

Turnover Intention Among Probation Officers and Direct Care Staff: A Statewide Study

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UP UNTIL NOW there has been no readily available, cost-effective mechanism to fully and empirically analyze actual, voluntary turnover among Texas probation personnel. The Texas State Auditor's Office (2007) reported a 10.8 percent statewide voluntary turnover rate (excluding involuntary separations and retirements) among all state agencies, except institutions of higher education, during fiscal year 2007. However, that report did not provide any information about the voluntary turnover rate of Texas adult probation personnel. Despite no systematically documented statewide turnover rate for Texas probation, there is much evidence that high levels of employee turnover, and its attendant causes, are critical issues faced by probation executives.

Florida probation agencies, for example, reported a turnover rate of approximately 30 percent in 1995 (Simmons, Cochran, & Blount, 1997). In a 2000 report, the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission reported a 19.7 percent turnover rate among the State's juvenile probation officers in 1999. The Commission also reported a 31.4 percent turnover rate for juvenile detention and corrections officers (Texas Juvenile Probation Commission, 2000). In addition, despite the absence of extensive national reports addressing probation officer turnover, members of the National Institute of Corrections agreed that the loss of qualified officers was a major concern (National Institute of Corrections, 1994).

Voluntary turnover can be attenuated by identifying and addressing its underlying causes. Failure to identify and address the underlying causes of voluntary turnover could impede the promotion of public safety, which is the primary mission of the Texas probation system. To that end, this study, funded by the Texas Probation Advisory Committee (PAC) was commissioned to conduct a web-based, a state-wide survey targeting all line probation officers and all direct-care staff.¹ It comprehensively investigated: 1) any determinant factors that shape turnover

intention; and 2) pay satisfaction's influence on organizational outcomes, such as overall job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intention.

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Literature Review

Both institutional and community corrections agencies have been concerned with, and paid significant attention to, voluntary turnover, which, in a probation setting, may result in increased caseloads for the remaining staff. This may lead to a deterioration in supervision, low morale, increases in unnoticed violations, absconders, recidivism, and increased expenditures related to the recruitment and training of replacements (Simmons et al., 1997).

As an underlying cause of voluntary turnover, organizational commitment as the emotional link between employees and their organization refers to the strength of their identification with, and involvement in, the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1997); an employee who is committed to his or her organization is more likely to both work towards the organization's goals and stay with the organization (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982). Organizational commitment has been found to be associated with both turnover intention and actual turnover (Griffeth, Hom, & Gaertner, 2000). Most recently, Moynihan and Landuyt (2008), in their analysis of turnover intention among 34,668 employees of 53 different state agencies in Texas, found increased organizational commitment reduced turnover intention.

Three different dimensions of organizational commitment—*affective, continuance, and normative commitment*—were developed by Allen and Meyer (1990). All of the three dimensions of organizational commitment are considered to contribute to reducing turnover intention and actual turnover. Each is useful in predicting what may cause an employee to remain committed to an organization and also predicting what will cause an employee to leave.

Affective commitment is defined as an employee's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in an organization. Employees commit to the organization because they *want to*. In contrast, *continuance commitment* is defined as the extent to which an employee perceives high costs, such as socio-economic costs, as a consequence of leaving the organization. Here, employees remain with the organization because they *need to*. The *continuance commitment* construct has two sub-dimensional constructs: *high personal sacrifice* and *lack of alternatives* (Meyer and Allen, 1997; Powell & Meyer, 2004). *High personal sacrifice* refers to the commitment related to personal accumulated investments: it develops when an employee realizes that he or she would lose accumulated investments by leaving the organization, and therefore the employee needs to stay with the organization. On the other hand, the *lack of alternatives* denotes the commitment related to an employee's lack of employment alternatives, which increase the costs associated with leaving the organization.

Finally, *normative commitment* represents an employee's feeling obligated to continue employment: employees stay with the organization because they *ought to*. For example, an employee remains committed to an organization mainly out of moral obligation to its mission or developed by the organization's investment resources, such as training. Among the three dimensions of organizational commitment, existing literature has empirically supported the contention that affective commitment, compared to normative and continuance commitments, has the strongest correlations with turnover intention and actual turnover (Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002). In other words, employees with strong affective commitment to the organization are more valuable employees for any organization.

Compared to organizational commitment, job satisfaction is a link between an employee and his or her job, resulting from the appraisal of the job and job experience. An employee's affective reactions to his or her job based upon the level of congruence between an employee's job expectations and the actual situational attributes present is generally defined as job satisfaction, which differs from organizational commitment (Cranny, Smith, & Stone, 1992). A substantial body of literature has reported that job satisfaction is negatively related to turnover intention and

has its negative effect on turnover intention (Tett and Meyer, 1993). However, a growing body of recent theoretical and empirical research supports the notion that organizational commitment, especially affective commitment, is a better predictor of turnover intention than job satisfaction (Griffeth et al., 2000).

Job stress has been found positively correlated with turnover intention (Begley & Czajka, 1993). Among its various definitions, job satisfaction can be succinctly defined as the lack of incongruity between individuals and their physical or social environment (Chesney & Rosenman, 1980; Whitehead, 1987). In conjunction with the person-environment fit perspective of job stress, job stressors have been concisely defined as “circumstances which place unreasonable or distinctive demands on an individual, and are usually capable of producing emotional and psychological discomfort” (Grossi & Berg, 1991, p. 76). The definition reflects that the conditions of situations or events are stressors, and consequently produce job-related stress. Existing literature suggests that role structure—role overload, role conflict, and role ambiguity—is an important source of job stress (Cherniss, 1980; Whitehead, 1987). Furthermore, dangerousness of the job in the probation setting was found to be an additional stressor to the role structure problem (Sheeley, 2008).

