing each dimension was arranged. The items comprehending the dimensions were mostly self-developed for the variables under study.



Note(s): PAS: Poor Administration Support, PD: Professional Distress, WOL: Work Overload, IFS: Inadequate Financial Support, JIS: Job Insecurity SWE: Strenuous Working Environment, PEO: Perceived External Opportunities, PEC: Perceived Economic Crisis, WFC: Work-Family Conflict, PEE: Perceived Employees Exploitation, ETIO: Employees Turnover Intention, χ^2/df = Chi Square/Degrees of Freedom, GFI = Goodness of Fit Index, CFI = Comparative Fit Index, NFI = Normed Fit Index, RMR = and RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation

Source(s): AMOS Output

Figure 1.
Structural equation
model for the
present study

Pre-testing was performed to accurately identify possible doubts before the final data were collected for analysis, if any, through face validity and content validity where experts' opinions were sought. Slight changes were made to the questionnaire items after receiving input from the experts. In total, 56 items were retained from the initial battery of 66 items and 10 items were removed due to irrelevance and repeatability prior to final data collection. The pretesting pertains to the administration of the survey instrument to a set of small number of respondents. Its main aim is to ensure the general feasibility of the data collection method and assess the validity and reliability of the research instrument. The pilot study was conducted on a sample of 128 respondents in June/July 2018 in line with the procedure laid down by [Chahal et al. \(2014\)](#) to validate the concept under study. The respondents from whom data were collected should have at least 1 year of experience as a teacher. During the test, 56 items were drafted. All the items were thoroughly explained to the respondents. Furthermore, the opinions of respondents were considered for further refinement of the questionnaire. All responses were reported on a scale of five Likert's points, ranging from 5 for strongly agree to 1 for strongly disagree. The data collected was subjected to purification by means of an exploratory factor analysis as indicated in the next sub-heading.

Exploratory Factor Analysis

Exploratory factor analysis was performed using principal component analysis (PCA) of extraction with Varimax orthogonal rotation technique for summing up the original knowledge with minimal factors and optimal coverage. For the subsequent study, the identified factors were selected in terms of own value greater than 1.0 and factor loads greater

than 0.5 (Hair *et al.*, 2010). A Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy, where value greater than 0.50 is sufficient, has been tested to check the appropriateness of a factor analysis (Hair *et al.*, 2010). Also, Cronbach's α was calculated to check the consistency. Cronbach's α was used as it is the constructs' reliability indicator (Cronbach, 1951). Cronbach's α values of 0.70 or higher indicate good reliability (Nunnally, 1970; O'Leary-Kelly and Vokurka, 1998). The development of occupational stressors included 56 items which were reduced to 37 items and converged under two factors, namely, endogenous stressor and exogenous stressor. Furthermore, perceived employees' exploitation and turnover intention consisted of 9 and 6 items, respectively, which were reduced to 5 and 3 items of the constructs. The KMO value of all constructs is higher than 0.75, the total variance described for all constructs is higher than 60%, the factor loadings and the Cronbach's α for all constructs are higher than 0.70 and eigen values are also greater than 1 for all the constructs (Hair *et al.*, 2010). In addition, the measurement model was also evaluated using reliability tests on items. Reliability of items is meant to assess the amount of variation in an item due to the underlying constructs rather than error. The item reliability coefficient, which is the square of the factor loading, of at least 0.5 is considered as reliability evidence. As seen in Table 1, all items surpassed the required minimum value, thus confirming the reliability of our measuring model. EFA specifics are set out in Table 1. After reliability was established, the items retained in each domain were used to collect final data.

Sample size and the participants

Finally, 45 items were incorporated in the scale after pre-testing for further review, considering the methods proposed by Israel (1992) to determine the correct sample size and, considering that this study would use a basic mediation model, the issue of sample size was primarily viewed from the mediation research perspective. The sample size for this analysis was 628 participants. The scale included 44 items. Hence, the ratio was 44:628, which equates to 1:13.95 – i.e. 13.95 respondents for each item on the scale. This ratio of 1:13.95 falls between the satisfactory limits of 1:5 and 1:10 as recommended by Hair *et al.* (2010). Therefore, the sample size in this study is assumed to have accurately represented the appropriate population in terms of mediation analysis. In addition, the sample size in this study exceeded the necessary sample size suggested by Hoe (2008) who claims that a sample size exceeds 200 participants may be considered sufficient to achieve the desired statistical power level with a structural model.

