An Investigation of Country Differences in the Relationship Between Job Satisfaction and Turnover Intentions

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The relationship between job satisfaction and turnover is important due to the extensive costs of turnover in most organizations. Unfortunately, little is known about how cultural differences at the national level, such as differences in uncertainty avoidance (UA) and individualism/collectivism (I/C), moderate the relationship between job attitudes and job withdrawal. In the present research, data from a large multinational opinion survey were used to compare the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intentions across four countries that differ in UA and I/C, namely France, Japan, the Philippines, and the United States of America. The relationship between satisfaction and turnover intentions was significantly stronger in the U.S. and France than in Japan and the Philippines, supporting the hypothesis that turnover intentions are more strongly related to job satisfaction in countries that are higher in individualism.

Job satisfaction is one of the most central and studied topics in industrial/organizational psychology (Judge, Parker, Colbert, Heller & Ilies, 2001; Spector, 1997). It has been found to correlate with a variety of important outcomes, such as life satisfaction, job performance, turnover, and absenteeism (Hulin & Judge, 2003; Judge et al., 2001). The relationship between job satisfaction and turnover is one of importance due to the extensive costs of turnover in most organizations (Johns, 2001). Turnover is part of a larger psychological and behavioral construct of withdrawal which includes lower effort, higher absenteeism, thoughts of quitting, and turnover (Hanisch & Hulin, 1991; Hulin, 1991). Job satisfaction is the most important predictor of these outcomes (Hanisch & Hulin, 1991; Hulin, 1991); however there have only been a few studies on how moderators influence the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational withdrawal behaviors. A few variables, such as unemployment rates (Carsten & Spector, 1987) and positive affectivity (Judge, 1993), have been
found to moderate the relationship between job satisfaction and withdrawal, but much less is known about the degree to which cultural differences among countries moderate relationships between job satisfaction and individual withdrawal behaviors. As business transactions, commerce, and communication increasingly transcend national boundaries, an understanding of the role of cultural factors in influencing behaviors at work represents an important practical and theoretical need.

This study examines how national differences in uncertainty avoidance (UA) and individualism/collectivism (I/C) moderate the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intentions. In particular, this study compares the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intentions across four countries that are thought to differ in these two cultural dimensions, namely France, Japan, the Philippines, and the United States of America. Thus, the present study extends our knowledge of cross-cultural organizational behavior by examining the degree to which job attitudes relate equivalently to behavioral intentions across national boundaries.

**Job Satisfaction**

Job satisfaction is an attitude, reflecting an individual’s evaluation of his or her job, and has both cognitive and affective determinants (Hulin & Judge, 2003; Weiss, 2002). Individuals can be satisfied with their overall jobs (Ironson, Smith, Brannick, Gibson, & Paul, 1989) and with specific job facets, such as the work done on the job, level of pay, promotion opportunities, coworkers, and supervision (Locke, 1976; Smith, Kendall & Hulin, 1969). A variety of measures of job satisfaction exist, with most of the well-constructed measures converging on the assessment of a common construct (Hulin & Judge, 2003). Job satisfaction is an important construct because of its centrality to the working lives of most adults (e.g. Hulin & Judge, 2003). Moreover, it has been empirically related to a number of important outcomes, including attendance (e.g. Scott & Taylor, 1985), decisions to retire (e.g. Hanisch & Hulin, 1991), prosocial and organizational citizenship behaviors (e.g. Bateman & Organ, 1983), and turnover (e.g. Carsten & Spector, 1987). Quantitative reviews have found the relationship between job satisfaction and job performance in organizations to be .30 when citizenship behaviors are taken into account (Judge, Thorensen, Bono, & Patton, 2001), and the associations appear stronger for more complex jobs (Viswesvaran, Ones, & Schmidt, 1996).

Numerous studies have found consistent relationships between overall job satisfaction and variables that reflect an individual’s attachment or identification with the organization, such as organizational commitment or by contrast,
individual turnover (Hulin & Judge, 2003; Judge et al., 2001; Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002; Mobley, 1982). Turnover itself is considered part of the larger construct of organizational withdrawal, which includes taking longer breaks, coming to work late, leaving or leaving early, and turnover intentions (Hulin, 1991). Turnover intentions are the most proximal precursors of quitting, and not surprisingly show a strong negative association with job satisfaction (Hulin, 1991; Steele & Ovalle, 1984).

