

Explaining the Impact of Perceived Career Growth and Organisational Justice on Intention to Stay

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate intention to stay among officers in the City Traffic Police Lahore in relation to their perceptions of organisational justice and career growth. Using a quantitative research approach, a sample of 224 traffic wardens working in 30 sectors in the city of Lahore were selected through stratified random sampling. Data were gathered using a questionnaire containing Likert-type scales relating to all variable of interest. Apart from procedural justice and professional ability development, all dimensions of organisational justice and perceived career growth were found to significantly influence traffic officers' intention to stay. Moreover, promotional speed emerged as the strongest predictor of the intent to stay. The findings of this study may guide police authorities in dealing with issues on turnover by initiating policies which can strengthen employee retention intention. Additionally, it provides empirical insights on the contributing factors of high turnover in the City Traffic Police Lahore. This paper enhances understanding of turnover issues by investigating retention intention of traffic police officers in an Eastern culture. Specifically, this research contributes to literature by examining the predictive role of organisational inducement factors (organisational justice and career growth) on attitude (intention to stay). Additionally, both the exogenous constructs of interest are used at the dimensional levels.

Keywords: *Intention to Stay, Organisational Justice, Perceived Career Growth, City Traffic Police Lahor*

INTRODUCTION

Employee retention in the police force has grown into a critical challenge (Howes and Goodman-Delahunty 2015). The turnover of 1145 out of 3000 officers from the City Traffic Police Lahore (CTPL) within 10 years (Bajwa 2015) captivated our attention and necessitated the need for this research.

A range of factors rationalises why understanding the issue of employee turnover is essential for researchers and organisations. Among these factors include the recruitment and training of new staff, which entail some financial costs (Blumberg et al. 2016). To become an accredited police officer, one is required to go through several specialised training programs; thus, recruiting well-trained sworn officers straight from the general public may be infeasible (Lynch and Tuckey 2008). Moreover, police recruits are compensated during training and certification period, though they are not yet providing service to the public (Blumberg et al. 2016). Other factors which have been found to impact turnover are productivity and performance losses (Howes and Goodman-Delahunty 2015). In 2006, over 3300 young graduates were instated as traffic wardens in Lahore to transform the police culture into public-friendly policing. Initially, they performed up to expectations, but due to high workload, they eventually exhibited various counter-productive behaviors indicative of their waning performance (Nazir Naji 2015). Apart from these, loss of job-specific and organizational knowledge has also been identified as a contributing factor for employee turnover (Reina et al. 2017). Since public dealing and traffic management are jobs that demand certain skills, it takes some time for an officer to become adept, thus leading to poor performance. Another factor that may be associated with

turnover is employee demoralization (Chew 2005). Due to high turnover, the morale of existing traffic wardens is dwindling. According to a report, the lack of an effective service structure abates the morale of traffic wardens. "Rewarding them with certificates and cash prizes motivates them for some time; however, promotion can be a permanent force of motivation for them" (Bajwa 2015). According to the rules of the Punjab Traffic Warden Service Rules 2007, every warden has to be promoted following the completion of five years of service. Several wardens reported that the lack of promotion opportunities was the chief reason for the high turnover (The Express 2015).

Career shifting is becoming increasingly common unlike in the past (Weng et al. 2010a). High employee turnover particularly in police organisations is becoming a crucial issue (Hur 2013). Police work is considered as one of the most taxing occupations in the world (Toch 2002). Therefore, to help police officers cope with their stressful roles, it is important to consider the factors that may increase their intention to stay (Reukauf 2018).

Despite significant implications and the opportunity to prevent voluntary turnover, there has been limited research on the nature of turnover in police organizations (Yun et al. 2015). In particular, very few published works on policing have been found in the Pakistani context. What is uniquely characteristic of Pakistan regarding its cultural values is the very high level of uncertainty avoidance and power distance (Hofstede 2017). It is known that employees in cultures with high uncertainty avoidance are sensitive to little changes. That is, they are driven by strict rules, values and procedures, and they react more quickly

on justice perception (Shao et al. 2013). In addition, the vast majority of research on turnover have focused on intention to quit. Accordingly, contemporary investigations mainly argue that the determinants of intention to quit may differ from those of intention to stay (Akhtar et al. 2017, Hom et al. 2017). Therefore, knowing about the determinants of staying intention may help practitioners realize how to transform reluctant stayers into enthusiastic stayers (Lee et al. 2017).