Organizational justice is related to fairness perception (Cropanzano & Greenberg, 1997). Basically, if organizational injustice is perceived, one feels relative deprivation, or a feeling of discontent, which in turn may lead to a range of attitudinal and behavioral effects, including higher turnover intention or actual turnover (Hendrix, Robbins, Miller, & Summers, 1998). Organizational justice conceptually includes two aspects of justice: *distributive justice* and *procedural justice*. Distributive justice is the degree of fairness in distributing rewards (Price & Mueller, 1986), while procedural justice is the degree of fairness in the procedures used for distribution (Folger & Greenberg, 1985). Both distributive justice and procedural justice are based upon employee judgments regarding the fairness of outcomes and the fairness of procedures. Empirical research has supported the important theoretical link between organizational justice and its organizational outcomes: turnover intention is an aspect of motivation that was found to be influenced by an employee’s perception of organizational fairness (Acquino, Griffeth, Allen, & Hom, 1997; Hendrix et al., 1998).

As a provision of instrumental and emotional assistance, social support can be drawn from both supervisors and fellow officers. It can function as a successful coping factor to alleviate job stress, preventing job dissatisfaction, enhancing high levels of organizational commitment, and reducing turnover intention. According to Cullen and his associates (1985), successful social support at work depends on the quality of interpersonal support from superiors and fellow line officers. There is substantial, empirical evidence indicating that support from supervisors is essential for line officers to achieve positive, job-related attitudinal and behavioral out-comes (Jurik & Halemba, 1984).

Participatory management seeks to balance the involvement of superiors and subordinates in information-sharing, decision-making, and problem-solving related to production and quality control (Wagner, 1994). “Reinventing Government,” borne out of the National Performance Review (NPR), criticized malfunctions of hierarchical, centralized bureaucracies, since bureaucratization reduces workers’ control over the means of production and alienates line workers from the decision-making process (Vernon & Byrd, 1996). Hence, a participatory climate allowing for employees’ participation in decision-making is more beneficial than a rigid, autocratic structure for enhancing employee job satisfaction, in turn leading to less turn-over intention (Slate, Vogel, & Johnson, 2001).

Participatory climate is related to empowerment; it is a non-traditional organizational culture with an emphasis on facilitating, coaching, and consulting employees to facilitate a sense of control and self-efficacy (Robbins, Chatterjee, & Canda, 1998). Low empowerment leading to loss of a sense of control and self-efficacy contributes not only to poor quality job performance, but also to a low level of desire to remain (Hammer, Landau, & Stern, 1981; Mowday et al., 1982). Empirically, Koberg, Boss, Senjem, & Goodman (1999) found a negative relationship between empowerment and turnover intention. Recently, Moynihan and Landuyt (2008) also

found that a sense of empowerment reduces turnover intention.

Regarding pay satisfaction, there are two theoretical grounds: equity theory (Adams, 1963) and discrepancy theory (Lawler, 1971). Although Lawler's discrepancy theory expanded Adams' equity theory by incorporating the concept of valence (how much one values the reward), both theories are essentially based on predicting pay satisfaction and explaining its organizational outcomes. Basically, if the employee's ratio of input (e.g. effort) to output (e.g. pay level and benefits) is significantly different from a referent other's ratio, he or she tends to feel underrewarded, and judges that he or she is not being treated fairly, potentially leading to a range of negative attitudinal and behavioral effects (Cropanzano & Greenberg, 1997; Vandenberghe & Tremblay, 2008). In other words, pay satisfaction is a matter of matching actual pay level with the pay level one expects to receive in comparison with those of a referent other. Empirical research has strongly established an important theoretical link between pay satisfaction and turnover (Heneman & Judge, 2000), and has found pay satisfaction a significant predictor of turnover intention and actual turnover (Miceli, Jung, Near, & Greenberger, 1991).

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Pilot Study

Lee and Beto (2008), with the assistance of Christie Davison, Executive Director of the National Association of Probation Executives, conducted a pilot study that explored voluntary turnover rates among Texas line probation officers from 2004 to 2006. They sampled four adult probation departments in Texas. Based on responses from the four departments, line officers' average turnover rate in each fiscal year was estimated to be 17 to 24 percent. Interestingly, voluntary turnover rates increased steadily during the study period: 17 percent for FY 2004, 20 percent for FY 2005, and 24 percent for FY 2006. Their findings suggest that probation agencies have not only experienced high turnover, but have failed to resolve the underlying problems associated with voluntary turnover.

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Statewide Turnover Intention Study

Data Collection, Recruitment Procedures, and Data Confidentiality

The current study was conducted utilizing Angelo State University's web-based survey targeting all line probation officers and all directcare probation staff in all 122 probation departments across Texas. However, since two departments were found to have only one employee, responsible for both line-officer and director duties, they were removed from the total 122 departments being targeted, and the total number of departments surveyed was reduced to 120. The survey period began March 31 and ended April 18, 2008. Guided by the previous theoretical and empirical literature, the survey used 24 organization-related items, including turnover intention. In addition, 8 individual demographic and work experience items were asked. Substantial efforts were made by the PAC and department directors to elicit voluntary subject cooperation, encourage a high response rate, and thus enhance the validity and reliability of the survey. Standard survey methodology, pre-announcements of the upcoming study, and an encouraging cover letter were combined with the consent form. Participation was voluntary and respondents were promised confidentiality.

During the three-week survey period, a total of 108 departments responded.² The individual directors from the remaining 12 departments were contacted. The non-response of 12 departments' employees was determined to be due to a lack of Internet capacity to access the survey web site. For the 12 departments without Internet access, the same questionnaire used for the web-based survey was mailed to each department on April 18, 2008. Mailings included a consent form, and a cover letter emphasizing that survey participation was voluntary and that responses were collected anonymously. Each respondent was provided with a pre-addressed, stamped envelope in order to return the survey directly to the researcher.

Of the usable sample of 3,234 responses from 120 adult probation departments,³ 2,653 responses were obtained from line officers and 581 from direct-care staff. Unfortunately, there is no available official information on the baseline population of both groups to calculate each group's response rate. However, using the total number of all probation officers, including supervisors and managers (N = 3,520), the response rate for the 2,653 line officer group should be well over 75.4 percent. [Table 1](#) provides the demographic breakdown of the respondents.

