The Relationship between Career Growth and Turnover Intention of New Employed University Graduates

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Abstract. In order to find out the relationship between career growth and turnover intention, 359 new employed university graduates were surveyed. The result shows that career growth can predict new employed university graduates' turnover intention after controlling demographic variables, that is, expected career growth will make new employed university graduates depress their turnover intention. In accordance with the conclusions, suggestions are put forward for managers to retain new employed university graduates.

Introduction

In recent years, new employed university graduates remain high demission rate, which has prompted common concern for this group by various sectors of the community. According to Employment Report of Chinese Graduate released by MyCOS Institute in recent years shows that Chinese college students continued high demission rate within three graduate years. Specifically, Employment Report of Chinese Graduate 2014 showed that 70% Chinese college students graduate within three years after graduating had quit, within six months after graduating, 34% had quit and 98% of them for voluntary turnover [1]. What has caused such a large number of new employed university graduates turnover? March and Simon , who were early concern of related factors of career development effect on employee turnover behavior, considering that if a person in the organization successfully obtained their knowledge or competency, and has a bright future, his or her turnover intention will be significantly reduced [2]. Conversely, when a person in the organization has not been ideal in career development or career development has lagged behind expectations, he will have feelings of deprivation [3], which will deepen its dissatisfaction with the organization, inducing their turnover intention and even turnover finally. Which means that not ideal for career development will often be an important driving factor in employee turnover.

Zhang Mian and Zhang De (2007) based on empirical research for technicians confirm that the career growth opportunities can contribute significantly to the negative effects of employee turnover intention [4]. Career Growth (CG) in this study reflects the individual flow speed to their working sequence that is more valuable [5]. In most cases, the better one's career growth, the more career growth opportunities he will have and the higher competence he will get. New employed university graduates are in the career of the early stages of employment, they have higher human capital cause of higher education, concerning about their own career growth and opportunities for learning and growth in an organization. Thus, the turnover of which most likely associated with career growth. In this study, career growth is proposed as an explaining variable for individual turnover intention (TI). By examining the potential effect of new employed university graduates on the relationship between CG and TI. The findings of this study will have both theoretical and practical implications for employers to keep effectively the new employed university graduates.

Method

Sample

In this study, the 'new employed university graduates' refers to 'graduating from college for less than five years, and have steady employment in the city [6]'. Thanks for the alumni resources of 3 universities in Beijing, junior college graduates, undergraduates and postgraduates who have been graduated less than 5 years, issuing the paper and the electronic version of the questionnaire to have a survey. Among 420 questionnaires distributed, a total of 388 responses were returned and 359 responses were effective. The response rate was 92.5%. Among the respondents, males account for 46.8%, females account for 53.2%, average age is 25.34 (SD=1.885), specialty account for 12%, bachelor account for 73.5%, graduate account for 14.5%, average years of graduating 2.65 (SD=1.285), general staff account for 69.1%, assistant manager or junior professional technicians account for 25.1%, middle management or professional and technical personnel account for 5.8%. No senior management or senior professional and technical personnel.

Measures

A fifteen-item scale developed by Weng Qingxiong and Xi Youmin (2011) was used to measure career growth, including 4 dimensional structure model of career goal progress (CGP), career capacity development (CCD), promotion speed (PS), remuneration growth (RG). Sample item is 'the current work prompted me to keep abreast of new job-related skills [7]'. Using 5-points-Likert Scale, response options ranged from 1 (strong disagree) to 5 (strong agree), which means that individual career growth become better. This scale has good construct validity and high reliability as it is used more than once in the domestic researches. The scale's alpha reliability in this study is 0.857, the four dimensions of alpha reliability is 0.723, 0.752, 0.730, 0.730.

A four-item scale developed by Farh (1998), used to measure TI, sample item is 'I will probably look for a new job within the next year [8]'. One of them is reverse score, others are positive score. Using 5 point Likert rating scale, response options ranged from 1 (strong disagree) to 5 (strong agree). The score of turnover intentions is the average of 4 items' sum, the higher the scores are, more strongly the TI is. The scale's alpha reliability in this study is 0.873, indicating its high reliability. By principal component analyzing for four items, only getting one principal component, explanatory power is 72.92%.

During the survey, the demographic data, such as gender, age, education background, graduation year and post level were also obtained, which will be used as control variables to analyze their influence on CG and TI.

Methods of Data Processing

SPSS20.0 was used to analyze the data. First of all, reliability analysis and exploratory factor analysis examine the reliability and validity of questionnaire. Then through descriptive statistical analysis and correlation analysis examines the level of main variables and correlation coefficient. Finally, by using hierarchical regression analysis, exploring the relationship between CG and TI.

Results

Table 1 presents the results of Descriptive Statistics Analysis of the main variable. There are more differences among four dimension of new employed university graduates' CG. The scores of CGP and CCD are in the medium level. And CCD is the highest score (3.919), closing to good level (4). CGP ranked second (3.531). PS and RG are under a medium level (3) and both scored similar (2.708, 2.669). The mean of new employed university graduates' TI (2.677) less than medium level (3).

In addition, it can be seen from the data in table 1, new employed university graduates in four dimensions of CG are significantly negatively correlated with TI, the correlation coefficients are significant (p= .01).