Literature review

Intention to stay

Intention to stay refers to employees' conscious and deliberate willingness to stay with the organization (Tett and Meyer 1993). The focus of researchers and management professionals is shifting away from employee turnover, and has already made progress in discovering useful retention methods (Ghosh et al. 2013). However, the number of studies on intention to stay is rather limited compared to investigations on intention to leave (Kim et al. 2016). Most researchers concerned with the retention of professionals and other workers tend to concentrate on aspects of the job or organization that make them decide to leave; whereas, surprisingly less focus seems to have been accorded to organizational and job components that make employees stay (George 2015). Intention to stay has been measured amongst many occupational groups such as physician assistants (Graham 2012), IT personnel (Eom 2015), service sector employees in Turkey (Zeytinoglu et al., 2012), engineers in Malaysia (Anvari et al. 2014), and personal support workers (Zeytinoglu et al., 2012). As such, this study will greatly enhance our knowledge on intention to stay among police officers.

Organisational justice

Organisations hardly survive without the key employees. However, the well-being, perceptions and feelings of employees within an organisation will considerably determine their intentions to stay or leave (Owolabi 2012). To build trust in employees, the organisation has to take a fair approach in all aspects connected to daily work. It has been revealed that employees' perceptions of justice are important in their decisions to leave or stay with an organisation (Nadiri and Tanov 2010). Moorman (1991) explained that organizational justice is concerned with the ways in which employees determine if they have been treated fairly in their jobs and how they affect other work-related variables. Organisational justice is composed of three dimensions: distributive, procedural and interactional justice. Distributive justice refers to "employees' perceptions of the rewards they receive such as pay and promotions" (Moorman 1991). The concept was initially derived from Berkowitz and Walster (1976), who used equity theory to evaluate fairness. Adam (1965) asserted that employees use impartial treatment as a motivating force to maintain fairness in their relationships with co-workers and the organisation.

In contrast, procedural justice is defined as "the fairness of the manner in which the decisionmaking process is conducted" (Folger and Konovsky 1989). The notion of procedural justice was first introduced by Thibaut and Walker (1975) in third-party dispute proceedings such as arbitration and mediation. In procedural justice, an individual's perceptions changes from the decision that was made to the process of making the decision (Folger and Konovsky 1989). Muzumdar (2012a), a sociologist, defined interactional justice as the level of dignity and respect received by individuals.

In particular, it deals with the interpersonal treatment that people experience when procedures are carried out. Interactional justice in the workplace is rooted in the social exchange theory and the norm of reciprocity (Cropanzano et al. 2016). It also refers to the organisation's concern about the feelings and well-being of employees, and quality of treatment when procedures are enforced (Brunetto et al. 2013). According to Greenberg (1988), the two dimensions of interactional justice are interpersonal justice and informational justice. Interpersonal justice pertains to personal treatment such as politeness, respect and dignity. On the other hand, informational justice is about actions taken by the management, including how information is disseminated to the employees (e.g., listening to the employees' concerns, providing adequate explanations for decision-making, and demonstrating care towards their well-being). Primarily, it explains how information is conveyed and presented to the people.

Career growth

While 'career' is understood as a succession of lifetime work experiences of an individual (Arthur et al. 2008), 'career growth' is defined as "one's perceptions of the chances of development and advancement within an organisation" (Jans 1989). According to Weng et al. (2010) and Weng and Hu (2009), perceived career growth consists of four factors, namely, career goal progress, professional ability development, promotion speed, and compensation. Career goal progress is the degree to which one's current organisation creates an environment that allows the person to meet his career goals. Professional ability development is about acquiring new knowledge, skills and abilities. Promotion speed is the degree to which the organisation reinforces accomplishments through promotions. Compensation describes

the degree to which one's remuneration may increase. Career goal progress and professional ability development account for intrinsic career growth, whereas promotion speed and compensation contribute to extrinsic career growth (Spagnoli and Weng 2017).