Measurement of Variables & Descriptive Analyses

Along with 8 individual demographic and work experience variables used, 24 organizational variables were measured based on a respondent's experience over the six-month period preceding the beginning date of the survey. Turnover Intention is the main dependent variable; the remaining 23 organizational variables are independent. A review of the literature indicates that these independent variables have been theoretically and empirically proven to be important correlates with turnover intention and actual turnover. All scale items were measured using the five-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*; 2 = *disagree*; 3 = *neither*; 4 = *agree*; 5 = *strongly agree*). Cronbach's Alpha for each additive scale ranged from 0.71 to 0.94, above the minimal level of acceptability ($\alpha = 0.70$), indicating all 24 scales are valid and reliable.

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Findings

Turnover Intention

Understandably, there might be a reasonable suspicion that turnover intention might not necessarily manifest in actual turnover. However, turnover intention has been found to be the best predictor and the most immediate precursor of the actual turnover. For example, Steel and Ovalle (1984), in their meta-analysis, found that turnover intention was better than job satisfaction and organizational commitment in predicting actual turnover. Furthermore, Hom and Griffeth (1995) found that among 35 variables presumably related to actual voluntary turnover, turnover intention had the strongest association with actual voluntary turnover. As the main dependent variable in this study, a respondent's intention to leave was measured using the four items developed by Shore and Martin (1989).

The respondents' turnover intention is mixed, with an overall average mean of 2.55 on a 1-5 point Likert scale. However, many respondents indicated a strong inclination to leave their department in all questions. The second item in [Table 2](#), for example, demonstrated that 41.3 percent reported their turnover intention: 30.3 percent were having serious thoughts about leaving in the near future and another 11 percent were actively seeking employment elsewhere. The findings from [Table 2](#) indicate that large portions of the line probation officers and direct-care staffs have high levels of inclination to leave in the near future.

Organizational Commitment

The three dimensions developed by Allen and Meyer (1990) that characterize an employee's commitment to the organization include affective, continuance, and normative commitment. However, there has been recurring criticism of poor discriminant validity between normative commitment and affective commitment (Jaros, Jermier, Koehler, & Sincich, 1993; Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). Mainly due to its strong association with affective commitment, normative commitment is not considered a unique predictor of turnover intention and actual turnover. This study, therefore, only adopted affective and continuance commitment constructs.

As for affective commitment, the respondents displayed an overall average mean of 3.17 on the 5 items.⁴ This mixed result therefore does not support any one particular view. However, many respondents reported lower levels of emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in their department. For example, 26.6 percent of the respondents did not want to spend the rest of their career in their current department, and 29.5 percent did not feel a strong

sense of belonging to their department. Continuance commitment includes three items eliciting reports of high personal sacrifice and three items testing for lack of alternatives.⁵ Existing literature (Meyer & Allen, 1997; Meyer et al., 2002) has empirically supported the contention that affective commitment, compared to normative and continuance commitments, correlates most strongly with turnover intention and actual turnover: Employees with strong affective commitment to the organization are more valuable employees for any organization.

Compared to the average mean of high personal sacrifice (3.21) and lack of alternative (Mean = 3.26), the average mean of affective commitment (3.17) was slightly lower. Unfortunately, this finding appears to indicate that the main reason why respondents are committed to their departments is awareness of the costs associated with leaving: high personal sacrifice (their personal accumulated investments) and lack of alternative (limited employment opportunities), rather than affective commitment (their strong emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the department). For example, 49.7 percent of the respondents would stay with their department because their lives would be too greatly disrupted if they left, and 46.2 percent would stay due to the scarcity of available alternatives.

Job Satisfaction

There are two measures of job satisfaction: overall job satisfaction and satisfaction with specific aspects of the job such as pay, supervision, promotion, co-workers, and the job itself. Overall job satisfaction was included in the study because Griffeth et al. (2000), in their meta-analysis, suggested that overall job satisfaction is a better indicator than job-facet satisfaction in predicting turnover, although both are related to turnover. However, the facet approach is useful to define which parts of the job produce satisfaction or dissatisfaction, as a useful tool to help an organization identify areas of dissatisfaction that it can improve (Spector, 1997).

Overall job satisfaction was assessed using the five items developed by Brayfield and Roth (1951). Based on the additive scale produced by the five items used, respondents reported a moderately high level of job satisfaction (Mean = 3.52). Specifically, more than half agreed that: "I am seldom bored with my job" (55.6 percent); "I like my job better than the average worker does" (56.6 percent); "I find real enjoyment in my job" (59.6 percent); "Most days I am enthusiastic about my job" (58.6 percent); and "I feel fairly well satisfied with my job" (60.1 percent).

The Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) by Spector (1997) measured the respondents' nine facets of job satisfaction. The nine facets comprise pay, promotion, supervision, fringe benefits, contingent rewards (satisfaction with rewards, not necessarily monetary, given for good performance), operating procedures (satisfaction with rules and procedures), co-workers, nature of work (satisfaction with the type of work done), and communication. This study originally employed both the four items of pay satisfaction in the JSS and the five items of pay satisfaction from the Index of Organizational Reactions developed by Dunham and Smith (1979). Dunham and Smith's (1979) pay satisfaction scale reflects a better understanding of the nature and domain of multi-dimensional pay satisfaction than Spector's unidimensional pay satisfaction scale (Williams, Malos & Palmer, 2002). Hence, the study adopted only Dunham and Smith's pay satisfaction scale for statistical analysis.

Among the nine specific job satisfaction items, pay and promotion were identified as unsatisfied job aspects (Mean = 2.44 and 2.33, respectively). Regarding pay satisfaction, only 10.3 percent reported their pay level was good; only 13.5 percent indicated their pay level was either adequate or more than adequate given the cost of living in their area, and only 15.4 percent reported that their pay level had a favorable influence on their overall attitude toward their job. Similarly, regarding promotion satisfaction, only 14.1 percent perceived much chance for promotion in their department; 25.2 percent felt those who performed well on the job had a fair chance of being promoted, and 16.2 percent reported high levels of satisfaction with their chances for promotion. Taken together, while the respondents had moderately high levels of overall job satisfaction, pay and promotion are the parts of the job that substantially contribute to dissatisfaction.

