

The role of the seven dimensions of job satisfaction in salesperson's attitudes and behaviors

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Abstract:

To date, the majority of studies on job satisfaction use either a global measure or the JDI measure. To extend current research, this study uses the seven dimensions of job satisfaction as described by Churchill et al. [Churchill, G.A., Ford, N.M., Walker, O.C. Measuring the job satisfaction of industrial salesmen. *J Mark Res* 1974; 11 (3): 254-260.] to explore the relationship between job satisfaction, emotional exhaustion, organizational commitment and propensity to leave. Findings suggest that: 1) emotional exhaustion only relates to certain dimensions of job satisfaction and 2) job satisfaction dimensions related to organizational commitment and propensity to leave are not necessarily the same. Overall, this research provides an argument for the use of the seven dimension job satisfaction scale, as opposed to global measures or the JDI measure.

Keywords: job satisfaction | emotional exhaustion | commitment | turnover

Article:

1. Introduction

Salesperson job satisfaction is a widely researched construct in sales force literature (e.g. Maxwell et al., 2005, Park and Deitz, 2006). Job satisfaction is defined as, "all characteristics of the job itself and the work environment which industrial salesmen find rewarding, fulfilling and satisfying; or frustrating and unsatisfying" (Churchill et al., 1974). Job satisfaction has been examined as an antecedent to intention to leave (Mulki et al., 2006) and organizational commitment (Brashear et al., 2003). Job satisfaction has also been predicted by emotional exhaustion (Jaramillo et al., 2006). While job satisfaction is examined as both an antecedent and outcome, the majority of academic research examines job satisfaction as a global, single-faceted construct.

According to Churchill et al. (1974), the use of a global measure of job satisfaction fails to provide an accurate and full assessment of satisfaction and provides little information that management requires concerning specific aspects of the work environment that salespeople find satisfying. In addition, studies that have examined job satisfaction with multi-dimensional scales,

have reported differential effects on employees' job-related attitudes and behaviors (e.g. Johnston et al., 1987, Russ and McNeilly, 1995, Boles et al., 2003).

With the inherent limitations of global measures of job satisfaction, several multi-dimensional salesperson job satisfaction scales were created to allow researchers to obtain a more accurate and full assessment of the construct. For example, Wood et al. (1986) developed a four dimension, 14 item Likert-type scale (satisfaction with: information, variety, closure and pay). Churchill et al. (1974) developed a seven dimension, 95 item Likert-type scale referred to as INDSALES (satisfaction with: overall job, co-workers, supervision, company policy and support, pay, promotion and advancement and customers). Smith et al. (1969) developed a five dimension, 72 item yes/no scale referred to as JDI (satisfaction with: type of work, the pay, opportunities for promotion, the supervision and the coworkers on the job).

Organizations need to understand factors affecting and affected by different dimensions of job satisfaction. Specially, how does emotional exhaustion impact each of the dimensions of job satisfaction and what are the differential effects of dimensions of job satisfaction on critical organizational outcomes like commitment and turnover. The formal objectives of this study are to provide further clarification of the inter-relationships between emotional exhaustion, dimensions of job satisfaction, organizational commitment and propensity to leave. To accomplish these objectives, using a multi-dimension job satisfaction scale is imperative. Of the earlier mentioned multi-dimensional scales, the INDSALES scale is used because it captures more dimensions than the other scales and was designed specifically for use in a sales setting.

2. Literature review

2.1. Emotional exhaustion

The interpersonal nature of a salesperson's job gives rise to different kinds job related stresses. Burnout is one such job related stress that research has found that significantly impacts various job related outcomes (Boles et al., 1997, Singh et al., 1994). Burnout is a psychological syndrome or condition that manifests in reactions to chronic stress experienced by people who provide services (Maslach and Jackson, 1981). Burnout is composed of three dimensions (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and personal accomplishment). According to Singh et al. (1994), emotional exhaustion reflects feelings of depleted energy and being drained of sensation which is what people often associate with being "burned-out". Personal accomplishment deals with inefficacy, reduced motivation and low self-esteem. Depersonalization, deals with the tendency to deindividuate and dehumanize others.