Organizational Withdrawal

Hulin (1991) defined individual organizational withdrawal as a process whereby dissatisfied individuals engage in behavior to avoid contact with the work situation. A number of authors contended that withdrawal behavior progresses from trivial acts to more serious acts as dissatisfaction increases (e.g., Herzberg, Mausner, Peterson, & Capwell, 1957; Hulin, 1991; Rosse & Miller, 1984). Individuals will progress to more serious levels if the less serious acts do not relieve job dissatisfaction. According to Mobley’s (1977) model for example, individuals first evaluate the job, and if it is dissatisfying, the withdrawal process is activated and individuals begin thinking about quitting and start searching for alternative positions, before forming an intention to quit and then actually leaving the organization. Therefore, the first hypothesis of the present study predicts an overall negative correlation between job satisfaction and turnover intentions in each of the countries sampled in this study. Although we expect the relationship to differ in strength across nations, as discussed in more detail below, we predict a significant negative relationship between satisfaction and turnover intentions in each of the countries investigated in this research.

Hypothesis 1: Higher levels of job satisfaction are associated with lower turnover intentions in France, Japan, the Philippines, and the U.S.

Moderators of the Relationship between Job Satisfaction and Withdrawal

As noted previously, an influential moderator of the relationship between job dissatisfaction and turnover is unemployment rate (e.g. Carsten & Spector, 1987; Kammeyer-Mueller, Wanberg, Glomb, & Ahlburg, 2005; Trevor, 2001). Not surprisingly employees are more likely to turnover during times of low unemployment than in times of high unemployment, due to the abundance of alternative employment opportunities. Another moderator that has been found to influence the relationship between job dissatisfaction and withdrawal is an individual’s general positive or negative affect (Judge, 1993). Judge (1993), for
example, found that employees with higher positive affectivity were more likely to quit when dissatisfied than employees with negative affectivity. He speculated that individuals with higher positive affect are more likely to quit a dissatisfying job because the negative affect caused by the job situation is incongruent with their dispositional state, whereas a dissatisfying job is more compatible with the dispositions of those with higher negative affectivity.

A high level of money-ethic endorsement has also been found to moderate the relationship between intrinsic job satisfaction and turnover intentions (Li-Ping Tang, Kim, & Shin-Hsiung Tang, 2000). Individuals who have a high level of money-ethic endorsement equate the amount of money paid at work to career success, do not consider money to be evil, and spend their money in a careful manner. In situations of low intrinsic satisfaction, those with a high money-ethic endorsement were more likely to turnover than those low in money-ethic endorsement, presumably because their quitting behavior has been rewarded with higher salaries in the past.

Similarly, in a study by Blau (1987), individuals with an internal rather than an external locus of control were more likely to leave their jobs if dissatisfied. Internals believe they are relatively more in control of their lives than externals, and therefore are more apt to take action to change an undesirable job situation. Although some studies have investigated how moderators influence the relationship between job satisfaction and individual job withdrawal, very little research has examined how the relationship between job satisfaction and job withdrawal may vary across national or cultural boundaries (Johns, 2001). This represents a significant limitation of our knowledge of the degree to which important organizational outcomes, such as employee turnover, can be predicted from a common set of variable in disparate cultures.

National Culture and Organizational Withdrawal

Hofstede (2001) treats culture as “the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes members of one group from another” (p. 9). Culture consists of symbols, achievements, artifacts, traditional ideas, and values that have the capability to influence behavior (Kluckhohn, 1951). Symbols consist of words, gestures, pictures and objects, such as the word “rodeo,” fingers forming a peace sign, a picture of a youthful fashion model, or a popular commercial product. Heroes could be persons from the past or present, real or fictitious, and rituals are behaviors that are engaged for the sake of upholding cultural norms, including ceremonies, celebrations, and scripted behavior. Through such practices, culture is made especially apparent when individuals from outside of the culture perceive it (Hofstede, 2001).
Johns (2001) underscored a need to study how culture plays a role in the causes and consequences of individual withdrawal within organizations. A noteworthy study by Abrams, Ando, and Hinkle (1998) found that perceived organizational identification correlated with turnover intentions in both Britain and Japan, but perceived social norms had a greater influence on turnover in Japan. This may suggest that Japanese workers are more bound by social norms and are less likely to turnover when they identify with their organization (Abrams et al., 1998). Little is known about how the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover generalizes to other countries or cultural groups. In much of the current cross-national research, researchers have emphasized the value of studying several important dimensions of cultural differences that vary across national boundaries (Hofstede, 2001), such as uncertainty avoidance, individualism/collectivism, masculinity/femininity, and power distance, to identify substantively interpretable patterns of similarities and differences across cultural groups. Two of these dimensions in particular are likely to moderate associations between job attitudes and organizational withdrawal behaviors, namely uncertainty avoidance and individualism/collectivism, as discussed in more detail below.