Table 1. Descriptive statistical analyses for the main variables

variables	average	standard	1	2	3	4	5
CGP	3.531	0.611	(0.723)				
CCD	3.919	0.534	0.568**	(0.752)			
PS	2.708	0.699	0.371**	0.279**	(0.730)		
RG	2.669	0.726	0.370**	0.319**	0.752**	(0.730)	
TI	2.677	0.861	-0.488**	-0.417**	-0.220**	-0.146**	(0.873)

All the data in the brackets is corresponding to the alpha reliability coefficient of variable measure; **$p<0.01$; *$p<0.05$.

Hierarchical regression analysis was used to investigate whether the CG will affect TI of new employed university graduates after controlling demographic variables. First, the demographic variables including gender, age, education degree, graduation years and post level as the first block in regression equation. Then, the career growth, including four dimensions, as the second block in the regression equations.

Table 2. Hierarchical regression analysis of career growth and turnover intentions

variables	TI（β）	
	Model 1	Model 2
Step 1: demographic variables		
gender	-0.012	-0.063
age	-0.024	-0.092
education degree	-0.091*	-0.058
graduation years	-0.094*	-0.074
position level	0.001	0.095
Step 2: individual variables		
CGP		-0.523***
CCD		-0.341***
PS		-0.209*
RG		0.219**
F	2.699*	18.812***
R²	0.030	0.301
ΔR²	0.030*	0.271***

***$p<0.001$; **$p<0.01$; *$p<0.05$.

The results can be seen from table 2, in the demographic variables, only the degree and graduation years are able to predict new employed university graduates' TI. After controlling for demographic variables, the four dimensions of CG negative forecasts has made a new contribution to TI, R² of model 2 regression equation is 0.301, and model 1' is 0.03, that is ΔR² increased 27.1%. Results of the regression analysis showed that better CG will lead to new employed university graduates reduced their TI.

Discussion

On the whole, the CG condition of new employed university graduates is good according to the mean of the four-dimension of CG, but they are much different. As we all know, it is not easily achieved in the short term for promotion and increasing remuneration. What's more, as it is well known that short length of employment may lead to lower scores of promotion rate and pay growth. From the mean of new employed university graduates' TI, it can be found that they are not as volatile as the rumored. In addition, the four dimensions of new employed university graduates' CG are

significantly negatively correlated with TI. It means that the better new employed university graduates' CG they get, the lower TI they will have. The new employed university graduates have accumulated more human capital by higher education, so when they entered the workplace, they will be full of expectation for their future career and employer training and eager to get CG. So it will be useful to keep them by providing the opportunities of CG.

Among demographic variables, only the degree and graduation years are able to predict TI of new employed university graduates. The study found that the higher education degree they have, the lower TI they get. On the one hand, higher education degree graduates have more specific career orientation and more clearly career goals. On the other hand, people are more available to obtain ideal CG due to high levels of human capital. It can also be found from the study that the longer time they work, the lower TI they get. The reason is organization committed have been raised by increasing input into the organization, and they have more years of working and accumulated experience, looking forward to achieving the career goals rather than leaving in the key period.

This study come to the conclusion confirmed the CG negatively impact TI after controlling the demographic variables of this study. TI of new employed university graduates will be lower if organization offers faster CG and more opportunities. First of all, CGP can significantly negative forecast TI of new employed university graduates, which suggesting that if they can access easily to their career goal in the organization, their TI will be greatly reduced. Secondly, CCP significantly and negatively forecast TI of new employed university graduates. It attaches great importance to promotion of their professional ability in order to achieve sustainable employability. So if an organization is unable to provide more opportunities for promoting the capacity, they are more likely to choose to leave. Finally, PS and RG negatively predict TI of new employed university graduates. Because in an organization, if the PS and RG is slow, it is easy to make new employed university graduates feel frustrated or even disappointed due to CG lags expectations, which would become an important factor in driving its turnover.

Conclusions and Implications

There are some main conclusions from this study have be drawn. The education, graduation years of demographic variables negatively predicted TI of new employed university graduates. In the case of control of demographic variables, CG negatively predicted TI of new employed university graduates. This study enlightened the employers to take two measures following to effectively retain new employed university graduates.

On the one hand, two groups of new employed university graduates with high TI should be focused on, including graduates with low education and short years after graduation, which characteristic should be payed close attention. In order to increase their organization identity and reduced its TI, managers should communicate with them usually and exchange views and idea, obtain their personnel of psychological and needs, then take corresponding measures to solute problems timely.

On the other hand, in order to promote new employed university graduates' CG by taking appropriate measures. First, using psychological testing, career consulting and guidance, and so on, to help new employed university graduates identify their careers orientation, plan career, strengthen the management of career goals and solve the problems they encounter in their career development. Second, facing new employed university graduates in high demand for self-improvement, the managers should strengthen vocational training, including the design and implementation of induction training and enterprise training by external experts. Besides, the managers should provide out learning opportunity for new employed university graduates and improve the professional ability of them for employment. Third, the managers need to break through the limit of age, work experience and other factors to provide promotion opportunities and job development for new employed university graduates who have strong ability and good performance. It is also important to set out a clear path for career advancement to accelerate the pace of promotion for them. Finally, the managers should improve the compensation system by paying for competence and performance. For some of good performance person, it is not only to increase their base pay, but also reward their additional

work done by pay-for-performance timely. All of these measures will promote CG of new employed university graduates, it will also greatly increases their sense of accomplishment and gratitude to the organization, which play a role in reducing TI at the same time.

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