In their recent study Lewin and Sager (2007) suggest that, because of the unique characteristics of the sales profession the core construct, emotional exhaustion, is predicted by both depersonalization and diminished personal accomplishments. In their study, they examined their proposed model against competing models. Findings suggest that both depersonalization and diminished personal accomplishments predicted emotional exhaustion.

Within sales research, emotional exhaustion is the most commonly examined dimension of burnout. For example, Boles et al. (1997), Babakus et al. (1999) and Jaramillo et al. (2006) have

all examined the relationship between emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction. Boles et al. (1997) failed to find a significant relationship between these two constructs. However, Babakus et al. (1999) found a significant and negative relationship between emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction in an international service organization. These results were reinforced by Jaramillo et al. (2006) in their examination of Ecuadorian financial institutions. While some research has linked emotional exhaustion to overall job satisfaction, little is known about how emotional exhaustion relates to the different dimensions of job satisfaction. Thus, we hypothesize (See Fig. 1):

H1. Emotional exhaustion is negatively related to salesperson's satisfaction with (A) supervision, (B) overall job, (C) company policy and support, (D) promotion and advancement, (E) pay, (F) co-workers and (G) customers.

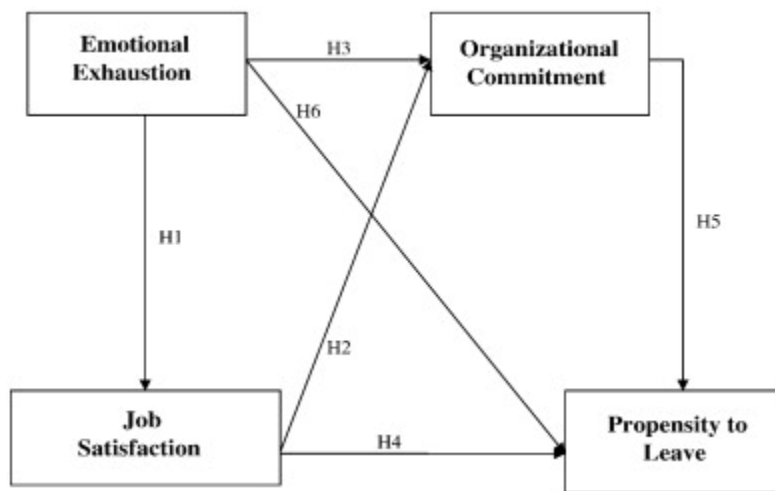


Fig. 1. The model.

2.2. Antecedents of organizational commitment

Organizational commitment is focused at the individual level and emphasizes the degree that an employee identifies with, and is involved in, an organization (Porter et al., 1974). Within the literature, effects of both satisfaction (Babakus et al., 1996) and emotional exhaustion (Babakus et al., 1999) have been examined in relation to organizational commitment.

Research examining multi-faceted job satisfaction and organizational commitment also has been conducted (e.g. Igbaria and Guimaraes, 1993, Schwepker, 2001). Igbaria and Guimaraes's (1993) findings suggest that global job satisfaction was a significant predictor of organizational commitment, but only satisfaction with promotion was a significant predictor of organizational commitment when using the JDI scale. Further, Schwepker (2001) looked at the seven dimensions of satisfaction in relation to organizational commitment, but did not provide a detailed look at which dimensions individually impact organizational commitment. In general, research indicates that overall job satisfaction is a significant predictor of organizational commitment and that individual dimensions of job satisfaction influence organizational commitment to different degrees. To fully assess which dimensions of job satisfaction affect organizational commitment, all seven will be linked to organizational commitment.