Hofstede (2001) defines uncertainty avoidance (UA) as a norm of intolerance for ambiguity. At the national level it is manifested in traditionalism and intolerance of different opinions. Uncertainty avoidance is not risk avoidance, but rather a general aversion to uncertainty. Individuals in countries of low UA are more likely to tolerate ambiguous situations, whereas individuals in cultures that emphasize higher UA are more apt to avoid ambiguous and unpredictable situations. Countries high in UA include France, Japan, and Greece, whereas countries low in UA include the U.S., the Philippines, and Singapore.

House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman and Vipin (2004) studied the construct of uncertainty avoidance and defined it as “the extent to which members of collectives seek orderliness, consistency, structure, formalized procedures and laws to cover situations in their daily lives,” (p. 603). Their study showed a positive and significant correlation between uncertainty avoidance and intolerance for ambiguity (House et al., 2004). Uncertainty avoidance was thought to be an important cultural construct due to its relevance in international business transactions, which usually involve a high level of ambiguity (Shenkar, 2001). The construct has been found to moderate the effects of safety training on safety outcomes (Burke, Chan-Serafin, Salvador, & Smith, 2008). In particular, safety training was less strongly related to safety outcomes in cultures higher in uncertainty avoidance, presumably because the training methods implemented in the high uncertainty avoidance cultures were too rigid and standardized to facilitate the transfer of complex skills to dynamic work contexts.
Uncertainty avoidance may be an important cultural moderator of the association between job satisfaction and withdrawal due to its powerful norms related to ambiguity. Individuals in countries of low UA are less likely than those in high UA cultures to fear the unknown, so they may be more likely to leave their jobs when dissatisfied. Individuals in cultures of high UA, however, should be more likely to stay when dissatisfied with their jobs because of an aversion to the uncertainty or unfamiliarity associated with starting employment elsewhere.

The present study investigates how the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intentions differs across two countries that are high in uncertainty avoidance, France and Japan, and two countries that are low in uncertainty avoidance, the Philippines and the U.S. Table 1 shows that France ties for tenth with Spain, Argentina, Panama, Chile, and Costa Rica in UA in Hofstede’s (2001) research, and Japan ranks seventh, out of fifty-three nations. In contrast, the Philippines ranks forty-fourth and the U.S. ranks forty-third. Therefore, in the present study, the following hypothesis is proposed:

_Hypothesis 2: Uncertainty avoidance is predicted to moderate the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intentions. In particular the relationship is hypothesized to be stronger in the Philippines and the U.S. than in France and Japan._

Table 1
_Countries, Culture Dimension Rankings, and Unemployment Rates for the Year 1997_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>I/C</th>
<th>UA</th>
<th>Unemployment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>#10/11</td>
<td>#10/15</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>#22/23</td>
<td>#7</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>#31</td>
<td>#44</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>#1</td>
<td>#43</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another dimension of national culture is individualism/collectivism (I/C) and it refers to how people associate themselves with others (Hofstede, 2001). An individualist thinks of him or herself as an individual removed and separate from others. Individualists strive to benefit themselves, and thus are thought to have a calculative involvement in their organizations (Andolsek & Stebe, 2004; Boyacigiller & Adler, 1991; Hofstede, 2001; Lincoln & Kalleberg, 1985; Palich, Hom, & Griffeth, 1995). In contrast, a collectivist thinks of him or herself as a
person belonging to a culture or group of people. Collectivists strive to maintain the best interest of the group so that all can benefit. Thus, collectivists are thought to consider themselves interdependent and morally involved in their organizations (Hofstede, 2001). Countries that rank high in individualism include the United States, France, and Germany, whereas collectivist countries include Japan, the Philippines, and most South American countries.