Job Stress

Job stress was assessed using the five items developed by Crank, Regoli, Hewitt and Wolfe (1989). Job stressors included three role structures (role overload, role conflict, and role ambiguity) and dangerousness of the job. *Role overload* refers to having too much to do in the amount of time or the lack of available resources for completing workload demands, and was measured using five items developed by Peterson and his associates (1986). The other two role characteristics are *role conflict* (conflicting requests from different people) and *role ambiguity* (unclear expectations in fulfilling a role); both role characteristics were measured using the nine items adopted from Lambert, Hogan, Paoline and Clarke (2005). Finally, *dangerousness of the job* was assessed using five items adopted from Cullen, Link, Cullen and Wolfe (1989).

Respondents displayed an average mean of 3.12 for their job stress level and therefore did not support any one particular view. However, 46.8 percent of the respondents reported that they were usually under a lot of pressure at work, whereas 29.9 percent reported that they were not under pressure. Among the job stressors, role overload (Mean = 3.09) was found to be the strongest stressor, closely followed by dangerousness of the job (Mean = 2.88) and role ambiguity (Mean = 2.77). The level of role ambiguity (Mean = 2.17) suggests that uncertainty about what actions are expected was not found to be particularly stressful. Overall, these findings suggest that role overload, such as excessive paperwork and expectations to complete job duties in too little time, substantially contribute to stress-induced role characteristics. In addition, like a prison setting, the dangerousness of the work needs to be recognized as a substantial stressor in adult probation.

Organizational Justice

Developed by Price and Mueller (1986), five items were utilized to measure the respondents' perception of fairness of outcome, which is *distributive justice* (perceived fairness of outcome). *Procedural justice* (fairness of the procedures in distributing outcomes) was assessed through the use of six items adopted from Lambert, Hogan and Griffin (2007). Respondents reported an average mean of 2.55 for their perception level of distributive justice, suggesting relatively negative judgments regarding the fairness of distributing rewards, such as pay and promotion. In addition, their perception of procedural justice (Mean = 2.86) is considered mixed and therefore does not support any one particular view. However, 49.9 percent of respondents perceived that promotions are given based on who you know rather than what you know. Overall, these findings indicate a perceived lack of fairness in distributing rewards such as pay and promotion, as well as a lack of fairness in promotional procedures.

Participatory Management

The study included both *participatory climate* and *empowerment*, which have been recognized as important elements of participatory management. Developed by Slate et al. (2001), seven items were employed to measure the respondents' perception of how welcome participation in decision-making is in their probation department. Despite no indication of one particular view (Mean = 2.89), individual item analysis demonstrated substantial evidence that the respondents' opinions were not sought and respected by management. For example, nearly 50 percent of the respondents felt they had no opportunity to have a say in the running of their agency on matters that concern them, 41.4 percent indicated unsatisfactory response or feedback to their input, and 53.2 percent did not feel involvement in the writing of policies. This evidence indicates that about half of respondents perceive that they work in a non-participatory management environment.

Empowerment was assessed through the use of the Index of Empowerment developed by Spreitzer (1995), which comprises 12 items. The Index of Empowerment measures four dimensions of empowerment (*meaning, competence, self-determination* and *impact*). These four dimensions, reflecting an employee's orientation to his or her work role, were combined into an overall measure of empowerment. Respondents reported an average mean of 3.64 for their level

of empowerment, suggesting that they believe they have a moderately high level of empowerment in their department.

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Analytical Scheme

In addition to the descriptive analysis, two analytical methods were employed in this study: hierarchical multiple regression and structural equation modeling analysis. First, hierarchical multiple regression was employed to identify which predicting variable(s) were significant determinants of turnover intention. However, structural equation modeling analysis using *Amos* was employed to examine indirect, direct, and total effects of the predicting variables, especially pay satisfaction, on turnover intention in the hypothetical model.

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Hierarchical Multiple Regression Model Analysis

[Table 3](#) presents the results of two multiple regression analyses for line probation officers. Equation 1 examined only the impact of individual variables on turnover intention. Among the eight individual variables, six variables were found to have statistically significant effects on a respondent's turnover intention. However, despite the good model fit statistics, only 9 percent of the variance in turnover intention was accounted for by Model. Turnover intention in Equation 2 was regressed on both individual and organizational variables. Fourteen variables based upon each statistically significant high partial correlation were included in Equation 2: four individual status variables and ten organizational variables. In comparison with Equation 1, gender and the number of children at home were excluded from the final best-fit equation after organizational variables were included in Equation 2.

Of particular interest in these separate equations was determining whether organizational variables better predicted turnover intention of line probation officers than individual variables. The proportion of variance explained by Equation 2 is almost 6.8 times higher than that explained by Equation 1. This finding implies that organizational variables, rather than individual status variables, play greater roles in predicting an officer's turnover intention. Not tabulated here, two multiple regression analyses for direct-care staff show the consistent finding ($R^2 = 0.074$ in Equation 1 and $R^2 = 0.564$ in Equation 2).

Two additional findings were important. First, affective commitment has the strongest direct effect on turnover intention, followed by high sacrifice, commitment, overall job satisfaction, and pay satisfaction. Second, among the individual status variables, only the standardized coefficient for age in the multiple regression for line officer exceeded the cut-off point of ± 0.1 , whereas only tenure for direct-care staff group was found to exceed the cut-off point. That is, unlike other individual variables, age and tenure substantially contribute to predicting turnover intention of both groups, respectively; younger respondents⁶ and those with less tenure⁷ were more likely to express greater turnover intention.

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Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) Analysis

To both practitioners and researchers, pay satisfaction has long been a topic of interest. Along with affective commitment, overall job satisfaction, has long been a topic of interest. Along with affective commitment, overall job satisfaction, and high sacrifice commitment, pay satisfaction was found to have a direct effect on turnover intention of both groups. However, the hierarchical multiple regression analyses used are limited in measuring only the direct effects of the predicting variables on turnover intention (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson & Tatham, 2006) and they cannot provide any results for indirect effect and total effect (direct and indirect), for each of the significant four organizational predictors of turnover intention. Hence, based upon a

hypothetical, causal link from pay satisfaction to turnover intention, comparing indirect, direct, and total effects of pay satisfaction, overall satisfaction, high sacrifice commitment, and affective commitment on turnover intention could be helpful in identifying underlying reasons and developing important managerial strategies for preventing and curbing turnover-related problems.