H2. Salesperson's satisfaction with (A) supervision, (B) overall job, (C) company policy and support, (D) promotion and advancement, (E) pay, (F) co-workers and (G) customers are positively related to a salesperson's organizational commitment.

Researchers have addressed the linkage between emotional exhaustion and organizational commitment in both non-sales setting (Leiter and Maslach, 1988, Cropanzano et al., 2003, Karatepe and Tekinkus, 2006) and sales setting (Babakus et al., 1999). Among hospital workers, Leiter and Maslach, (1988) and Cropanzano et al. (2003) found a linkage between emotional exhaustion and organizational commitment. In a Turkish bank setting, Karatepe and Tekinkus (2006) failed to find a significant relation between emotional exhaustion and organizational commitment. In a sales setting, Babakus et al. (1999) found a significant and negative relationship between emotional exhaustion and organizational commitment. Thus, we hypothesize:

H3. Emotional exhaustion is negatively related to a salesperson's organizational commitment.

2.3. Antecedents of propensity to leave

Research has linked job satisfaction to a salesperson's turnover intentions (Netemeyer et al., 1990, Ladik et al., 2002). In studies using a global measure of job satisfaction, a direct negative relationship is found with propensity to leave (e.g. Boles et al., 1997, Jaramillo et al., 2006). Jaramillo et al. (2006), found a significant relationship between job satisfaction and propensity to leave even after accounting for organizational commitment and emotional exhaustion. Overall, some research suggests that global job satisfaction is a predictor of propensity to leave when considering organizational commitment and emotional exhaustion, although other research suggests an indirect link (Brown and Peterson, 1993).

While the linkage between global job satisfaction and propensity to leave is widely researched, few studies have used multiple dimensions of job satisfaction. Using the JDI scale, Futrell and Parasuraman (1984) found that satisfaction with promotion, work and supervision were significantly related to propensity to leave, while Johnston et al. (1988), using the JDI scale, found only satisfaction with work as a significant predictor of propensity leave. Ladik et al. (2002), using the JDI scale, found significant differences in all dimensions of job satisfaction in relation to propensity to leave within different groups of salespeople.

Parasuraman and Futrell (1983) used the INDSALES scale to examine job satisfaction with regard to propensity to leave, but failed to account for the impact of partial correlations. Their results indicate all seven dimensions were significantly related to propensity to leave. Based on previous findings and the lack of existing research on all seven dimensions of job satisfaction addressed in the INDSALES scale, all of the job satisfaction dimensions are predicted to be significantly related to propensity to leave.

H4. Salesperson's satisfaction with (A) supervision, (B) overall job, (C) company policy and support, (D) promotion and advancement, (E) pay, (F) co-workers and (G) customers are negatively related to a salesperson's propensity to leave.

Organizational commitment has been linked with lower levels of salesperson's propensity to leave (e.g. Naumann et al., 2000, Schwepker, 2001). Babakus et al. (1999) found that both organizational commitment and job satisfaction were significantly linked with intention to leave. In a study looking at organizational commitment, job satisfaction and job involvement of expatriate salespeople, Naumann et al. (2000) found that organizational commitment and job satisfaction were linked with propensity to leave. Schwepker (2001) found that turnover intention was significantly predicted by organizational commitment. Further, Jaramillo et al. (2006) found that emotional exhaustion was significantly linked to intentions to quit after accounting for the impact of job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Based on this previous research, the following hypothesis is offered:

H5. Organizational commitment is negatively related to a salesperson's propensity to leave.

When addressing the relationship between emotional exhaustion and intentions to leave, mixed results were found. Babakus et al. (1999) found that emotional exhaustion was directly related to organizational commitment, though that study did not test a linkage between emotional exhaustion and intentions to leave. On the other hand, Boles et al. (1997) found that emotional exhaustion was directly linked to propensity to leave. However, their study does not include organizational commitment. While the Jaramillo et al. (2006) study indicates that emotional exhaustion is directly and significantly related to intentions to quit, the study fails to test a linkage between emotional exhaustion and organizational commitment. Given the mixed findings of previous research with regard to direct paths between emotional exhaustion and propensity to leave, the following hypothesis will be tested:

H6. Emotional exhaustion is positively related to a salesperson's propensity to leave.