Weng and McElroy (2012) studied career growth and its influence on turnover intentions. Perceived career growth has also been linked to work outcomes, such as job satisfaction (Spagnoli 2017), employee voice (Wang et al. 2014), organizational commitment (Weng et al. 2010b), turnover intention (Chen et al. 2016), and performance (Spagnoli 2017). The scale for perceived career growth was developed by Weng and his colleagues (Howes and Goodman-Delahunty 2015, Weng et al. 2010a). Its reliability and validity have been established in cross-cultural settings including Turkey (Karavardar 2014), Korea (Kim et al. 2016), China (Chen et al. 2016) and Italy (Spagnoli and Weng 2017).

Theoretical foundation and Hypothesis development

The social exchange theory (SET) provides an explanation on the relationship of intention to stay with organisational justice and perceived career growth. In this theory, Blau (1964) defined social exchanges as 'voluntary actions' in response to an organisation's treatment of its employees, expecting that such treatment will be repaid in the long run. The social exchange theory has been widely applied to explain the nature of employee-employer relationship (Cropanzano et al. 2016). Social exchange relationships develop when an organisation shows concern for its employees. The concept of social exchange proposes that workers are more devoted to their organisational task when they perceive a well-balanced

and reasonable system of exchange (Blau 1964). If an employee perceives that the organisation has benefited from him but failed to reciprocate within the expected period of time, some unfavourable effects on the growth of their mutual relationship may ensue (Cropanzano et al. 2016, Liu et al. 2015). Such situation may lead to trust deficit wherein an employee's loyalty would be compromised. From the social exchange perspective, employees expect to receive fair and respectful treatment from their organisation or its representatives. When they receive fair treatment, they will have greater satisfaction with their job. Researchers suggest that justice perceptions directly relate to organisational outcomes such as turnover intentions and other withdrawal behaviours (Rhoades and Eisenberger 2002). Inferring from the social exchange theory, a conceptual model of intention to stay and its relationships with perceived career growth and organisational justice is proposed by this study. As shown in Figure 1, the model includes both organisational justice and perceived career growth as potential predictors of intention to stay. Thus, the following seven hypotheses were postulated in this empirical investigation:

- H1: Organisational justice is significantly related to intention to stay.
- H1(a): Distributive justice is significantly related to intention to stay.
- H1(b): Procedural justice is significantly related to intention to stay.
- H1(c): Interactional justice is significantly related to intention to stay.
- H2: Perceived career growth is significantly related to intention to stay.
- H2(a): Career goal progress is

significantly related to intention to stay.

H2(b): Professional ability development is significantly related to intention to stay.

H2(c): Promotion speed is significantly related to intention to stay.

H2(d): Remuneration growth is significantly related to intention to stay.

METHODS

The study sample consisted of 224 traffic wardens from 30 offices of the City Traffic Police Lahore. In order to avoid potential biases and problems which may stem from the hectic nature of a traffic officer's job, data gathering was carried out during the morning briefing time, when employees were more mentally and physically alert. Furthermore, social desirability bias was minimized by ensuring the confidentiality of the responses of respondents.

Measures

Intention to stay, as opposed to turnover intention, is defined in this study as a conscious and deliberate wilfulness to leave the organisation (Bayazit and Mannix 2003). Consistent with this definition, intention to stay was measured using a three-item scale with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.83, and was developed by Armstrong-Stassen and Ursel (2009). A sample item is: "If I were completely free to choose, I would prefer to continue working in this organisation."

Distributive justice refers to "the fairness associated with decision outcomes and distribution of resources" (Loi et al. 2006). In accordance to this, distributive justice was measured using a six-item scale developed by Price and Mueller (1986), that has a reported Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.94. A sample item is: "I am rewarded fairly,