In the present study, 650 questionnaires were distributed among private school teachers. About 628 questionnaires were received back successfully and 22 were rejected as they were incomplete. Thus, the final sample consists of 628 teachers working at the different private schools in the state. Respondents comprised of teachers at grade-level schools, elementary schools, middle schools, high schools and higher secondary schools working in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. Since the sample was drawn from the population of a homogeneous group, so the random sampling technique was employed for this study.

Sample characteristics

Table 2 exhibits the demographic characteristics of the sample in which 34.81% of teachers are males and 65.18% are females. The private school teachers are mostly dominated by female because of their preferences for this job in the Jammu and Kashmir society (Chopra and Gartia, 2009). Further sample results reveal that 57.2% were married respondents and 42.8% were unmarried respondents. The experience of 4–6 years has the highest percentage of respondents (39%) followed by 1–3 years (34.4%) and the experience above 13–15 years has the lowest number of respondents (4.0%). Moreover, the majority of the respondents who have educational qualification of post-graduation with B.Ed degree were (32.0%) and the respondents with minimum educational qualification were (5.7%).

Constructs	Factors loading	KMO	Eigen value	Variance explained (% age)	Cronbach alpha	Item reliability
Endogenous Stressor		0.803		79.25		
Poor administrative support			1.79	18.74	0.853	
PAS1	0.854					0.729
PAS2	0.723					0.522
PAS3	0.758					0.574
PAS4	0.776					0.602
Professional distress			2.34	15.11	0.764	
PD1	0.714					0.509
PD2	0.888					0.788
PD3	0.795					0.632
PD4	0.723					0.522
Work Overload			2.54	14.93	0.874	
WOL1	0.826					0.682
WOL2	0.818					0.669
WOL3	0.797					0.635
WOL4	0.738					0.544
Inadequate financial security			2.89	11.71	0.886	
IFS1	0.745					0.555
IFS2	0.876					0.767
IFS3	0.896					0.802
IFS4	0.863					0.744
Job Insecurity			4.45	9.71	0.863	
JIS1	0.728					0.529
JIS2	0.894					0.799
JIS3	0.889					0.790
Strenuous working environment			3.99	9.05	0.812	
SWE1	0.789					0.622
SWE2	0.800					0.640
SWE3	0.864					0.746
Exogenous Stressor		0.846		65.84		
Perceived external opportunity			2.78	28.23	0.763	
PEO1	0.794					0.630
PEO2	0.867					0.751
PEO3	0.777					0.603
PEO4	0.894					0.806
PEO5	0.718					0.515
Perceived economic crisis			3.15	19.47		
PEC1	0.791					0.625
PEC2	0.756					0.571
PEC3	0.789					0.603
PEC4	0.813					0.660
PEC5	0.801					0.641
Work-Family Conflict			3.56	18.20	0.821	
WFC1	0.783					0.613
WFC2	0.724					0.524
WFC3	0.810					0.656
WFC4	0.864					0.746

Table 1.
Results of exploratory
factor analysis

(continued)

Constructs	Factors loading	KMO	Eigen value	Variance explained (% age)	Cronbach alpha	Item reliability
WFC5	0.839					0.703
<i>Perceived Employees Exploitation</i>						
Perceived Employees Exploitation		0.723	2.89	68.72	0.824	
PEE1	0.739					0.546
PEE2	0.853					0.727
PEE3	0.732					0.535
PEE4	0.846					0.715
PEE5	0.756					0.571
<i>Employees turnover Intention</i>						
Employees turnover Intention		0.759	2.79	85.42	0.834	
ETOI1	0.769					0.591
ETOI2	0.817					0.667
ETOI3	0.894					0.799

Note(s): PAS: Poor Administration Support, PD: Professional distress, WOL: work overload, IFS: Inadequate Financial support, JIS: Job Insecurity SWE: Strenuous working environment. PEO: Perceived External Opportunities, PECs: Perceived economic crisis, WFC: Work-Family Conflict; PEE: Perceived Employees Exploitation, ETIO: Employees Turnover intention

Source(s): SPSS Output

Table 1.