3. Methodology

3.1. Sample

A census of a regional promotions firm's sales force was used to collect the data. A total of 152 surveys were distributed to salespeople employed by the firm which endorsed the study. Respondents returned the completed survey questionnaires to the authors in postage-paid envelopes. Of the returned surveys, a usable sample of 132 responses was obtained after listwise deletion for an effective response rate of 87%. Of the respondents, 69% were male. The average respondent is approximately 32 years of age and has worked as an account executive in the firm for approximately 2 years.

3.2. Measures

Table 1 provides correlations, reliabilities, means and standard deviations. The seven dimensions of job satisfaction were measured using a reduced version of the INDSALES scale (Comer et al., 1989, Lagace et al., 1993). Twenty items from this scale were used in the study (see Appendix A). Propensity to leave was assessed using three 7-point items, anchored with terrible to excellent, that asked the respondents to indicate their chances of quitting this job in the next 3, 6 and 12 months. Similar items have been used by Johnston et al. (1988) and Ladik et al. (2002). Emotional exhaustion was assessed using 4 items from Kreitner and Kinicki (1992). Organizational commitment had three 7-point items (Porter et al., 1974, Mowday et al., 1979).

Table 1. Correlations, reliabilities, means, and standard deviations.

Variables	X1	X2	X3	X4	X5	X6	X7	X8	X9	X10	Mean	S.D.
Satisfaction with supervision	.79										4.97	1.22
Satisfaction with overall job	.262*	.86									5.62	.93
Satisfaction with policies and support	.368*	.408*	r = .54 ¹								4.95	1.18
Satisfaction with promotion and advancement	.361*	.372*	.438*	.79							4.59	1.35
Satisfaction with pay	.181*	.216*	.315*	.297*	.71						4.35	1.07
Satisfaction with co-workers	.442*	.490*	.383*	.185*	.150*	.70					5.38	.91
Satisfaction with customers	.205*	.113	.082	-.002	-.037	.155	r = .55 ¹				4.74	.94
Emotional exhaustion	-.280*	-.295*	-.344*	-.303*	-.180*	-.145	-.116	.90			2.67	1.42
Organizational commitment	.399*	.511*	.535*	.429*	.341*	.248*	.003	-.419*	.75		5.01	1.21
Propensity to leave	-.284*	-.487*	-.363*	-.464*	-.212*	-.173*	-.021	.342*	-.586*	.95	2.16	1.48

*Significant correlation.

Reliabilities are on the diagonal.

¹=Correlations are reported for two item indicators.

3.3. Method

First, a confirmatory factor analysis was conducted using LISREL 8.51. Items that fit poorly on their constructs were removed from the analysis. The resulting measurement model contained 30 items. The overall model suggested good fit according to the standards set forth by Hu and Bentler (1999) and Hair et al. (2006) (chi-square of 504 with 360 degrees of freedom; SRMR = .062; RMSEA = .046; CFI = .97). All items had significant loadings and demonstrated convergent and discriminant validity. Average variance extracted from each construct ranged between .50 and .87.

Next, regression was used to test the hypothesized relationships. Regression was selected over structural modeling because of: 1) the sample size of 132, 2) the complexity of the model and 3) the lack of existing literature-based support for paths to and from the individual dimensions of job satisfaction. In the first step of the regression analysis, emotional exhaustion was linked to each dimension of job satisfaction. Then, multiple regression was employed to test the impact of emotional exhaustion and the seven dimensions of job satisfaction on organizational commitment. The last step was to link organizational commitment, emotional exhaustion and the seven dimensions of job satisfaction to propensity to leave.

