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## **THE INFLUENCE OF PERSON – JOB FIT, CRITICAL PSYCHOLOGICAL STATES, AND SELF – EVALUATION ON INTENTION TO LEAVE AMONG MEDICAL WORKERS OF MULAGO NATIONAL REFERRAL HOSPITAL, UGANDA**

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### **Abstract:**

This study aimed at determining the joint effect of person – job fit, critical psychological states and self – evaluation on intention to leave among medical workers of Mulago National Referral Hospital in Uganda. The study used cross sectional descriptive survey design. A sample size of 475 medical workers consisting of Director, Deputy Director, Senior Consultant, Consultant, Medical Officer, Nurses and Other Allied workers was used. A structured questionnaire was used for data collection. The study used both descriptive and inferential statistics for data analysis. It was hypothesized that the joint effect of person – job fit, critical psychological states, and self-evaluation on intention to leave is significantly different from the sum of the individual predictor effects. Multiple linear regression was used to test this hypothesis. The findings of the study indicate that the combined effect of person – job fit, critical psychological states and self – evaluation was significantly different from the sum of the individual predictor effects. The results of this study contributed to the job characteristics theory, self – verification theory and the theory of perceived job mobility. It is recommended that organizations improve the fit between employees and their jobs, make jobs more meaningful and give employees responsibility for their work, create a work environment in which self-esteem and self-efficacy thrive, and recognize the combination of antecedents of intention to leave.

**Key words:** Person – Job Fit, Critical Psychological States, Self – Evaluation, Intention to Leave, Mulago National Referral Hospital, Uganda

## 1. Introduction

Employee turnover can be costly to organizations while intention to leave among staff can result in poor service delivery, negative critical psychological states experienced by employees, and actual turnover (Wheeler, 2007). This is because of lack of congruence between employees' needs, their abilities, and jobs resulting in most employees leaving their jobs (Carless, 2005; Purani et al, 2008; Wheeler, 2007). Person – job fit has for long been a subject of discussion in the medical profession (Hagopian, 2009). A country with a good health care system will have medical workers whose skills, abilities and attitudes are aligned with the demands of their jobs resulting in a healthy dependable workforce and a thriving economy (World Health Organization, 2017). In Uganda, patients spend more than USD 200 million per annum on medical treatment overseas (Omaswa, 2009). The inefficient health care system has affected wellbeing of most people and slowed economic development, further affecting the health sector. Because of this situation, Mulago National Referral Hospital does not have enough health care staff, money and equipment needed for patients resulting in poor person – job fit due to many staff performing jobs they do not fit and qualify for and a workforce that is exposed to disease (Hagopian, 2009; Omaswa 2009; Lwamafa, 2006; Kitanda, 2008). Despite being the biggest and main referral hospital, Mulago National Referral Hospital has a high rate of attrition leaving jobs that are difficult to fill since Uganda has a significant shortage of medical workers. The hospital lacks resources and equipment, and is severely understaffed (Omaswa, 2009). Health personnel are constantly looking for improved opportunities and a more satisfying work atmosphere elsewhere (Kitanda, 2008; Lwamafa et al., 2006). It is clear that there is a need for a detailed study on person-job fit for Mulago medical workers (Huang, 2005; Sekiguchi, 2007; Lwamafa et al., 2006).

Medical workers have the primary responsibility to safeguard and improve the well-being of others and their societies in hospitals, healthcare centers and other facilities, and in academia (Hagopian et al, 2009). They operate in different disciplines, making important contributions that are critical to the functioning of health care systems (WHO Report, 2016). Medical workers are a combination of generalists and physicians referred to as doctors and other occupations including nurses and other allied workers (Omaswa, 2009). The estimated number of medical workers in Uganda stands at 43,000 institutional healthcare professionals within the public sector (Ministry of Health Annual Performance Report, 2019). Further to this, Uganda is challenged by a significant deficiency of health workers, with only a doctor, nurse, and midwife to patient ratio of 14:10,000. Mulago National Referral Hospital employs approximately 1,007 medical workers who are in the following cadres: Director/ Deputy Director, Senior Consultant, Consultant, Medical Officer, Nursing, Other Allied Health Workers. The other allied health workers include Technician, Attendant, Radiographer, Sonographer, Physicist, Laboratory Technologist, Laboratory Assistant, among others (Mulago National Referral Hospital Staffing List, 2019). The medical workers are identified to be in the following divisions; Medical Services, Diagnostics and Therapeutics, Reproductive Health Services/ Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Pediatrics and Child Health, Surgery, and Nursing (Mulago National Referral Hospital Staffing List, 2019; Kitanda, 2016). There is a shortage of critical equipment to train health cadres, a lack of infrastructure to provide adequate space, shortage of financial investment to public medical training institutions, scarce housing and accommodation for health workers, and irregular remuneration. The already few health workers suffer burnout and increasing workload, brain drain, and a growing population in need of health services. There is urgent need for facilitation of health workers to enable them to serve the public (Omaswa, 2009).