Demographic variables	Frequency	Percentage
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	294	34.81%
Female	334	65.18%
<i>Marital status</i>		
Married	359	57.2%
Unmarried	269	42.8%
<i>Experience</i>		
1–3 year	216	34.4%
4–6 year	242	39.1%
7–9 year	61	9.7%
10–12 year	33	5.3%
13–15 year	25	4.0%
Above 15 year	51	8.1%
<i>Educational qualification</i>		
Under graduation	36	5.7%
Graduation	88	14.1%
Graduation with B.ed	108	17.2%
Post graduation	117	18.6%
Post graduation with B.ed	201	32.0%
Post graduation with M.ed	78	12.4%

Source(s): SPSS Output

Table 2.
Description of the
respondents

Common method variance

CMV, also known as Common Method Bias, is a prevalent problem in quantitative research and other self-report surveys. It happens when the data is gathered from a single source. This study used Harman's one-factor test to solve the CMV problem, as recommended by Podsakoff *et al.* (2003). Consequently, our statistical findings indicated that CMV is not a problem in this study.

Confirmatory factor analysis

Confirmatory factor analysis has been used to validate the factors that emerged after EFA. CFA is a statistical method of determining how well our specified factors match reality (Khan *et al.*, 2020; Khan and Bhat, 2022). In that sense, the CFA is assessed with some model fit indices for the measurement model were determined (Chau, 1997) such as χ^2/df (<2 is good and 2–5 acceptable); Goodness of Fit Index (GFI > 0.90 is good and >0.80 acceptable), Comparative Fit Index (CFI > 0.90), the Root Means Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA < 0.10) is based on the fit between the implied covariance matrix and the estimated population covariance matrix rather than the sample covariance matrix (Byrne, 2002). Further, to test whether items in the construct stand at 0.5 or higher, and ideally, 0.70 are significant factors loadings (Hair *et al.*, 2009). The second-order factor models were designed for occupational stressors that emerged after EFA. The model fit indices are (χ^2/df = 3.64, GFI = 0.927, CFI = 0.934 and RMSEA = 0.071). It was observed from the item loadings that WFC1 (my schoolwork schedule often conflicts with my family life) of Work-family conflict standardized factor loadings lower than the recommended cut-off limit 0.70 (Hair *et al.*, 2006). Hence, for the final measurement model, the said item was withdrawn. Moreover, the deletion of these items does not have any impact on the understudy construct. Zero order factor models were designed for perceived employees' exploitation and employee's turnover intention, model fit indices are (χ^2/df = 2.641, GFI = 0.957, CFI = 0.952 and RMSEA = 0.063) and (χ^2/df = 0.140, GFI = 0.999, CFI = 0.997 and RMSEA = 0.052), respectively. Fit indices of all the models are within the threshold limits (Hair *et al.*, 2009). These model fit indices depict that the data fits the measurement model.

Composite reliability values of all constructs are greater than 0.70 (Table 3), indicating that the scale is quite reliable. A scale with 0.5 or above Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and standardized regression weights (SRW) values confirm Convergent validity (Hair *et al.*, 2010). This indicates constructs' validity and reliability coefficients yield measurements within acceptable ranges. Thus, data collected for the present study supports the convergent validity and the measurement theory for the present study was found valid.

Discriminant validity

Discriminant validity is achieved if the square root of average variance is larger than the squared correlation coefficients (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). The logic here is based on the idea that a latent construct should explain item measures better than it explains another construct. Passing this test provides good evidence of discriminant validity. In other words, discriminant validity ensures that the conceptually similar concepts are distinct. The results in Table 4 revealed that the Average Variance Extracted for all the constructs is higher than the squared correlations thereby ascertaining the discriminant validity of the constructs (Malhotra and Dash, 2011).