4. Results

The results of the first part of the regression analysis provided support for five of the seven linkages. Specifically, emotional exhaustion was negatively related to: 1) satisfaction with

overall job, 2) satisfaction with company policy and support, 3) satisfaction with promotion and advancement, 4) satisfaction with pay and 5) satisfaction with supervision. Emotional exhaustion was not significantly related to 1) satisfaction with co-workers and 2) satisfaction with customers (see Table 2 for a summary of the results). Overall, results support H1A, H1B, H1C, H1D and H1E, but fail to support H1F and H1G.

Table 2. Summary of results.

Emotional exhaustion leading to:	Unstandardized coefficient	Supported/Not supported
Satisfaction with supervision	-.324	Supported
Satisfaction with overall job	-.450	Supported
Satisfaction with policy and support	-.411	Supported
Satisfaction with promotion and advancement	-.319	Supported
Satisfaction with pay	-.238	Supported
Satisfaction with coworkers	-.226	Not supported
Satisfaction with customers	-.175	Not supported
Antecedents of organizational commitment:		
Emotional exhaustion	-.140	Supported
Satisfaction with supervision	.208	Supported
Satisfaction with overall job	.440	Supported
Satisfaction with policy and support	.274	Supported
Satisfaction with promotion and advancement	.047	Not supported
Satisfaction with pay	.136	Not supported
Satisfaction with coworkers	-.199	Not supported
Satisfaction with customers	-.118	Not supported
Antecedents of propensity to leave		
Organizational commitment	-.452	Supported
Emotional exhaustion	-.070	Not supported
Satisfaction with supervision	-.034	Not supported
Satisfaction with overall job	-.401	Supported
Satisfaction with policy and support	-.025	Not supported
Satisfaction with promotion and advancement	-.239	Supported
Satisfaction with pay	.040	Not supported
Satisfaction with coworkers	.149	Not supported
Satisfaction with customers	.010	Not supported

The second part of the regression analysis, examined inter-relationships between all seven dimensions of job satisfaction, emotional exhaustion, and organizational commitment. Results provide that: 1) satisfaction with supervision, 2) satisfaction with overall job, 3) satisfaction with policy and support and 4) emotional exhaustion were related to organizational commitment. Overall, results support H2A, H2B, H2C and H3. Results fail to support H2D, H2E, H2F and H2G.

In the final part of the regression analysis, the relationships of organizational commitment, emotional exhaustion, the seven dimensions of job satisfaction, and propensity to leave were examined. Results indicate that organizational commitment, satisfaction with overall job, and satisfaction with promotion and advancement were related to propensity to leave. Results provide supported for H4B, H4D and H5. The results fail to support H4A, H4C, H4E, H4F, H4G and H6.

5. Discussion and conclusions

5.1. Implications

This study has several important managerial and research implications. From a research standpoint, results related to emotional exhaustion provide an interesting addition to existing knowledge about the inter-relationships between emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction. Previous research has typically examined the relationship between emotional exhaustion and global job satisfaction—finding a negative relationship between the constructs (e.g. Babakus et al., 1999, Jaramillo et al., 2006). The current study indicates that emotional exhaustion is not related to all dimensions of job satisfaction – suggesting that other workplace attitudes and feelings may have a stronger linkage with these other aspects of job satisfaction. Emotional exhaustion only has an indirect link with on propensity to leave through organizational commitment, satisfaction with overall job, and satisfaction with promotion and advancement.

The current study also indicates that the relationships between job satisfaction, organizational commitment and propensity to leave may be somewhat different than expected from previous research. Three dimensions of job satisfaction were related positively to organizational commitment and only one dimension of satisfaction—satisfaction with overall job—is related to both organizational commitment and propensity to leave. These findings indicate that satisfaction with promotion and advancement is significantly and negatively related to propensity to leave, but is not to organizational commitment. Considering the mixed relationships between dimensions of job satisfaction, organizational commitment and propensity to leave, results of this study question whether a global measure of job satisfaction can fully explain the complexity of the inter-relationships among these constructs.