When the characteristics of an employee and those of the job or tasks to be performed are compatible, then person-job fit is achieved. It is conceptualized as needs-supplies fit in which the preferences, needs, or desires of the jobholder are fulfilled by the tasks they handle; demands-abilities whereby job demands are in line with the employee skills, knowledge and skills; and self-concept-job fit which assesses the job holder's self-view (Scroggins, 2007; Kristof et al., 2005). Critical psychological states that influence person – job fit – outcomes relationship consists knowing actual results, experiencing meaningfulness, and experiencing responsibility (Hackman and Oldham, 1976; Behson et al, 2000). In addition, the role of self-evaluation which is manifested in self-efficacy and self-esteem provides a basis for self-view which influences work outcomes including intention to leave. Intention to leave is characterized by a situation where employees think about quitting and generally lack continuity (Morrel et al., 2008; Purani and Sunil, 2008; Wheeler et al., 2007). The direct effect of person - job fit on intention to leave among has been an ongoing subject of discussion across different professions. This, as well as the role of incidental effects through other variables remains a significant gap (Wheeler et al., 2007, Aktas, 2014).

In Uganda, Government efforts to reduce employee turnover in Mulago National Referral Hospital have met little success; in fact, turnover in Mulago has increased since 2001 (Omaswa, 2009; Hagopian et al., 2009; Uganda Health Workforce Study Report, 2007). This may be attributed to poor compensation, poor working conditions, lack of career advancement and high demands from the job (Omaswa, 2009). The stressful experience that health workers go through is characterized by challenging working conditions with high workloads, long working hours including weekends and public holidays, limited equipment and critical medical supplies, lack of adequate opportunities for professional development, and the lowest ranked salaries in East Africa have compounded the problem. The health personnel lack medical supplies to perform their work, and fear to be held individually accountable if something goes wrong in the process of treatment. Those on the job are considering better opportunities and improved life and a more rewarding work environment elsewhere (Kitanda, 2008; Lwamafa et al., 2006). This situation puts the profession, the medical workers and the patients in danger.

## 2. Literature Review

Intention to leave characterizes a situation in which an employee thinks about quitting and generally lacks continuity (Jourdian and Chenevert, 2010), has an acute awareness and interest in job opportunities elsewhere and alternative career choices, and is actively searching for a job (Leong et al., 1996; Lum et al., 1998; Rahim and Psenicka, 2004; Aktas, 2014). Person- job fit is one of the variables reliably found to lead to intention to leave. Demand – abilities fit and needs – supplies fit are two fundamental facets of the person-job fit theory (Edwards, 2008). Demands-abilities fit arise when the jobholder's abilities, knowledge and skills match with job requirements. Needs – supplies fit arises when the jobholder's requirements, requests, or preferences are satisfied by the job. In addition to demand – abilities and needs – supplies fit, Scroggins (2007) proposed Self Concept-Job fit in which employees seek out those jobs that give them self-fulfilling and confirming information that the perceived self is the actual self. These three forms of fit demonstrate the nature of fit dimensions in person-job fit (Kristof et al., 2005).

The relationship between person-job fit and intention to leave may be influenced by incidental variables and attitudes that could lead to intention to leave (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). The stronger the fit between an employee and the job, the less likely the employee will leave the job. In contrast, Wheeler et al., (2007); Resick et al., (2007) and Aktas (2014) found a weak effect of person – job related variables on intention to leave, but rather indirect effects through the experience of job related attitudes and other variables, therefore suggesting that there is an indirect relationship between person-job fit and intention to leave. Work outcomes such as intention to leave may therefore result from a job that stimulates three critical psychological states namely experienced meaningfulness, experienced responsibility, and knowledge of results. Experienced meaningfulness refers to the extent to which an individual considers his or her job important against their value system, and largely has meaning, is valued and worthy. Experienced responsibility characterizes the extent of personal liability and accountability an employee has over their work. Knowledge of results is the extent to which an employee is conversant, on a regular basis, with their performance on the job, and the impact of this performance. According to Behson et al, (2000), critical psychological states are a core explanation of the relationship and mediate the effects of the person-job fit (PJF) on outcomes such as intention to leave.