I/C is one of the most important cultural moderators due to its pervasive influence in guiding individuals’ actions (Kim, Triandis, Kagitscibasi, Choi, & Yoon, 1994). Whether individuals act for their own benefit or the benefit of the group has the potential to affect their decision to stay or leave their jobs. Individualists are more likely to take actions that benefit themselves rather than the group, and thus the decision about whether to stay or leave a job should depend on an evaluation of the personal costs and benefits of quitting. Such an individualistic mentality puts the well-being of the individual before the well-being of the group and could lead individuals to leave their jobs if they are dissatisfied. In comparison, collectivists should be less likely to leave a dissatisfying job because of their higher moral or affective attachment to the organization, and because of the perceived effects of their behavior on the well-being of their workgroup.

The present study examines how the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intentions differs between two individualistic countries, France and the U.S., as compared to two countries that are higher in collectivism, Japan and the Philippines. As can be seen in Table 1, the U.S. ranks first in individualism and France ties for tenth with Sweden in Hofstede’s (2001) comparison. By contrast, Japan ties for twenty-second with Argentina and the Philippines ranks thirty-first. Therefore, in the present study, the following alternative hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 3: Individualism/collectivism is predicted to moderate the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intentions. In particular, the relationship is hypothesized to be stronger in France and the U.S. than in Japan and the Philippines.

It should be noted that Hypothesis 2 and Hypothesis 3 contradict each other with respect to the relative rankings of France and the Philippines. Results supporting one pattern of differences over the other would indicate that the effects of uncertainty avoidance and individualism/collectivism differ. Countries were selected for the study to provide, as much as possible, unambiguous comparisons between countries that are high and low in individualism and high and low in uncertainty avoidance, while at the same time controlling for differences in
unemployment. As can be seen in Table 1, the two countries with lower individualism differed considerably in uncertainty avoidance, and the two countries selected with higher individualism also differed as expected in uncertainty avoidance. Unemployment differences between nations did not correspond to either cultural dimension, in that the two countries with the lowest unemployment were low in individualism and high in uncertainty avoidance (i.e., Japan) and high in individualism and low in uncertainty avoidance (i.e., the U.S.), whereas the opposite pattern was observed for the two countries with the highest levels of unemployment. Although Hofstede (2001) identified several other cultural dimensions besides UA and I/C, there were no theoretical reasons to predict moderating effects of the other dimensions on the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intentions.

**Method**

This study uses a subset of the 1997 Work Orientations II Module of the International Social Survey Program (ISSP). This on-going research project aims to examine issues of interest in the social sciences (Smith, 1992). The questionnaire used in the present research contained 59 items that were administered to samples of respondents who reported that they were working for pay. The purpose of the survey was to assess a variety of job-related constructs, such as work values, job reactions, and organizational attachment.

**Participants and Procedures**

The present sample consists of 2,952 participants working for pay from France, Japan, the Philippines, and the U.S. All individuals completed the questionnaire in their native language. Table 1 shows the ranking of each country on the cultural dimensions of UA, I/C, and each country’s unemployment rate. Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics for each country, including means, standard deviations, intercorrelations, and the number of participants in each country. Survey administration procedures and response rates differed to some degree across the four countries included in this research (Harkness, Langfeldt, & Scholz, 2000). In the Philippines and U.S., the Work Orientations II Module was administered as part of a larger survey project, whereas it was administered by itself to participants in Japan and France. Individual participants were identified from public records in Japan and the Philippines, whereas in France and the U.S., households/adresses were first identified and then individual participants were selected using the Kish or birthday methods within the households. Face to face interviewing methods were used in Japan, the Philippines, and the U.S., whereas
Table 2
Means, Standard Deviations, Alpha Reliabilities, and Intercorrelations of Final Variables in Each Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>France (N=710)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Turnover Intentions</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>-0.35**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Job Satisfaction</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>(0.67)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Japan (N=777)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Turnover Intentions</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>-0.24**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Job Satisfaction</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>(0.51)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Philippines (N=614)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Turnover Intentions</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>-0.08**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Job Satisfaction</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>(0.72)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>United States (N=851)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Turnover Intentions</td>
<td>2.01</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>-0.27**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Job Satisfaction</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>(0.71)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** p < .01.

Note. Coefficient alphas in parenthesis for multi-item scales.

the questionnaire was sent by mail for self-completion and return by individual participants in France. This would account for the low response rate in France.
(10%) compared to the higher response rates in the other countries (Japan = 69%, Philippines = 86%, U.S. = 73%).