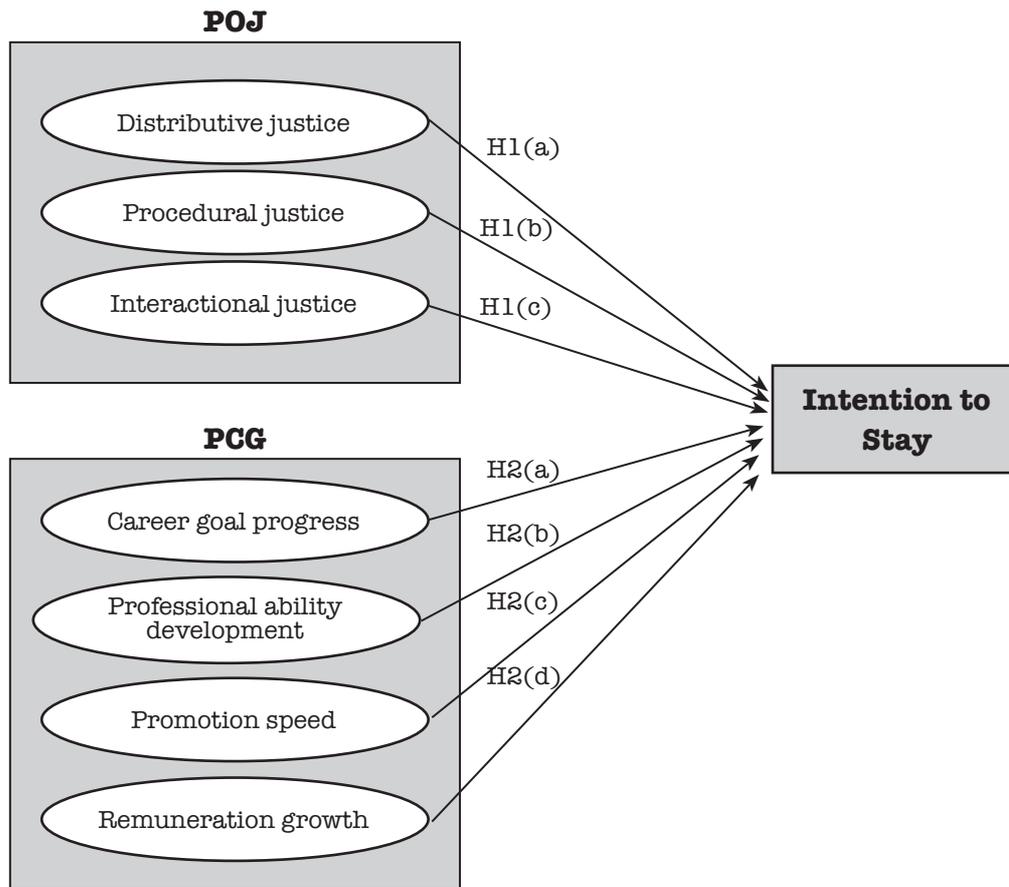


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

considering the responsibility assigned to me.”

Procedural justice refers to “the fairness of the processes that lead to outcomes” (Loi et al. 2006). Accordingly, procedural justice was measured using a six-item scale developed by Moorman (1991), which has a reported Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of 0.94. One of the items is: “My organisation’s procedures provide for collecting accurate information for making decisions.”

To measure interactional justice, Moorman’s (1991) six-item scale that has a Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of 0.93 was employed. One of the items in the scale is: “My immediate supervisor treats me with kindness and consideration.”

Career progress practices indicate an employer’s commitment and concern for their employees’ future in the organisation. To assess career goal progress, a scale developed by Weng et al. (2010a) consisting of three items and a Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of 0.086 was utilized. A sample item is: “My present job sets the foundation for the realization of my career goals.”

Professional ability development is defined as “the development of the knowledge, skills and abilities that employees require to perform their tasks competently” (Nouri and Parker 2013). To measure professional ability development, a three-item scale developed by Weng et al. (2010a) that has a Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of 0.090 was used. One of the items in the scale is: “My

present job encourages me to continuously gain new and job-related skills.”

Promotion speed was measured using Weng et al.’s (2010a) scale, which consists of three items and a Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of 0.087. A sample item is: “My promotion speed in the present organisation is fast.” Remuneration encompasses fringe benefits, salary and yearly bonus (Lal et al. 2007). In this study, remuneration growth was evaluated using a three-item scale developed by Weng et al. (2010a), that has a Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of 0.083. A sample item is: “My salary is growing quickly in my present organisation.”

All instruments used in this study were answered on a five-point rating scale, with response options ranging from 1 “strongly disagree” to 5 “strongly agree”.

RESULTS

Descriptive analyses

Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations, and correlation coefficients between the study variables. The possible range of scores for all variables was 1 to 5, where higher scores indicate greater levels of intention to stay, distributive justice, procedural justice, interactional justice, career goal progress, professional ability development, promotion speed and

remuneration growth. Specifically, the range for each variable of interest is: 1.0 – 4.33 for intention to stay, 1.17 – 4.50 for distributive justice, 1.0 – 4.50 for procedural justice, 1.0 – 4.33 for interactional justice, 1.0 – 4.67 for career goal progress, 1.0 – 4.33 for professional ability development, 1.0 – 4.68 for promotion speed and 1.0 – 4.57 for remuneration growth.