Theoretical and Empirical Ground for Hypothetical SEM

Before specifying theoretical grounds and a hypothetical causal model, we should note that any individual status variables were not included as control variables in the causal model. There are two reasons behind the exclusion. First, age, gender, education level, and tenure have been found to correlate with turnover (*e.g.*, Cotton & Tuttle, 1986, Griffeth et al., 2000). However, the results from multivariate regression analyses were considered inconsistent across the two groups and do not support the previous empirical literature. Second, individual status variables, in comparison with organizational variables, had a substantially weak or negligible contribution to associating and predicting turnover intention. Hence, the exclusion could lead to the simplest of explanations of complex turnover intention processes.

Due to the lack of literature on pay satisfaction and its organizational outcomes, it is difficult to identify a causal model of voluntary turnover processes from pay satisfaction, and to explain causal relationships among a subset of the variables. Therefore, considerable research based upon the theoretical ground and empirical findings was required to identify the causal relationships of pay satisfaction, overall satisfaction, high sacrifice commitment, affective commitment, and turnover intention.

Compensation Satisfaction and Organizational Justice

Previous literature has indicated that pay satisfaction not only has a direct effect (Miceli et al., 1991) but also an indirect effect on turnover intention, through overall job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Lum, Kervin, Colark, Reid, & Sirola, 1998). More specifically, Vandenberghe and Tremblay (2008), in their study of the effects of pay satisfaction and organizational commitment on turnover intention, found that both affective and high-sacrifice commitments had intervening effects that account for the association between pay satisfaction and turnover intention. These empirical findings indicate that pay satisfaction has both a direct and indirect effect on turnover intention, through overall job satisfaction, high-sacrifice commitment, and affective commitment.

However, pay satisfaction cannot be explained by pay level itself. It includes four correlated but distinct dimensions: pay level, benefits, pay raises, and pay structure/administration (Heneman & Schwab, 1985). Therefore, incorporating benefits satisfaction into pay satisfaction may provide a better understanding of the nature and domain of pay satisfaction.⁸ This insight should enable the incorporated model to better predict pay satisfaction's influence on its organizational outcomes.

Organizational justice was included in this hypothetical causal model to probe causal relationships of pay satisfaction, overall satisfaction, high-sacrifice commitment, affective commitment, and turnover intention. Consistent with the theoretical link between pay satisfaction and its organizational outcomes, empirical research has supported the important theoretical link between organizational justice and its organizational outcomes. Specifically, overall job satisfaction (Hendrix et al., 1999), organizational commitment (Martin & Bennett, 1996), and turnover intention (Acquino et al., 1997; Hendrix et al., 1999) are aspects of motivation influenced by employee judgments regarding the fairness of outcomes and the fairness of the procedures.

Furthermore, these findings suggest that incorporating organizational justice into compensation satisfaction provides a better understanding of the nature and realm of compensation satisfaction, and enables the incorporated model to better explain compensation satisfaction's influence on its organizational outcomes. Like compensation satisfaction, organizational justice was

hypothesized to have a direct and indirect effect on turnover intention, through overall job satisfaction, high-sacrifice commitment, and affective commitment.

Guided by the previous theoretical and empirical literature, we hypothesized that the latent construct of compensation satisfaction combined pay satisfaction and benefits satisfaction, which was found by the previous theoretical and empirical findings to be correlated. We hypothesized that the second latent construct—organizational justice—bound distributive justice and procedural justice. An exploratory factor analysis examined whether all items in pay satisfaction, benefits satisfaction, distributive justice, and procedural justice can be explained by the two latent constructs—compensation satisfaction and organizational justice. Results demonstrate that the four-factor model (pay satisfaction, benefits satisfaction, distributive justice, and procedural justice) would be better than the hypothesized two-factor model (compensation satisfaction and organizational justice).

However, as noted by Hair et al. (2006), “exploratory factor analysis can be conducted without knowing how many factors really exist or which variable belongs with which constructs” (p. 773). For this reason, therefore, the result from the exploratory factor analysis should be tested by confirmatory factor analysis, to examine whether the four-factor model may be proven empirically. The results of our confirmatory factor analysis do not support the four-factor model developed by exploratory factor analysis.⁹ Instead they confirm the hypothesis that there were two distinct constructs—compensation satisfaction and organizational justice—in which pay satisfaction and fringe-benefits satisfaction measured compensation satisfaction, while distributive and procedural justice measured organizational justice. Therefore, the results from the confirmatory factor analysis support the good discriminant validity of the two constructs (compensation satisfaction and organizational justice).

Overall Job Satisfaction, Organizational Commitment, and Turnover Intention

In a causal link between job satisfaction and organizational commitment, the dominant theoretical view has assumed that an employee’s emotional state and attitude toward a specific job necessarily precedes his or her psychological state and attitude towards the organization (Mowday et al., 1982). This assumption implies that overall job satisfaction causally precedes organizational commitment. Some research (such as Vandenberg & Lance, 1992) has found an opposite causal sequence and supported the causal ordering from organizational commitment to overall job satisfaction. Nonetheless, many empirical studies (such as Mueller, Boyer, Price, & Iverson, 1994) indicate that organizational commitment may be a more immediate influence on turnover intention than job satisfaction.

In a causal ordering from organizational commitment and turnover intention, Meyer and Allen (1997) have reported that organizational commitment is negatively related to turnover intention, and is also an antecedent to turnover intention. In a causal link between higher sacrifice commitment and affective commitment, McGee and Ford (1987) and Meyer, Allen, and Gellatly (1990) provided a theoretical explanation suggesting that an employee’s awareness of the costs associated with leaving the organization leads to a higher desire to continue to work, which in turn may lead to a greater degree of emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization. Despite a lack of empirical research to test the causal link, intuitively it appears to manifest through examination of the causal precedence of high sacrifice commitment over affective commitment.