Another issue related to inter-relationships examined in this study is that several dimensions of job satisfaction were not related to either organizational commitment or propensity to leave. Specifically, satisfaction with pay, satisfaction with coworkers and satisfaction with customers were not related to either organizational commitment or propensity to leave. While it appears that some types of job satisfaction do not help a firm retain salespeople, it is possible that they are related to other important workplace constructs not captured in the current research. Overall, findings from the current research suggest that the use of global measures of salesperson satisfaction in sales force research does not necessarily provide a complete picture concerning how to enhance employee commitment or reduce propensity to leave (Fig. 2).

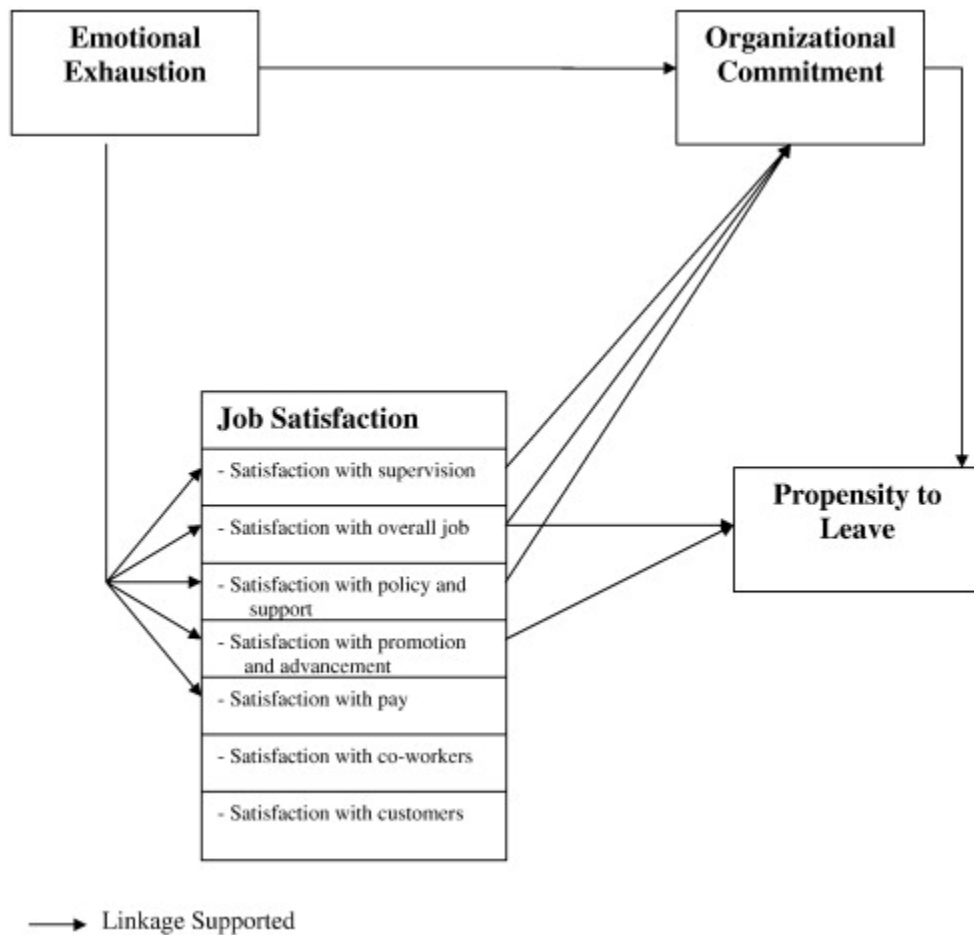


Fig. 2. Summary table of the results.

