

## Turnover Intentions and Quality of Work -Life: Mediating Effects of Career and Organisational Commitment

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### Track 1 – Management, Work and Organisation

Organizational success especially of service nature firms such as auditing firms are directly linked to the service performance of its human capital. Losing talented professionals may contribute to a decline in productivity, efficiency and profits (Larkin, 1995; Roth & Roth, 1995). The accounting profession posed a significant role towards the country's growth and development and the Malaysian government has envisioned that at least 60,000 accountants are required by the year 2020 ("The Country Needs 60,000 Accountants," 2007). However, there are currently only about 26,000 accountants in the workforce ("Move to overcome shortage of accountants," 2008) and despite the increasing demand, turnover rate of accountants particularly from auditing firms has increased tremendously. The local accounting industry faces big challenges in efforts of retaining its talented workforce as several countries are luring Malaysian accountants to work abroad with attractive pay and promises for a better quality work life (QWL) ("Higher Pay, Better Life Abroad," 2007). As a result, this causes serious loss to these firms as service provider organizations rely heavily on their human capital (Chang, 1999).

Studies have proven that organizations offering better QWL are more likely to gain leverage in hiring and retaining its valuable work force (May, Lau, & Johnson, 1999). Attaining a reasonable level of QWL poses a significant impact on individual's organizational commitment (Huang, Lawler & Lei, 2007; Kalbers & Cenker, 2007; Razali, 2004; Saklani, 2004). Furthermore, with the heightening of dual-earner families in Malaysia as women's involvement in the workforce increased to 3.7 million in 2006 as compared to only 2.7 million in the previous year ("3.7 million Working Women," 2007), there would be an increasing concern for employees to achieve QWL, as now both males and females are made responsible to take care of both work and home.

Thus, it is the purpose of this study to examine the effects of QWL on turnover intention of accounting professionals in Malaysia. In addition, the study will examine the mediating effect of career and organizational commitment. A total of 121 responses of accounting professionals that specialised in auditing and taxation from three major cities in Malaysia were analysed. The findings showed that only two out of four of the conceptualised QWL were found relevant to the sample. Both work-life balance and job characteristic of QWL dimensions were significant and negatively related to turnover intention. Work-life balance positively related to all commitment dimensions (career commitment, affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment) but job characteristic was significant and negatively related to only continuance and normative commitment. In addition, only affective and normative commitment were found to partially mediated the relationship of work life balance and turnover intention, whereas normative commitment fully mediated the relationship between job characteristic and turnover intention. Implications of these findings should be of interest to human resource managers in devising human resource practices that will address QWL issues important to retaining accounting professionals.

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