Measures

Seven items were used to compose a job satisfaction scale, and a single-item measure was used to measure turnover intentions. We used the same 7-item job satisfaction scale that was used by Hattrup, Mueller, and Aguirre (2008), in their study of the cross-national generalizability of affective commitment. This satisfaction scale included 5 job facet satisfaction items (job security, income, opportunities for advancement, interesting job, and work independence) that respondents rated by indicating whether their jobs possessed each facet, using a 5-point Likert scale with anchors, “Strongly Agree” (1), “Agree” (2), “Neither agree nor disagree” (3), “Disagree” (4), and “Strongly Disagree” (5). Two additional items asked respondents to describe their relationships at work with managers and with coworkers, using a 5-point Likert scale with anchors, “Very good” (1), “Quite good” (2), “Neither good nor bad” (3), “Quite bad” (4), and “Very bad” (5). A “Can’t choose” (8) option was also provided for each of the items. An overall satisfaction score was calculated by averaging the seven facet items. Hattrup et al. (2008) reported internal consistency reliabilities (Cronbach’s alpha) that ranged between .51 and .73 across countries. Table 2 provides the internal consistency reliabilities (Cronbach’s alpha) of the job satisfaction scale in the countries investigated in this study. As can be seen, reliabilities are somewhat low, probably as a result of the small number of items, but are unrelated to the relative magnitude of the zero-order correlations shown in Table 2. To evaluate the psychometric equivalence of the job satisfaction scale across the countries, multiple groups confirmatory factor analyses (MGCFA) was conducted. A hierarchical job satisfaction model was tested that included an overall satisfaction factor at the apex and three lower-order facets representing satisfaction with intrinsic job characteristics (interesting job, work independently) extrinsic job characteristics (security, pay, promotions), and relationships with coworkers and managers. As can be seen in Table 3, this model fit well when applied to all of the groups, as indicated by the high CFI and IFI values (exceeding .90, Vandenberg & Lance, 2000) and low RMSEA value (below .08). To evaluate metric invariance, the loadings of the items on the first-order facets were fixed to equivalence across groups, and the decrease in model fit was examined (Vandenberg & Lance, 2000). As can be seen in Table 3, these restrictions resulted in a decrease of .008 in the CFI, which is considered a non-significant change (Cheung & Rensvold, 2002). Thus, the results support the psychometric equivalence of the job satisfaction scale, and the use of observed scores for evaluating differences across countries.
A one-item scale was used to measure turnover intentions: “All in all, how likely is it that you will try to find a job with another firm or organisation within the next 12 months?” Respondents rated turnover intentions on a 4-point Likert scale, with anchors “Very unlikely” (4), “Unlikely” (3), “Likely” (2), and “Very likely” (1). A “Can’t choose” (8) option was also provided for the turnover intention item. The use of a single item to measure turnover intentions precludes analyses of reliability or cross-cultural measurement equivalence. However, single item measures are considered effective for the purposes of measuring specific behavioral intentions (e.g. Johnsrud & Heck, 1994; Mobley, Griffeth, Hand, & Meglino, 1979) and have been used frequently in studies of turnover intentions (e.g. Conklin & Desselle, 2007; Grover & Crooker, 1995; Haar, 2004; Lounsbury & Hoopes, 1986; Steele & Ovalle, 1984).

Table 3
Results of MGCFA Tests of Measurement Equivalence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>$\chi^2$</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>CFI</th>
<th>IFI</th>
<th>RMSEA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job Satisfaction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equivalent Form</td>
<td>82.273</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>.984</td>
<td>.984</td>
<td>.043</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equivalent Loadings</td>
<td>114.266</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>.976</td>
<td>.976</td>
<td>.047</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analysis

The job satisfaction and turnover intention items used in this study were recoded so that higher values corresponded with higher levels of each construct. Moderated multiple regression analysis, with dummy codes to represent countries, was used to test the study hypotheses. In the first step of these analyses, job satisfaction was entered as a predictor of turnover intentions to evaluate the overall relationship between the constructs in the combined samples. In a second step, dummy codes were entered to capture differences in turnover intentions across the four countries, and the last step entered the products of job satisfaction and the dummy codes to evaluate whether the relationships between satisfaction and turnover intentions varied across the four countries. Follow-up tests were performed to compare regression slopes between each pair of countries in the study. This was done to examine the specific pattern of differences across countries in the slopes relating turnover intentions to job satisfaction.
Results

As can be seen in Table 2, correlations between job satisfaction and turnover intentions were negative and statistically significant in each country, supporting Hypothesis 1. The correlation is small but statistically significant owing to the large sample size. Table 4 provides the results of the moderated multiple regression analysis that tested for variation in the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intentions across countries. As can be seen in the table, the block of variables that represented the interaction between job satisfaction and country was statistically significant. This indicates that the slope relating turnover intentions to job satisfaction varied significantly across countries, and thus implies a need for follow-up tests (reported below) to evaluate the degree of support for Hypothesis 2 and Hypothesis 3. Overall, job satisfaction accounted for 2% of the variance in turnover intentions, and the interaction between job satisfaction and turnover intentions accounted for an additional 1% of the variance. Although little of the variance in turnover intentions was related to satisfaction and to the interaction between satisfaction and country, the results are statistically significant owing to the large sample sizes.