5.2. Future research and limitations

While this study provides evidence of the importance of examining satisfaction from a multi-faceted approach, this study does have limitations. First, while the reduced 28-item job satisfaction scale was used, the final measurement model contained only two items for: 1) satisfaction with policy and support and 2) satisfaction with customers, because of loading issues in the measurement model. Thus, additional work may be needed to develop multi-faceted job satisfaction scales. Second, emotional exhaustion is viewed as an antecedent of job satisfaction, but was the only indicator used. An additional issue involves the exploratory nature of this study and the limited sample size which prevented the use of structural equation modeling procedures.

Many avenues for future sales research emerge from this study. First, additional studies should try and replicate the findings of this study across different settings. In addition, subsequent studies can use more complex analytical tools, such as structural equation modeling to test the resulting model from this study. With further replication, a clearer picture may emerge with regard to the impact of the individual dimensions of job satisfaction.

Next, a number of other possible antecedents to the seven dimensions of job satisfaction should be included in future research; such as role stress, work-family conflict and measures of

organizational support. With the inclusion of other antecedents of job satisfaction, managers will be better able to increase specific aspects of a given salesperson's job satisfaction. In addition, researchers could also explore possible moderators for the examined relationships. For example, gender differences could be examined.

5.3. Conclusions

This study provides evidence for researchers to use the multi-dimension INDSALES scale over other scales that measure only global job satisfaction in sales settings. Specifically, this study finds that only one dimension of salesperson job satisfaction, satisfaction with overall job, was related to organizational commitment and propensity to leave. Further, two dimensions of job satisfaction were related to propensity to leave and three with organizational commitment. This is an indication that increases in global job satisfaction may or may not reduce salesperson turnover; hence research findings using a global assessments of job satisfaction may provide less benefits to managers than previous research has suggested.

Next, findings from this study further assess the relationships between emotional exhaustion, job satisfaction, organizational commitment and propensity to leave. Findings suggest that emotional exhaustion is related to five of the seven dimensions of salesperson job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Findings failed to find that emotional exhaustion predicts satisfaction with co-workers, satisfaction with customers and propensity to leave. This is an indication that emotional exhaustion impacts propensity to leave indirectly through dimensions of salesperson job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

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Appendix A. Selected scale items

Propensity to stay How would you rate your chances of: 1) Quitting this job in the next 3 months 2) Quitting this job in the next 6 months 3) Quitting this job in the next year	Satisfaction with company policy and support 1) Management is progressive 2) Top management really knows its job
Emotional exhaustion 1) I feel emotionally drained from my work. 2) I feel used up at the end of the workday. 3) I feel fatigued when I get up in the morning and have to face another day on the job. 4) I feel burned out from my work.	Satisfaction with promotion and advancement 1) My opportunities for advancement are limited (R) 2) There are plenty of good jobs here for those who want to get ahead 3) I have a good chance of promotion
Organizational commitment In my job I: 1) Find that my values and the organization's values are very similar. 2) Feel this organization really inspires the very best in me in the way of job performance. 3) Feel, for me, this is the best of all possible organization for which to work.	Satisfaction with pay 1) My pay is low in comparison with what others get for similar work in other companies (R) 2) In my opinion, the pay here is lower than in other companies (R) 3) My income is adequate for normal expenses
Satisfaction with supervision 1) My sales manager has always been fair in dealings with me 2) My sales manager gives us credit and praise for work well done 3) My sales manager lives up to his/her promises	Satisfaction with Coworkers 1) My fellow workers are pleasant 2) The people I work with are very friendly 3) The people I work with help each other out when someone falls behind or gets in tight spot
Satisfaction with overall job 1) My job gives me a sense of accomplishment 2) My job exciting 3) My job is satisfying 4) I am really doing something worthwhile in my job	Satisfaction with customers 1) My customer live up to their promises 2) My customers are trustworthy

(R) = reverse coded item.