Structural equation modeling results

Following the achievement of the model fit for the measuring model and the validation of the study constructs, the next step was to evaluate the different causal relationships using a Maximum Likelihood method of 2,000 bootstrapping procedures to authenticate the

						Stress— turnover relationship
Dimensions	Mean	Standard deviation	SRW Standardized regression weights	Average variance extracted (AVE)	Composite reliability (CR)	659
<i>Endogenous Stressor</i>						
PAS	3.60	0.750	0.590	0.627	0.870	
PD	3.43	0.645	0.620	0.621	0.867	
WOL	3.45	0.645	0.683	0.650	0.881	
IFS	4.19	0.746	0.675	0.748	0.922	
JIS	3.67	0.804	0.621	0.718	0.883	
SWE	3.33	0.817	0.936	0.670	0.858	
<i>Exogenous Stressor</i>						
PEO	3.60	0.750	0.675	0.678	0.913	
PEC	3.78	0.892	0.721	0.653	0.904	
WFC	3.11	0.796	0.635	0.684	0.896	
<i>Perceived Employees Exploitation</i>						
PEE	4.16	0.648	0.681	0.640	0.898	
<i>Employees Turnover intention</i>						
ETIO	3.84	0.950	0.941	0.776	0.912	
Note(s): PAS: Poor Administration Support, PD: Professional distress, WOL: work overload, IFS: Inadequate Financial support, JIS: Job Insecurity SWE: Strenuous working environment. PEO: Perceived External Opportunities, PECs: Perceived economic crisis, WFC: Work-Family Conflict; PEE: Perceived Employees Exploitation, ETIO: Employees Turnover Intension						
Source(s): AMOS Output						
						Table 3. Convergent validity analysis

Table 3.
Convergent validity
analysis

Dimensions	Endogenous Stressors	Exogenous stressors	Perceived employees’ exploitation	Employees turnover intentions
Endogenous Stressors	0.67			
Exogenous Stressors	0.45	0.73		
Perceived Employees’ Exploitation	0.47	0.53	0.64	
Employees Turnover Intentions	0.51	0.58	0.49	0.61
Source(s): AMOS Output				

Table 4.
Discriminant validity

findings and check the hypotheses. The hypotheses testing was performed using structural path modeling with “Employees’ Turnover Intentions” as the dependent variable, and Endogenous, Exogenous and occupational stressors as independent variables. The model captures the intricacy of select stressors, classified as endogenous and exogenous stressors which leads to the formation of occupational stress. It further extends to explain the impact of endogenous and exogenous stressors on turnover intentions through perceived employees’ exploitation using mediation analysis.

The testing procedure for testing hypotheses requires a model summary evaluation to check whether the hypothesized model fits the data and whether it is in line with the conceptual model proposed. Therefore, the importance of the parameter estimates was evaluated by means of Regression estimates, Critical Ratio and Determination Coefficient (R^2). The findings show that the proposed model matches well with observed data (see Figure 1). The fitness indices of the present model: $\chi^2/df = 4.11$, GFI = 0.90, CFI = 0.93, NFI = 0.92 and RMSEA = 0.084, all are within the recommended ranges, indicating fit between the hypothetical model and the sample data.

Table 5.
Results of
structural model

The different causal relationships which the research hypothesized were checked. The hypotheses tests were performed using structural path modeling with dependent and independent variables (Figure 1). Structural model (Table 5) shows a direct relationship between Endogenous Stressors, Exogenous Stressors and Occupational Stress with Employee's Turnover Intentions. As shown in the model, the regression path coefficients reveal that Endogenous Stressors, Exogenous Stressors and Occupational Stress explain 40%, 61% and 43% of variance in the Employee Turnover Intentions, respectively, significant beyond 95% of confidence level. The coefficient of determination (R^2) depicts that Endogenous, Exogenous and Occupational Stressors determine 48% of Employee's Turnover Intentions. The results reveal that Occupational Stress significantly predicts Employees' Turnover Intentions. There are many other researchers who found that the higher the stress, the higher will be employees' turnover intentions (Chen *et al.*, 2011; Applebaum *et al.*, 2010).