The good fit between the person and the job is critical for sustaining positive critical psychological states. There is great support and evidence for the link between both demands – abilities fit and needs – supplies fit, and critical psychological states (Cable & Derue, 2002; Kristof et al., 2005; Scroggins, 2007). In addition, self-concept measures were found to strongly correlate with job fit and other variables (Scroggins, 2007). Based on the structure proposed by Kristof et al., (2005), it is suggested that three types of fit may justify and be responsible for unique inconsistencies and variations in critical psychological states. While research consistently supports the meaningful and important results that arise from a greater sense of fit, it is assumed that person-job misfit necessarily leads to intention to leave (Kristof et al., 2005) and therefore concluding that person-job fit and critical psychological states share a strong positive relationship (Wheeler et al., 2005; Kristof, 1996; Chatman, 1991). Other studies beyond the model of job characteristics reveal that other variables are important moderators of the job – outcomes relationship (Karatepe & Demir, 2014). This finding is supported by the works of Fried and Ferris (1987) who found a strong relationship between specific variables and work-related results and outcomes.

A jobholder's view and assessment of himself or herself is important in determining how the jobholder interacts with the job. Self-evaluation is a general personality concept manifested in four major traits; self-efficacy, self-esteem, locus of control, and neuroticism. Individuals who have a strong self – evaluation are fascinated by complex jobs because they see the prospect for a more fulfilling role and inherent rewards, whereas individuals with a weak self – concept could be expected to focus on the struggle and potential for failure. In their study, Judge, Bono and Locke (2000) identified self-efficacy and self-esteem as the core constructs of self-evaluation. An individual's confidence and conviction in his or her competences to get the determination, cognitive resources, and expected behavior and actions needed to demonstrate control over their work and life determines their self-efficacy (Judge, Bono & Locke, 2000; Samija & Samija, 2016; Shere et al., 1982). On the other hand, the comprehensive assessment of one's individual worth or value determines their self-esteem (Strauss, 2005). Self-esteem is influenced by comparison of competences between and among people. Emotional interaction, the capability to demonstrate oneself at getting things done, proficiency, and how individuals react to either success or failure have an impact on self-esteem (Lawler, 2001). Largely, self-esteem can influence a jobholder's behavior and resultant performance.

Scroggins (2007) conceptualized the self-concept – job fit in which employees' desires and requirements are aligned to the jobs that they perform. This dimension of person-job fit has been a foundation for the theories of adjustment and self-evaluation (Joo, 2016). Self-esteem and self-efficacy are an avenue for demonstrating the association between core self-evaluations and job attitudes and work outcomes (Judge, Bono & Locke, 2010). Judge et al. (2003) support the relationship between core self-evaluations and work outcomes such as intention to leave. The role of self-evaluation in the relationship between person-job fit and intention to leave cannot be ignored as the assessment of oneself may influence intention to leave (Judge et al., 2003; Boon et al., 2009; Karatepe & Demir, 2014; Judge & Hurst, 2007). A research study conducted by Cable and DeRue (2002) on workers indicates that it is imperative to assess all types of person-job fit as they are associated with other variables and work outcomes such as intention to leave. Their findings are consistent with Kristof et al. (2005), Sekiguchi (2007) and Edwards (2008). In contrast, Wheeler et al., (2007); Resick et al., (2007) and Aktas (2014) identified a weak effect of person – job related variables on intention to leave, but rather through other variables, therefore suggesting that there is an indirect link between person-job fit and intention to leave. According to Behson et al. (2016), other incidental variables such as critical psychological states make the fundamental causes and evidence of this relationship. From the literature reviewed, a positive relationship between person – job fit, critical psychological states, and core self-evaluation influences an individual's decision and choice to either stay or quit a job (Boon et al., 2011; Judge, Bono & Locke, 2000).

### 3. Materials and Methods

The study used cross sectional descriptive survey design. At the time of the study, Mulago National Referral Hospital had approximately 1,007 medical workers. The target population of the study was all medical workers at Mulago National Referral Hospital. Data compiled from Mulago National Referral Hospital (MNHR) Staffing List (2019) provided a total number of 1,007 medical workers in Mulago Hospital Complex. A simple random sample size of 475 was obtained for each stratum using proportionate stratified sampling method as shown in Table 1. The respondents were sampled through stratified random sampling method. The strata comprised Director, Deputy Director, Senior Consultant, Consultant, Medical Officer, Nursing Officer, and Other Allied Health Workers (Mulago National Referral Hospital Staffing List, 2019). A simple random sample was obtained for each stratum using proportionate stratified sampling method (Sakaran, 2003; Lenth, 2001). The unit of analysis and inquiry in this study was a medical worker in MNRH in Uganda. Simple linear regression model was used to test individual effect while multiple linear regression method was used to test joint effect of Person – Job Fit, Critical Psychological States, and Self-Evaluation on Intention to Leave.