Given the accumulated theoretical explanation and empirical findings, we developed a hypothetical model to examine the causal relationship of both compensation satisfaction and organizational justice with overall satisfaction, high sacrifice commitment, affective commitment, and turnover intention. Extending the previous literature, the following four specific hypotheses were developed:

H₁: Compensation satisfaction and organizational justice each have a direct effect on overall job satisfaction, high sacrifice commitment, affective commitment and turnover intention.

H₂: Compensation satisfaction and organizational justice each have an indirect effect on turnover intention through overall job satisfaction, high sacrifice commitment, and affective commitment.

H₃: Overall job satisfaction has a direct effect on high sacrifice commitment, affective commitment and turnover intention, and also has an indirect effect on turnover intention through high sacrifice commitment and affective commitment.

H₄: High sacrifice commitment has a direct effect on affective commitment and turnover intention, and also has an indirect effect on turnover intention through affective commitment.

The final model in [Figure 1](#) provided a better fit than the hypothesized model. In the hypothetical model, however, organizational justice was not a significant predictor of overall job satisfaction ($p = 0.80$), high sacrifice commitment ($p = 0.17$) and turnover intention ($p = 0.48$). Hence, the three paths (organizational justice → overall job satisfaction; organizational justice → high sacrifice commitment; and, organizational justice → turnover intention) were eliminated and the original model was reanalyzed in the final version. The results indicate that the hypothesized model fits the data very well, but the final model, after leaving out the three insignificant paths, best fits the data.¹⁰ [Figure 1](#) presents the significant paths of the final structural model.

The effects of compensation satisfaction and organizational justice are positively correlated at 0.73. As predicted, compensation satisfaction had its significant direct effect on overall job satisfaction (0.36), high sacrifice commitment (0.32), affective commitment (0.08), and turnover intention (-0.30). However, organizational justice had its significant direct influence on only affective commitment and had an insignificant direct impact on overall job satisfaction, high sacrifice commitment, and turnover intention. This finding suggests that when an employee believes that he or she is fairly treated by the organization, he or she is more likely to have a greater degree of emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the department. However, the perceived fairness cannot directly lead to higher levels of overall job satisfaction and high sacrifice commitment, and lower levels of turnover intention. Hence, the hypothesis (H₁) is only partially supported.

As hypothesized (H₂), compensation satisfaction had its indirect effect on turnover intention through overall job satisfaction, high sacrifice commitment, and affective commitment. Specifically, compensation satisfaction had an indirect or mediated influence on high-sacrifice commitment through overall job satisfaction (0.03); on affective commitment through overall job satisfaction and high sacrifice commitment (0.15); and on turnover intention through overall job satisfaction, high sacrifice commitment, and affective commitment (-0.23). However, organizational justice had its indirect or mediated effect on turnover intention only through affective commitment. Therefore, the hypothesis (H₂) is only partially supported.

As predicted, overall job satisfaction had a direct effect on high sacrifice commitment, affective commitment, and turnover intention. Also, it had an indirect effect on turnover intention through high sacrifice commitment and affective commitment. Likewise, high sacrifice commitment had a direct effect on affective commitment and turnover intention and had its indirect effect on turnover intention through affective commitment. These findings suggest that the hypotheses (H₃ and H₄) are fully supported.

[Table 4](#) summarizes structural equation modeling estimations of indirect, direct, and total effects of each independent variable on overall job satisfaction, high sacrifice commitment, affective commitment, and turnover intention.

Affective commitment had the strongest direct effect on turnover intention. In comparing the direct effects of compensation satisfaction, organizational justice, overall job satisfaction, and high sacrifice commitment on affective commitment, overall job satisfaction was found to have the largest direct and indirect effect, followed by organizational justice. However, compensation

satisfaction and high sacrifice commitment had negligible direct effects on affective commitment. These findings suggest that overall job satisfaction is a key influence on affective commitment, followed by organizational justice and compensation satisfaction.

Of particular interest was to compare the total effects of compensation satisfaction, organizational justice, overall job satisfaction, high sacrifice commitment, and affective commitment on turnover intention. Although affective commitment had the strongest direct effect on turnover intention, compensation satisfaction had the largest total effect (indirect and direct) on turnover intention. Affective commitment had the second largest total effect (only direct) on turnover intention, closely followed by overall job satisfaction. The total effect of high sacrifice commitment on turnover intention is less important than that of the other variable.

Taken together, compensation satisfaction, especially pay satisfaction,¹¹ is a pivotal organizational influence on turnover intention and is much more important than affective commitment, overall job satisfaction, and high sacrifice commitment in reducing high levels of turnover intention.

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Discussion and Conclusion

A review of the literature suggests that present probation systems fail to resolve high levels of employee turnover rates. Since voluntary turnover can be prevented by identifying its underlying reasons and addressing identified causes, reducing high levels of staff turnover should be a top priority for probation administrators. Unfortunately, no readily available, cost-effective mechanism has been implemented in Texas probation to fully and empirically analyze actual, voluntary turn-over. In response, the study investigated: 1) any determinant factors that shape turnover intention; and 2) pay satisfaction's influence on turnover intention.

Results from the descriptive analyses indicate that large portions of the line probation officers and direct-care staff have high levels of inclination to leave. Among all organizational factors used, pay and promotion are the most negatively perceived work-related areas. Moreover, the average mean of organizational commitment was lower than that of overall job satisfaction, suggesting that employees have a stronger psy-chological/emotional attachment to their job and job experience than to their department.

Findings from the hierarchical multiple regression analyses indicate that organizational factors, rather than individual status factors, contribute more to predicting the employees' turnover intention, suggesting that the organization is the underlying cause for employee turnover intention. For both line probation officers and direct-care staff, affective commitment, high sacrifice commitment, overall job satisfaction, and pay are the main predictors of turnover intention. Among the four main predictors, affective commitment has the strongest direct effect on turnover intention. In addition, among all individual factors, those in the young age group and short tenure group are more likely to feel inclined to leave their job. Specifically, being in the 20-34 age group of line officers is the strongest predictor of turnover intention, whereas tenure, particularly the 0-3 years of tenure group of direct-care staff, is the strongest predictor of inclination to quit.