In the present study, there is one mediator, namely, Perceived Employees Exploitation that passes through three different paths. For testing the H1a, H2a and H3a, Mediation research was performed using a bias-corrected percentile bootstrap with a confidence interval of 95% to get standardized results. Results of mediation are given in Table 6, showing direct, indirect and total effects. The table depicts that the direct relationship between Endogenous, Exogenous Stressors and Occupational Stress with Employee's Turnover Intentions is significant (p -value = 0.000) as well as indirect relationship through Perceived Employees Exploitation is also significant (p -value = 0.000). In this case, Hair *et al.* (2010) and Kline (2011) suggested that if both direct and indirect paths are relevant, divide the standardized indirect effect by the standardized total effect, if the outcome is more than 50%, then there is a proof of complete mediation if it is less than 50%, then it is regarded as partial mediation. Therefore, Perceived Employees Exploitation mediates in all three paths (Endogenous, Exogenous Stressors and Occupational Stress) with employees' turnover intentions is fully mediation accepted.

Hypothesis	Paths			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	<i>P</i>	Decision	<i>R</i> ²
H1	ETOI	<—	EDS	0.401	0.031	12.935	***	Supported	0.048
H2	ETOI	<—	EXS	0.611	0.039	15.641	***	Supported	
H3	ETOI	<—	OS	0.432	0.020	21.160	***	Supported	
Note(s): *** <i>p</i> -value < 0.01									
Source(s): AMOS Output									

Table 6.
Mediation results

Hypothesis	Relations					Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Total Effect	Results
						*Estimate	*Estimate	*Estimate	
H1a	EDS	→	PEE	→	ETOI	0.241 **	0.265 **	0.506 **	Full Mediation
H2a	EXS	→	PEE	→	ETOI	0.267 **	0.289 **	0.556 **	Full Mediation
H3a	OS	→	PEE	→	ETOI	0.230 **	0.263 **	0.493 **	Full Mediation

Note(s): *Standardized path estimates; ** p -value < 0.01
Source(s): AMOS Output

Discussion and conclusion

Changes in the global economy and technology platforms over the past three decades have increased external pressures which have led organizations to use new and different ways to exploit employees (Shore *et al.*, 2012; Volberda *et al.*, 2021). So, employees' exploitation is slavery and exists worldwide today across all sectors of business. Indeed, there is a great potential for organizations to exploit their employees today considering changes in employment relationships including decline in trade unions and increase in unemployment (Adam Cobb, 2016; Jung *et al.*, 2020). These changes, outcomes of the advance of technology, have increased organizations' potential for exploitation of employees (Bidwell *et al.*, 2013; Del Giudice *et al.*, 2021). However, the present study has several distinct contributions as it opens new perspective of occupational stress and its implication in the organizational behavior. The present study explores various endogenous stressors, exogenous stressors and their relationship with employees' psychological contact with their organizations. The study identifies six endogenous stressors (poor administration support, professional distress, work overload, inadequate financial support, job insecurity and strenuous working environment) and three exogenous stressors (perceived external opportunities, perceived economic crisis and work-family conflict) which significantly affect employee–organization relationships. Both stressors contribute negatively toward employees' psychological state resulting in an undesirable employee–organizational relationship, such as high turnover intentions. However, it was found that endogenous and exogenous stressors have different implications on the employees' organizational membership. Endogenous organizational stressors such as inadequate financial support, lack of administrative support, job insecurity, etc. initiate employees' intention to leave the organization. Simultaneously, exogenous stressors compel employees to maintain organizational membership, even against a stressful working environment. In fact, an exogenous stressor reduces employees' actual turnover; this is primarily because working in an economy that particularly lacks external opportunities is prone to the perceived economic crisis. Instead, they may continue to support the interests of their organization until they find a next job option, as they are not willing to take the risk of job loss. The findings of this study contrast with such principles of self-interest. More specifically, the study finds support for the theoretical logic of reactance theory (Brehm, 1966) that states indeed dysfunctional retention can occur, that is, keeping employees who are confronted with stress and are unable to leave, resulting in reluctant stayers or involuntary stayers within an organization (Hom *et al.*, 2012; Woo and Allen, 2014) as current global recessionary pressures have impacted labour markets to such an extent that many employees who may wish to leave may have little to no alternatives (Treuren, 2013). Hence, they may be forced to stay in an organization. However, the study identified endogenous and exogenous stressors influencing the psychological contact of employees that spur the feeling of exploitation among the employees at workplace. The explored variable “perceived employees' exploitation” was found to have a mediating role in the relationship of employees' turnover intentions with both stressors, i.e. endogenous as well as exogenous stressors. In the worst economic conditions and lack of alternative job opportunities, organizations use human capital to achieve its organizational ends (Cohen *et al.*, 2016; Li *et al.*, 2022). Under these economic conditions, managerial approaches like scientific management, administrative principles and bureaucracy are still highly embraced and admired by business organizations. Despite these managerial approaches, the feeling of being exploited among the employees gets exacerbated. Further, it has been found the sense of exploitation establishes strong link between exogenous stressors and employees' turnover intentions. This clearly indicates that organizations working in the economically depressed nation use rising unemployment levels as a tool to augment their economic profits (Kingdon, 2020). Employees' exploitation results from low benefits due to a lack of alternative external opportunities and economic crises which is further reinforced by non-adherence to surveillance mechanisms developed by the governing bodies to ensure adherence to the norms in the aspects, for instance, employees' salaries, working conditions and administrative support on the part of management, owing to which the organizational membership becomes a