Table 1: Distribution of Sample

Category	Population (N)	Sample Size (S)
Director/ Deputy Director	2	2
Senior Consultant	15	14
Consultant	23	19
Medical Officer	84	66
Other Allied Health Workers	206	132
Nursing	677	242
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,007</b>	<b>475</b>

Source: Researcher, (2020)

#### 4. Test of Hypothesis Results

The following hypothesis drawn from the literature review was tested:

H0: The joint effect of Person – Job Fit, Critical Psychological States and Self - Evaluation on Intention to Leave is significantly different from the sum of the individual predictor effects.

This hypothesis was tested using multiple regression analysis. The results are presented in Table 2

Table 2: Regression Results for Joint effect of Person – Job Fit, Critical Psychological States and Self - Evaluation on Intention to Leave

Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	Change Statistics			
						F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.571 <sup>a</sup>	0.326	0.324	0.948	0.326	200.935	1	416	0.000
2	.699 <sup>d</sup>	0.489	0.486	0.949	0.163	132.094	3	414	0.000

  

ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	180.537	1	180.537	200.935	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	373.769	416	0.898		
	Total	554.306	417			
2	Regression	271.06	3	90.352	132.094	.000 <sup>e</sup>
	Residual	283.246	414	0.684		
	Total	554.306	417			

  

Coefficients								
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	3.206	0.046		69.145	0.000		

2	Person – Job Fit	-0.658	0.046	-0.571	-14.175	0.000	1.000	1.000
	(Constant)	3.206	0.046		69.115	0.000		
	Critical Psychological States	-0.040	0.057	-0.035	-0.705	0.481	0.675	1.482
	Person – Job Fit	-0.628	0.052	-0.545	-12.067	0.000	0.796	1.256
	Self - Evaluation	-0.036	0.056	-0.032	-0.656	0.512	0.697	1.435

a. Dependent Variable: Intention To Leave

b. Predictors: (Constant), Self – Evaluation, Person – Job Fit, Critical Psychological States

Source: Field Data (2020)

## 5. Discussion and Interpretation

The findings presented in Table 2 show that that for the individual significance; the goodness of fit for person job fit on intention to leave was  $R^2 = 0.326$ , that is person job fit explains 32.6 % of the variation in employee intention to leave. F - Statistic ( $F = 200.935$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ) shows that the regression model for the effect of employee intention to leave on person – job fit was significant overall. Beta coefficient of person job fit ( $\beta = -0.571$ ,  $t = -14.175$ ,  $p\text{-value} = 0.000 < 0.05$ ) is significant. This means that for every one unit increase in person - job fit, employee intention to leave decreases by 0.571 units, other factors held constant. The results also revealed that the joint effect of person job fit, critical psychological states and self-evaluation on employee intention to leave significantly improved ( $R^2 = 0.489$ ). This means that jointly, person job fit, critical psychological states and self-evaluation accounted for 48.9% of the variation in employee intention to leave. The model was statistically significant overall as shown by the F statistic ( $F = 132.094$ ,  $P\text{-value} = 0.000 < 0.05$ ). Coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) for the joint effect was greater and significant ( $R^2 = 0.489$ ) as compared to the individual effect ( $R^2 = 0.326$ ). The joint effect ( $R^2$ ) of person – job fit, critical psychological states and self – evaluation on intention to leave was greater than the individual predictor effects ( $R^2$ ) of person – job fit on intention to leave. Thus, the hypothesis that the joint effect of Person – Job Fit, Critical Psychological States and Self-Evaluation on Intention to Leave is significantly different from the sum of the individual predictor effects was confirmed.

The findings support studies by Huang, (2005); Sekiguchi, (2007); Edwards, (2008); Kristof-Brown et al., (2005) who found that the relationship between person-job fit and intention to leave is influenced by incidental variables and attitudes which leads to intention to leave (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). The findings further conform to those of Wheeler et al., (2007); Resick et al., (2007) and Aktas (2014) who found that person – job fit has indirect effects through the experience of job-related attitudes and other variables in predicting intention to leave. In addition, Joo (2016) found that the self-evaluation is a determinant of job attitudes and work outcomes.

The study outcomes majorly support the propositions of the theory of Job Characteristics. The study findings indicated a moderate positive relationship between person – job fit and intention to leave. This finding is anchored on the job characteristics theory which assumes that job characteristics are an important determinant of work-related outcomes such as intention to leave. The findings of this study indicated that all job facets including needs – supplies, demands – abilities, self-concept job, task prioritization – job, and emotional strength - job are important contributors in determining person – job fit, and not any single one of them on its own demonstrates the influence of all other factors.