Finally, SEM analysis compared total effects of compensation satisfaction (pay and benefits), overall job satisfaction, lack of alternatives, high sacrifice, and affective commitment on turnover intention. Results from the structural equation modeling indicate that the total effect of compensation satisfaction on turnover intention is much greater than the total effect of affective commitment. Overall, these findings suggest that while affective commitment has the strongest direct effect on turnover intention, the total influence of compensation satisfaction, especially pay satisfaction, is much more important than that of affective commitment in reducing high levels of turnover intention and subsequent voluntary turnover. Therefore, it can be concluded that pay satisfaction is the strongest underlying cause of high turnover intention in Texas probation, followed by affective commitment.

Based on these accumulated findings, policy recommendations are provided. Most important, probation administrators should be made aware of the transition from individual to organization factors, especially the significance of pay satisfaction, as the most influential underlying causes leading to high voluntary turnover rate. Only small numbers of the line probation officers and directcare staff sampled were satisfied with the pay they received. Hence, probation administrators should recognize chronic negative organizational outcomes caused by inadequate salary and should present a united front to increase compensation for probation employees. Moreover, probation administrators should make a concerted effort to convince their legislatures to significantly increase probation funding.¹² Inherent traps in the vicious cycle of low pay satisfaction, high turnover intention, and high voluntary turnover may possibly diminish promotion of public safety, compromising the mission of the probation system.

Second, increasing compensation is important, but on its own does not necessarily guarantee an employee's long-term commitment to probation's mission. As noted, affective commitment in both line officers and direct care staff was the strongest predictor of turnover intention, suggesting that affective commitment is the most immediate precursor of turnover intention. From the perspective of probation managers, employees with strong affective commitment to the organization are more valuable employees. However, 3,234 respondents reported that the main reason for commitment to their department is an awareness of the costs associated with leaving—their personal accumulated investments and limited employment opportunities—rather than strong emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in their department.

In recognizing existing low levels of affective commitment, probation administrators should identify the underlying causes and develop strategies to increase employees' emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in their department. An employee who doesn't have an emotional connection to the organization's mission may start thinking about leaving. Therefore, every department should have a clearly articulated mission, vision, and values that are supported and reinforced by management.

Third, younger personnel and those with fewer years of service are more likely to feel inclined to leave their probation jobs than older employees and those with more tenure. High turnover intention was most prevalent among line probation officers whose age ranged from 20 to 34 years. Surprisingly, this age range group accounts for 42.8 percent of the line probation officers sampled. Likewise, high turnover intention was most prevalent among directcare staff whose tenure range was somewhere between 0-3 years (45.6 percent of the direct-care staff sampled). Given the highest turnover intention among younger age and tenure groups, we highly recommend that probation administrators recognize the unique characteristics of the younger employee and devote considerable attention and resources to this new generation, which has a much lower affective commitment and much higher turn-over intention than other groups.

Inevitably, the role of probation managers is extremely important in providing organizational stimulus for this new generation of employees to encourage their feelings of belonging and to establish their emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in their department. Specifically, management needs to focus on developing mentoring relationships with new employees. Also, management should change supervisory and managerial roles and styles from a traditional, autocratic organizational climate to one of facilitating, coaching, and consulting with the new generation. To facilitate this shift in managerial roles, probation departments should devote considerable attention and resources to the selection, development, and training of managers.

Finally, in the not too distant past, probation administrators did not experience the need to actively recruit staff. It was not uncommon to have a number of highly qualified applicants for each available position. This is no longer the case, and probation departments find themselves competing with other social service and law enforcement agencies for prospective employees from a dwindling labor pool. Probation administrators should become less passive and more active in recruiting new employees by attending job fairs at colleges and universities, developing close relationships with faculty members of criminal justice programs, and mentoring senior-level students in area high schools with the hope of having them return to the community after

college to seek employment as probation officers.

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Turnover Intention Among Probation Officers and Direct Care Staff: A Statewide Study