Hypothesis testing

Multiple regression was employed to predict intention to stay (ITS) from distributive justice (DJ), procedural justice (PJ), interactional justice (IJ), career goal progress (CGP), professional ability development (PAD), promotion speed (PS) and remuneration growth (RG). Results from partial regression plots and a plot of studentized residuals against the predicted values showed linearity. The analysis also revealed independence of residuals as measured by a Durbin-Watson statistic of 2.21. Homoscedasticity was likewise established using a visual inspection of a plot of studentized residuals versus unstandardized predicted values. Despite high correlations among the independent variables, there was no evidence of multicollinearity, as evidenced by tolerance values greater than 0.1.

Overall, the multiple regression model significantly predicted intention to stay

Table 1. Means, standard deviations and correlation coefficients

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Mean	SD
1 ITS	–	0.614	0.541	0.586	0.453	0.505	0.627	0.597	1.899	0.560
2 DJ		–	0.748	0.764	0.716	0.701	0.827	0.753	1.707	0.427
3 PJ			–	0.750	0.711	0.664	0.737	0.722	1.825	0.484
4 IJ				–	0.772	0.704	0.797	0.733	1.672	0.448
5 CGP					–	0.662	0.759	0.674	1.670	0.543
6 PAD						–	0.698	0.717	1.693	0.529
7 PS							–	0.777	1.740	0.570
8 RG								–	1.783	0.568

($F(7, 216) = 26.37, p < 0.05$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.443$). Specifically, 44.3 percent of the variance in intention to stay can be explained by different dimensions of organisational justice and career growth. Further, as shown in Table 2, coefficient estimates demonstrate that five out of seven variables were statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) in predicting intention to stay among traffic wardens. Accordingly, DJ ($B = 0.279, t = 2.124, p = 0.035$), IJ ($B = 0.248, t = 2.007, p = 0.046$), CGP ($B = -0.240, t = -2.662, p = 0.008$), PS ($B = 0.278, t = 2.629, p = 0.009$) and RG ($B = 0.187, t = 2.084, p = 0.038$) were significant predictors of intention to stay. On the other hand, PJ ($B = 0.059, t = 0.582, p = 0.561$) and PAD ($B = 0.003, t = 0.041, p = 0.967$) were not statistically significant in predicting intention to stay. In view of these findings, the regression equation can be written as:

$$ITS = 0.480 + 0.279(DJ) + 0.248(IJ) - 0.240(CGP) + 0.278(PS) + 0.187(RG)$$

Discussions

The present study set out to investigate the predictive roles of organisational justice and career growth on traffic wardens' intention to stay. Consistent with findings by Lambert et al. (2010), this study showed

that there is a significant relationship between distributive justice and intention to stay among traffic wardens of the CTPL. It implies that when officers realize that there is impartial distributive justice in their organisation, they will have a stronger desire to stay. The positive relationship between distributive justice and intention to stay justifies officers' perceptions that they are being treated unfairly in terms of the rewards they receive for the responsibilities assigned to them. Such perceptions may arise when they compare themselves with their colleagues. Being government employees, they are mainly getting the same amount of salary despite the differences in the level of difficulty demanded by the nature of their job. By the same token, traffic wardens, who are strictly required to undergo extensive trainings, may not be appropriately rewarded according to their level of educational attainment since they are designated to the same ranks as those who completed only a bachelor's degree.

Interestingly, results of this study revealed that procedural justice is not a significant predictor of intention to stay. In support of this finding, a study by Wittmer et al. (2010) indicated that procedural justice was not directly related to turnover. Results may

Table 2. Regression Analysis

Variables	B	SE _B	β	t	p	Tolerance
	0.480	0.126		3.813		
Distributive Justice	0.279	0.131	0.212*	2.124	0.035	0.250
Procedural Justice	0.059	0.101	0.051	0.582	0.561	0.326
Interactional Justice	0.248	0.123	0.198*	2.007	0.046	0.256
Career Goal Progress	-0.240	0.090	-0.233*	-2.662	0.008	0.326
Professional Ability Development	0.003	0.085	0.003	0.041	0.967	0.388
Promotion Speed	0.278	0.106	0.283*	2.629	0.009	0.215
Remuneration Growth	0.187	0.090	0.189*	2.084	0.038	0.303

Note: Dependent Variable, Intention to Stay; B=unstandardized coefficient; SE_B=Standard error of the coefficient; β=standardized coefficient; *p<0.05

imply that the CTPL is doing well in maintaining its procedures, as evidenced by the traffic wardens' satisfaction with perceived justice in the organisation. Moreover, it denotes that there is an imbalance between perceived distributive justice and procedural justice which may motivate officers to have the intention to quit.