Table 4
Hierarchical Moderated Multiple Regression Analysis Variables for Turnover Intention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Step 1</th>
<th>Step 2</th>
<th>Step 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job Satisfaction</td>
<td>-0.15</td>
<td>-0.24</td>
<td>-0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dummy Code 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dummy Code 2</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td>0.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dummy Code 3</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.47</td>
<td>-0.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dummy Code 1 x Job Satisfaction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dummy Code 2 x Job Satisfaction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dummy Code 3 x Job Satisfaction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R^2</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.02**</td>
<td>0.18**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in R^2</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.02**</td>
<td>0.16**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** p < .01

Note. Dummy Code 1, Dummy Code 2, and Dummy Code 3 are dummy-coded vectors used to capture differences between the four countries, and Dummy Code 1 x Job Satisfaction, Dummy Code 2 x Job Satisfaction, and Dummy Code 3 x Job Satisfaction are the terms that carry the interaction between country and job satisfaction.
Table 5 shows the within country bivariate regression results that relate turnover intentions to job satisfaction. As can be seen in this table, the slope relating satisfaction and turnover intentions was lower in France and the U.S. compared to Japan and the Philippines. Post-hoc comparisons revealed significant slope differences between France and the U.S., as compared to Japan and the Philippines. Slopes did not differ significantly between France and the U.S., or between Japan and the Philippines. Thus, consistent with Hypothesis 3, job satisfaction showed a stronger relationship with turnover intentions in countries that are higher in individualism. Hypothesis 2, which predicted a stronger relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intentions in countries that are lower in uncertainty avoidance, was not supported by the data.

Table 5
Within country regression analysis for job satisfaction on turnover intentions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>Intercept (a)</th>
<th>Slope (b)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>0.12**</td>
<td>4.19</td>
<td>-0.58a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>0.06**</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>-0.27b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>0.01**</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>-0.14b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>0.07**</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>-0.50a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** p < .01

Note. Values in the column labeled “slope” that do not share common superscripts are significantly different at p < .01.

As noted above, countries were selected for the study to control as much as possible for differences in I/C, UA, and unemployment when testing for the effects of a given cultural variable, namely UA or I/C. Table 1 shows that differences exhibited a pattern that would lead to reasonably unambiguous comparisons between countries that differed in I/C or UA. Correlations calculated at the country level of analysis showed that UA and I/C were reasonably independent (r = -.07, p = .926), and unemployment was unrelated to both I/C (r = -.01, p = .991) and UA (r = .06, p = .943). Analysis with hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) was also performed to evaluate whether controlling for country
level differences in unemployment reduced variance in the level 1 (within-country) slopes relating turnover intentions to job satisfaction. Within country slopes are shown in Table 5, and have a standard deviation across countries of .19 when estimated by HLM ($\chi^2 (3) = 32.54, p < .01$). The standard deviation becomes .23 when unemployment is controlled in the level 2 model for the level 1 slopes, suggesting that differences in unemployment do not decrease the variance across countries in the slopes shown in Table 5. Another way to consider this is to note that if unemployment differences explained variance in the level 1 slopes, then the slopes should be lowest in the countries with highest unemployment, namely France and the Philippines, and higher in countries with lower unemployment, namely Japan and the U.S.. In fact, France has the highest slope and Japan has the second lowest slope. Thus, the results indicate that differences in the relationship between turnover intentions and job satisfaction between countries that differ in individualism are not appreciably confounded by differences in unemployment between the countries.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the degree to which the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intentions generalizes across countries, and whether country-level differences in uncertainty avoidance and individualism moderated the relationship. Turnover intentions is the most immediate precursor to quitting, and so an understanding of the causes of turnover intentions is of obvious importance. In the present investigation, countries that vary in UA and I/C were compared to assess the effects of these cultural dimensions on the relationship between job attitudes and job withdrawal. Thus, the present study was designed to contribute to a growing body of knowledge of the role of national culture as a potential moderator of behavioral phenomena in organizations.