compulsion rather than a desire (Sender *et al.*, 2021). However, the expectations of employees were found high on their attrition intentions despite their low evaluation of the prevailing human resource practices within their organization and scarce labor market conditions outside their organizations. Therefore, it could be asserted that in order to survive in the cutthroat competition, employers find cost reduction as a major strategic tool and take leverage of poor external labor market conditions by paying low wages to their employees (Kim and Sakamoto, 2010; Bhat *et al.*, 2021). Therefore, the emerging conclusion seems that employees are confronted with two things. First, a poor work environment where work becomes the source of stress and second, a shattered job market which compels an employee to retain his job simply for survival and family welfare. In such circumstances, the employee stays with no affection, obligation and loyalty toward his employing organization (Chen *et al.*, 2011; Caillier, 2021).

Implications of the study

Practical implications

There are several practical implications that can be derived from the findings of this study. It lays emphasis on the government to set minimum working hours as well as basic salary especially for the private sector teachers to prevent them from exploitation. In addition, government can design and implement a continuous monitoring mechanism to check if the well-defined rules and regulations are followed by private institutions akin to the government institutions. Further, the practical implications of our results are particularly relevant in relation to the design of training courses for teaching professionals. For instance, practitioners might monitor teachers with low level of stress, when they are in situations with high occupational stressors, as these professionals are especially at higher risk of experiencing low levels of energy and dedication and to be less immersed in their teaching work. On the other side, exogenous stressors occur outside an organization to employees and are beyond the control of management. At this juncture, it lays emphasis on government and policy makers to design an effective mechanism and several policies that will contribute toward the elimination of external stressors faced by employees of an organization.

Managerial implication

It was found, in this study, employees in an organization are confronted with both endogenous as well as exogenous stressors present in the environment. In this situation, an employer, taking due advantage, tries to exploit its employees. As endogenous stressors are internal to organizations, management can play a vital role to combat with these stressors by taking several remedial measures seriously consider monitoring the level of stress among teachers and take right human resources policies and practices to decrease these stressors. They can decrease the level of stress in the organization by increasing teacher's satisfaction with policies, work conditions, equal compensation, job security and equal promotion. Another implication that may be gleaned from the study findings show that the stressors and employee turnover intentions harm employees. More specifically, endogenous and exogenous stressors facet enhance occupational stress, and the meaning employees derive from their work, while increasing employees' turnover intentions. These adverse consequences of endogenous and exogenous stressors have substantially affected turnover intentions through perceived employee's exploitation. Managers should protect employees from stressors and essentially offer more attractive and competitive salary and benefit packages, using specific job demands and resources. Thus, the results of this study could be beneficial to human resource departments and organizations to develop policies and preventive mechanisms to prevent negative behavior from their employees. Additionally, policymakers

and teacher educators could take a genitive initiative to deal with such factors and assist teachers with experiencing a more favorable professional atmosphere.