Furthermore, the significant relationship between interactional justice and intention to stay demonstrates that officers have negative perceptions about supervisory behaviour. In the police force, such phenomenon is not new. Interactional justice has been found to be negatively related to turnover intention (Muzumdar 2012b).

Career goal progress was likewise found to have a significant impact on intention to stay. Achieving career goal progress is a typical example of a higher-order need satisfaction (Weng et al. 2010a). Results suggest that police officers do not consider their job as a way of fulfilling their career goals. Moreover, they have very few employment opportunities which are in line with their perceived career goals. There is also no stable service structure that can guarantee the realization of their long-term goals. In Pakistan, the negative image of the police may be another reason why officers may not want to have a long-term career in the organisation.

Interestingly, professional ability development was not significant in predicting intention to stay among traffic wardens. This may suggest that a high turnover among wardens is not due to their level of professional development. On the contrary, they may be getting ample opportunities to learn job-related skills. Public dealing, communication skills, traffic management and road knowledge are some of the basic skills that are enhanced through experience.

The results from this study revealed that officers were satisfied with their acquisition of job-related knowledge and capabilities. Hackman and Oldham (1975) argued that experiencing a meaningful work is connected to positive satisfaction as well as decreased staff turnover.

Promotion speed emerged as a very strong predictor of turnover intention. Accordingly, officers seem to be disappointed at the rate at which promotion is granted. The press reports suggest that the slow awarding of promotions most frequently contributes to high turnover. Due to the politicization of the police, it remains as an underdeveloped service structure even after ten years. A study by Weng et al. (2010a) revealed that regardless of an employee's ongoing contributions to the organisation, slow promotion speed could diminish his level commitment. Such scenario inevitably triggers turnover intention.

This study also found that remuneration significantly impacts the perception of turnover among wardens. Since CTPL is a state department, salary is paid by the government on an equal basis. The results imply that the salary received by the traffic wardens is not sufficient enough to compensate for the amount and nature of work that they perform. The dissatisfaction resulting from inadequate salary may cause low intention to stay.

Limitations and Future Directions

The present study has offered a framework for understanding the significant predictors of intention to stay among traffic wardens. However, some limitations need to be considered. The regression analysis demonstrated that the model accounted for 44.3% of the variance in intention to stay. Despite this promising result, there is still an abundant

room for progress in identifying other factors that may directly or indirectly affect employee turnover. In future investigations of intention to stay in the CTPL or similar organisations, other potential predictors may be included in the model, such as level of commitment, job satisfaction, compensation, perception about the job and public perception of police work. Apart from psychological factors, environmental and physical conditions that include adequate equipment, the condition of police vehicles, office space, and the overall state of the police facility may also provide insights on employee turnover; hence, researchers may consider incorporating them in future studies. Along these lines, although the present study collected data on marital status, specific questions pertaining to its association with decisions to leave or remain in the organisation were not asked. In view of this, future studies that explore the effects of family background on turnover intentions could be beneficial.

Moreover, the sample of this research was limited only to current traffic officers. This

study did not examine officers who have actually left the law enforcement profession and do not have the intention to return. Further work is needed to gather information from these officers in order to arrive at a better understanding of the factors that prompted them to leave the police profession and seek a new career. Nonetheless, locating former police officers is an arduous challenge as it requires cooperation from the human resource departments of numerous law enforcement agencies. As such, collecting empirical information from them may be difficult to attain due to its complexity and possible legal roadblocks.

Lastly, the present study only investigated intention to stay and was not specifically designed to evaluate factors related to intention to quit. In view of this, further research can be carried out to investigate intention to quit and its relationship with intention to stay. Such an undertaking could enlighten us if intention to stay and intention to quit are closely associated with each other or are two completely different phenomena. ◀

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