The finding that the joint effect of Person – Job Fit, Critical Psychological States and Self-Evaluation on Intention to Leave is significantly different from the sum of the individual predictor effects supports the theory of perceived job mobility. The theory posits that employees go through a series of cognitive processes during decision making to either stay or quit a job and positive or negative critical psychological states can influence stay or quit decision, respectively.

The finding further supports the self-verification theoretical assumption that chronic self-views give employees a sense of confidence and encouragement and that self-views shape people's efforts which affect job performance, attitudes and outcomes. In addition, the self – verification theoretical assumption that people prefer circumstances and jobs that provide them with self -confirming evidence, and that individuals will value themselves and develop superior perceptions of fit when the job provides self-approving and assuring experiences is supported.

## **6. Implications and Recommendations**

Managers need to focus and pay attention job characteristics in order to trigger favorable psychological states, create a work environment in which employees perceive and believe that they can successfully perform their jobs and achieve desired results with the belief and conviction in their capabilities to have control over their jobs, and focus on all job characteristics but understand that different job characteristics drive quit decisions in varying degrees and should focus more on the structure of jobs, employee skills, knowledge and training that fit the job requirements, employee resources and abilities to solve problems on the job, actual job performance, and building confidence for employees.

Many National Policy documents in Uganda have focused on the work environment and the organisation and less on the individual. The study finding that the joint effect of Person – Job Fit, Critical Psychological States and Self-Evaluation on Intention to Leave is significantly different from the sum of the individual predictor effect means that it is important for organisations to examine policies on the needs of the employee and what the job offers, job demands such as education and working hours and the abilities of employees, and realistic job reviews, consistently examine the design of jobs including meaningfulness of work, nature of job responsibilities and feed back in the form of managing performance and reward. These can be integrated into policy on regular review of jobs. Further to this, organisation should examine policies on continuous professional development, practice and competence development in order to build efficacy, esteem and confidence of medical workers.

It is recommended that managers make jobs more meaningful and give employees responsibility for their work. Experienced meaningfulness on the job can be achieved by attaching importance to jobs by clearly defining how job tasks contribute to organizational success, valuing jobs and making them worthwhile. Experienced responsibility can be achieved by encouraging employees and holding them personally accountable for their work through clear performance indicators and measures and continuous performance reviews. As a result, employees who perceive meaningfulness and responsibility are likely to exhibit stronger experiences of the job attitudes, which in turn can lead to positive work outcomes. In addition, knowledge of results can be achieved through regular formal and informal performance feedback, supervision and rewards/recognition.

Managers need to create a work environment in which employees perceive and believe that they can successfully perform their jobs and achieve desired results. Employees with the belief and conviction in their capabilities to have control over their job with a perception of personal worth or value are more likely to thrive and stay on the job as individuals with positive biases and predispositions experience more objectively confident work experiences on the job, gain control of their work environment and will easily cope with complex tasks and exert more effort as they are less likely to withdraw. Self-efficacy, esteem and confidence can be built through identification of key competences for satisfactory job performance and continuous professional development and practice to build the identified competences.

The study findings indicated that the joint effect of person – job fit, critical psychological states and self – evaluation on intention to leave is greater than the sum of their individual effect. Therefore, the study recommends that managers and employees need to be aware that intention to leave is affected by several factors beyond person – job fit, critical psychological states and self – evaluation and that relying on any one of these alone may not guarantee low intention to leave.

Finally, long term longitudinal studies are the preferred way to study progress of relationships. Noting that individual perceptions change over time depending on the context, a longitudinal study would show how the relationship between person – job fit, critical psychological states, self – evaluation and intention to leave progresses overtime more than at only one time. In addition, this study found that 48.9% variation in intention to leave is attributed to person job fit, critical psychological states and self evaluation.

There is opportunity for further research and exploration of the other antecedents of intention to leave to contribute to the full understanding of intention to leave.

## 7. Conclusion

In conclusion, the hypothesis that the joint effect of Person – Job Fit, Critical Psychological States and Self-Evaluation on Intention to Leave is significantly different from the sum of the individual predictor effects was confirmed. Managers need to focus and pay more attention to job characteristics but also understand that different job characteristics drive quit decisions in varying degrees. In addition, policies need to give more focus to the individual needs of the employee and what the job offers including regular review and design of jobs, and continuous professional development, practice, and competence development. Finally, future research should focus on long term longitudinal studies and other antecedents of intention to leave to contribute to the full understanding of intention to leave.

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