As predicted by Hypotheses 1, job satisfaction was significantly correlated with turnover intentions in all four countries sampled in this research. Overall, the correlation was strongest in France, followed by the United States, Japan, and the Philippines, respectively. Thus, as expected turnover intentions relate to job satisfaction in various countries, and should be expected to precede actual turnover decisions. However, it is also important to note that at least in the Philippines, the correlation between satisfaction and turnover intentions was small, accounting for less than one percent of the variance in turnover intentions. Overall, when data from all of the countries were combined, only 2% of the variance in turnover intentions was predictable from individual job satisfaction. Although not hypothesized, results presented in Table 2 show that mean turnover
intentions were lowest in Japan and highest in France, with the U.S. and the Philippines falling between these extremes. This result is somewhat consistent with previous speculations that commitment and attachment to the organization should be higher among collectivists, owing to their focus on the well-being of the groups to which they belong (Besser, 1993; Ouchi, 1981). On the other hand, empirical research in fact shows that commitment to the organization is unrelated to country-level differences in I/C (Gelade, Dobson, & Gilbert, 2006), implying that mean differences in turnover intentions in the present study cannot be unambiguously attributed to differences between the countries in organizational commitment. Future research is needed to test theoretical models that include country as a direct cause of cross-national differences in organizational attachment and withdrawal behaviors, including intentions to turnover.

Hypotheses 2 and 3 predicted that country would moderate the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intentions, with the two hypotheses proposing competing patterns of differences in this relationship. A stronger relationship between satisfaction and turnover intentions in the Philippines and the U.S. compared to France and Japan would support the prediction that satisfaction relates more strongly to turnover intentions in countries that are lower in uncertainty avoidance (i.e., Hypothesis 2). In contrast, stronger relationships between satisfaction and turnover intentions in France and the U.S. as compared to Japan and the Philippines would support the hypothesis that satisfaction is more strongly related to turnover intentions in countries that are higher in individualism (i.e., Hypothesis 3). As predicted, the interaction between country and satisfaction was statistically significant, implying differences in the relationships across countries, requiring further analysis to determine whether Hypothesis 2 or Hypothesis 3 was supported by the data.

Follow-up tests on the within-country slopes revealed support for Hypothesis 3. Specifically, the association between satisfaction and turnover intentions was strongest in the two countries that were chosen to represent high levels of individualism (France and the U.S.), as compared to the countries that are lower in individualism (Japan and the Philippines). Thus, as predicted by Hypothesis 3, the decision of an individual incumbent to quit his or her job is more strongly associated with the individual’s job satisfaction in cultures that are higher in individualism. As noted above, individualists are presumed to form work commitments for instrumental reasons, basing their decisions to commit to the organization and remain a member on a calculation of the individual benefits and costs associated with organizational membership (Andolsek & Stebe, 2004; Boyacigiller & Adler, 1991; Hofstede, 2001; Lincoln & Kalleberg, 1985; Palich et al., 1995). Collectivists, in contrast, are presumed to form commitments as a result of a sense of identification with the groups to which one belongs. Although these
ideas have been expressed by a number of authors (e.g. Andolsek & Stebe, 2004; Boyacigiller & Adler, 1991; Hofstede, 2001; Lincoln & Kalleberg, 1985; Palich et al., 1995), few studies have empirically investigated whether job satisfaction relates equivalently to organizational attachment or withdrawal across national boundaries. The results of the present study support the prediction that the decisions of individualists to turnover are more strongly dependent on individual job satisfaction than are the decisions of collectivists.