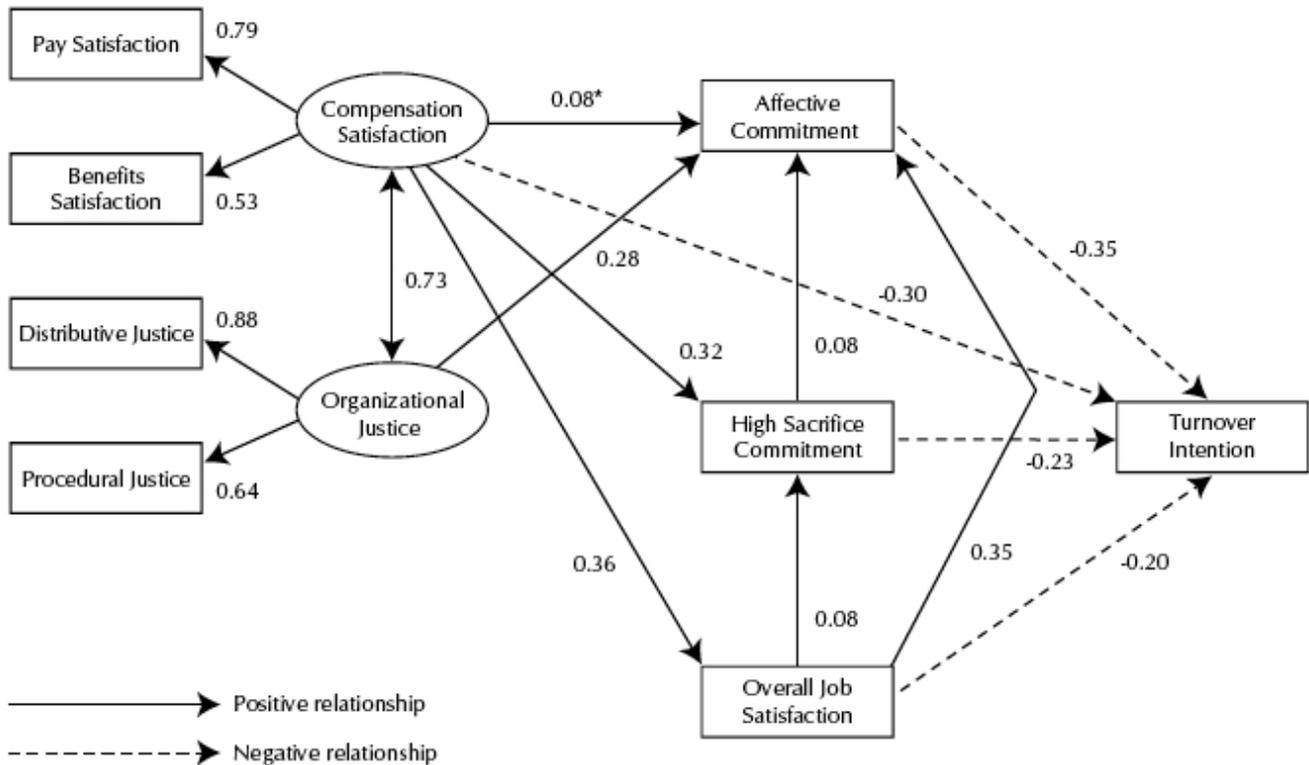
Figures

[Figure 1](#)

Figure 1.

FIGURE 1.

The Results of Structural Equation Modeling (N = 3,126)



Note: All coefficients depicted by arrows are significant at 0.001 except when noted with*, which is significant at 0.05.

Turnover Intention Among Probation Officers and Direct Care Staff: A Statewide Study

1. Direct-care staff were defined as all Community Supervision and Corrections Departments (CSCD) employees who have direct contact with probationers or other clients as an assigned job duty, such as case workers, counselors, counselor interns, residential monitors, caseload technicians, and technicians assigned to the inter/intrastate caseloads, while excluding other staff, such as secretaries, general clerks, computer technicians, fiscal clerks, couriers, and transportation specialists, not assigned to a caseload or having contact with clientele as part of their regular duties.
2. Respondents were required to select their department from a list, in order for the researcher to elicit a response rate for each department.
3. Survey responses were obtained from a total of 3,241 line probation officers and direct-care staff. However, data provided by 6 line probation officers and 1 direct care staff were deleted due to missing information.
4. A principal components factor analysis indicates that one of the original six items developed by Meyer and Allen (1997) was found to be heterogeneous and was thereby discarded.
5. A principal components factor analysis indicated that all factor loading scores exceeded the 0.50 cut-off, suggesting substantial loads (Comrey & Lee, 1992) and supporting the validity of the two sub-dimensional constructs of continuance commitment.
6. Tukey's HSD Post-Hoc test for the nine age groups indicates that high turnover intention was strongly prevalent among line officers whose age range was somewhere between 20-34 years. This age range group accounts for 42.8 percent (991 out of 2,618) of the total sampled line officers.
7. Tukey's HSD Post-Hoc test for the seven tenure groups indicates that high turnover intention was strongly prevalent among direct-care staff whose tenure range was somewhere between 0-3 years. This tenure group accounts for 45.6 percent (257 out of 564) of the total sampled direct-care staff population.
8. Pay satisfaction developed by Dunham and Smith (1979) was classified by Williams et al. (2002) as multi-dimensional pay satisfaction, rather than uni-dimensional, pay-level satisfaction. However, due to no inclusion of benefits satisfaction, the study utilized and incorporated Spector's (1997) benefits satisfaction scale into Dunham and Smith's (1979) pay satisfaction scale.
9. Two absolute fit (GFI = 0.99, RMEAS = 0.49) indices, well exceeding the recommended cut-off values, indicate that the hypothetical two-factor model, compared to alternative factor models, provided best fit to the data. Also, the two-factor model provided a significant improvement: three incremental fit indices were better for the two-factor model (NFI = 0.99, CFI = 0.99, TLI = 0.98) than for the four-factor model (NFI = 0.94, CFI = 0.94, TLI = 0.83).
10. Two absolute fit indices (GFI = 0.99, RMEAS = 0.01) fully support the absolute best-fit of the final model to the data. The three incremental fit indices were better for the final model (NFI = 0.999, CFI = 0.999, TLI = 0.998) than for the hypothetical model (NFI = 0.996, CFI = 0.996, TLI = 0.991).
11. As demonstrated in Figure 1, the factor-loading score for pay satisfaction (0.79) showed a 1.49 times higher association with compensation satisfaction than the factor-loading score of benefit satisfaction (0.53).
12. Even though a failure due to the current economic status and its subsequent statewide budget cuts, the concerted effort was recently made to vote to move forward with a recommendation of a \$6,000 salary supplement for all probation line officers and direct

care staff (A total amount of \$45million for the biennium) to the Texas Legislature.

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Good Job or Dirty Work? Public Perceptions of Correctional Employment

1. Thanks to Amber Herbeck and Chad Briggs for their help collecting and entering the data used for this project. The data were collected as part of Grant 98-CE-VX-0021 from the National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. Points of view in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice. Correspondence may be directed to: Jody Sundt, Criminology and Criminal Justice, PO Box 751, Portland State University, Portland, OR 97207-0751. Email:sundt@pdx.edu.
2. These data include those employed in community corrections, prisons, and jails.

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Sexual Victimization and Requests for Assistance in Inmates' Letters to the National Prison Rape Elimination Commission

1. The views contained and expressed in this document do not represent the position of the National Prison Rape Elimination Commission. All views and interpretations contained herein are those of the authors alone.
2. It should be noted that the correspondence reviewed in this analysis is only a subset of correspondence received at the Commission from inmates. Correspondence received prior to June 2004 and after February 2008 is not included. Additionally correspondence from individuals who are not inmates is not included in the analysis.
3. Additionally, 42.4 percent of correspondence included supplementary materials. These supplementary materials included court documents, legal letters, affidavits, inmate grievance complaints with identifying information, hearing dispositions, news articles, declarations, inmate/parolee appeal forms, and official complaints filed against correctional personnel.

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