Limitations and directions for future research

Research, in future, should attempt to determine a relationship between endogenous and exogenous stressors and turnover intentions. Expansion of the present study may include a larger sample size and government educational institutions and a more geographically diverse sample. In order to gain insights into the phenomenon of exploitative employee–organization relationships, it is crucial to describe the historical development of the concept of exploitation and to draw on other disciplines in doing so. This is especially necessary due to the dearth of research on employee’s exploitation in the organizational behavior and particularly in the human resource literature. A review of relevant organizational research on negative behaviors of employees, supervisors and organizations is also pertinent to the positioning of organizational behavior in context and to highlight the contribution of the concept to a wider field. Although this study considered turnover intention as an outcome variable, there are other outcome variables, such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behaviors that need to be considered in future research.

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Appendix

Endogenous stressor

Poor administrative support

- PAS1. School authorities are not willing to accept my opinions.
- PAS2. Task distribution is not uniform and reasonable.
- PAS3. I lack recognition for the extra classes/good teaching I do.
- PAS4. There is lack of communication between teacher and school management.

Professional distress:

- PD1. School management demands much more from its faculty, irrespective of facilities provided by school.
- PD2. It is quite difficult to complete the syllabus within the stipulated time.
- PD3. Given the vulnerable behavior of students in class it is difficult for me to deliver my best.
- PD4. School related issues are to be completed at home.

Job Insecurity:

- JIS1. I feel uncertain about the future of my job in the school.
- JIS2. My job is insecure in this school.
- JIS3. The school I work for does not provide me lot of job security.

Work Overload

- WOL1. I have to work consecutively for longer working classes.
- WOL2. I have to deliver the classes of other teachers in their absence.
- WOL3. There is excessive workload on the one hand and insufficient number of resources on the other.
- WOL4. Being too busy with official work I am not able to devote sufficient time to my domestic and personal problems.

Inadequate financial security

- IFS1. My salary does not commensurate with the number of classes I conduct.
- IFS2. I earn less than the people working on similar jobs like government.
- IFS3. My salary does not meet my requirements/needs.
- IFS4. My salary is not paid in time.

Strenuous working environment

- SWE1. Higher surveillance/monitoring at school frustrate me.
- SWE2. Unreasonable management interruption during class lectures irritates me.
- SWE3. I have been provided with ideal and favorable teaching environment.

Exogenous stressors

Perceived external opportunity

- PEO1. I am getting better offers from other institutions to work at higher salary.
- PEO2. If I leave this job, I will have another job as good as this one within a short period of time.
- PEO3. Given the flow of candidates having qualification equal to mine, indicate your chance of getting a suitable position in government organization.
- PEO4. Given the economic condition and job policies of J&K state, it would not be easy to find acceptable alternatives employment.

PEO5. Given the nepotism and corruption in J & k, I doubtful of getting a job matching my desired qualification.

Perceived economic crisis

PEC1. I am scared that my school is affected by the economic crisis.

PEC2. I am afraid that my school, due to the economic crisis may get closed.

PEC3. The school's future is unstable (unknown) because of the economic crisis.

PEC4. My school is solid, although there is an economic crisis.

PEC5. The economic crisis won't influence the school.

Work-Family Conflict

WFC1. My schoolwork schedule often conflicts with my family life.

WFC2. My family dislikes how often I am preoccupied with my school while at home.

WFC3. Because my work school is so demanding, at times I am irritable at home.

WFC4. The amount of time my school works takes up makes it difficult to fulfill family responsibilities.

WFC5. My school job produces strain that makes it difficult to fulfill my personal obligations.

Perceived Employees Exploitation

PEE1. My qualification is exploited as I am being paid low than I deserve.

PEE2. My present job is compulsion rather than my desire.

PEE3. Given the amount of salary, I feel sense of exploitation due to unemployment.

PEE4. I cannot demand high pay, for the reason of threat of losing my job.

PEE5. My job restrains me to meet my desired goals.

Employees' Turnover Intentions

ETOI1. I will look for another job in the next year.

ETOI2. I often think about quitting.

ETOI3. I may look for a new job in the next year.

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