From a practical point of view, the present results might imply that efforts to increase individual level job satisfaction in the organization may have a greater effect on reducing turnover intentions in cultures that are higher in individualism and lower in collectivism. Although satisfaction was significantly related to turnover intentions in each of the countries included in the present research, the association was significantly stronger in countries that are higher in individualism than those that are lower in individualism. Given the high costs associated with turnover in most organizations, identifying approaches to reduce turnover intentions are of obvious practical relevance. The present findings suggest that improvements in employee job satisfaction result in lower turnover intentions, although the effects are stronger in countries that are higher in individualism. Thus, especially in cultures that are higher in individualism, management might consider the variety of theoretical models and approaches that have been described in the literature for improving employee job satisfaction (see Cranny, Smith, & Stone, 1992; Hulin & Judge, 2003; Spector, 1997, for reviews). In collectivist cultures, by contrast, turnover intentions are less strongly associated with job satisfaction. Moreover, collectivists are thought to form strong interpersonal bonds and collective identity with others who are considered part of the same in-group, but weaker bonds with those who are not considered members of the in-group (e.g. Triandis, 1989). Thus, in cultural contexts characterized by high collectivism, turnover intentions may be reduced, not necessarily by increasing job satisfaction per se, but by identifying methods of encouraging organizational commitment and organizational identification among employees. Teambuilding, trust building, and methods of helping employees to feel connected with the organization and their coworkers may be especially effective for reducing turnover intentions in collectivist cultures. Clearly, more research is needed to empirically identify the strategies and techniques that reduce turnover intentions in different cultural contexts. Indeed, we urge researchers to follow-up on the present findings to explore the boundary conditions of the effects observed in this research, and to investigate other possible mediators and moderators of the effects of job satisfaction on organizational withdrawal.

As in all empirical research, a number of limitations of the present research need to be considered. First, like previous research in the area, cultural
differences were operationalized using national boundaries rather than with direct measures. This poses somewhat of a problem for the interpretation of the results, given that culture varies both within and between national boundaries. Nevertheless, there are good reasons to assume that important differences exist between nations in a variety of cultural dimensions and patterns (e.g., Hofstede & Peterson, 2000), and the use of country boundaries to operationalize culture is commonplace in the literature (Peterson & Smith, 1997). Further, the present research was designed to address the practical question of whether variation exists in the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational withdrawal across countries, which is relevant to the management of behavior in multinational firms.

Of course, the age of the data, collected in 1997, may limit generalizability to some degree, given rapid changes in globalization. We also did not have information about the job levels of the respondents, and thus, had no way to investigate whether the present results vary across different jobs or occupations. Likewise, additional research is needed to build upon and extend the present findings.

A second limitation was the use of a single item measure of turnover intentions. Single item measures preclude analyses of reliability and psychometric equivalence across countries. However, as noted above, the use of single-item measures of turnover intentions is fairly commonplace in the literature (e.g., Steele & Ovalle, 1984). As Miller, Katerberg, and Hulin (1979) and Steel and Ovalle (1984) noted, behavioral intentions represent an objective and concrete cognition (i.e., I plan to quit, or I don’t plan to quit), and are much less elusive than other psychological constructs, such as personality traits or dispositions. A review of the turnover literature by Mobley et al. (1979) revealed that behavioral intentions to leave are consistently correlated with turnover behavior across studies that used various measures of the turnover intentions construct. Several authors (e.g., Griffeth, Hom, & Gaertner, 2000; Miller et. al., 1979; Steele & Ovalle, 1984) have reported that turnover intentions are the strongest and most immediate predictor of actual turnover decisions, with a weighted average corrected correlation of .38 to .50 between behavioral intentions and employee turnover (Griffeth et al., 2000; Steele & Ovalle, 1984). Correlations were observed between job satisfaction and turnover intentions in the present research, exceeding -.24 in three of the four countries, supporting the construct validity of both of the measures used in this research. Thus, although less than ideal, the use of a single item measure of turnover intentions is supported by previous research and is unlikely to have seriously undermined the generalizability of the present findings. Finally, it should be noted that several of the relationships observed in the present research were of small magnitude, but were statistically significant owing to the large sample sizes. Between 1% and 12% of the variance in turnover intentions
was related to job satisfaction in the different countries investigated, and only 1% of the variance in turnover intentions was related to the interaction between job satisfaction and country. Although the associations are modest, they likely underestimate the population relationships because of lower reliabilities, lack of control for job levels and organizations, and limitations resulting from the large-scale survey methodology that was employed.

In conclusion, the results of this study revealed that the cultural dimension of individualism/collectivism appears to be an important moderator of the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intentions. Although many of the associations were weak, job satisfaction was significantly related to turnover intentions in each of the countries that was investigated. Within country regressions supported the prediction that job dissatisfaction has a stronger relationship with higher turnover intentions in countries that are higher in individualism. Results did not support the prediction that country-level differences in uncertainty avoidance moderate the relationship between satisfaction and turnover intentions, implying that I/C is the more relevant cultural dimension to consider when predicting whether higher levels of job satisfaction will translate into lower intentions to quit. It is hoped that these findings will stimulate further research on the role of culture as a moderator of the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational withdrawal.

References


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