

How Economic Situation Effect on Career Anchors of IT Personnel?

TREO Talk Paper

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Abstract

Information systems (IS) are a core capability of an organization in controlling critical downstream and upstream data. Since it is the information technology personnel (ITP) that maintain this core capability for the organization, turnover is therefore costly, not only in terms of replacing staff and training new employees, but also in terms of systems development productivity and quality. However, since the 1960s, the turnover rate of ITP has been much higher than that for other professional workers. In the 21st century, notwithstanding the recent trend toward relocating jobs offshore, the turnover of ITP remains a chronic problem. Although turnover is inevitable, organizations still need to retain their qualified key ITP to improve organizational competence, as they have a high propensity for voluntary turnover due to the limited opportunities to learn state-of-the-art IT knowledge and to improve their career ability. Thus, both professionals and academics have serious concerns about how to retain qualified ITP.

Researchers spend an inordinate amount of time in identifying the factors causing ITP's turnover, in order to enhance retention and accordingly reduce the costs incurred from the turnover. Most such studies boil down to understanding the IT employees' needs and desires, which influence the selection of occupation and their intention to leave an organization. It is assumed that by satisfying such needs and desires will reduce the employees' turnover intention. In practice, career planning has been a critical issue for the turnover rate of ITP.

The concept of career anchor was originally proposed by Schein, as guidance for career decisions. It is a self-concept of career that refers to the combination of an individual's needs, attitudes, values, and talents in the process of career development. Prior research has investigated the implications of career anchor for ITP's turnover. In addition, some unsatisfied ITP remain with their current organization due to the fact that job opportunities outside the current organization are mostly nonexistent, thus, the external job market and economic situations are possible reasons to influence their turnover intention.

Due to global financial crisis that has significantly influenced the global economy since 2008, then the European debt crisis beginning in 2010, according the chain effect of the global financial crisis. At that point, the global economy began to recover from 2013, and has continued to improve until now. Therefore, based upon a long-term survey study from 2010 to 2016 (data timings collected: 2010, 2013, and 2016) of the same group of ITP. The key objective of this research is to investigate career stage and age have different meanings due to different economic situations for career anchors, as these three factors also play an important role that impacts on career anchors, having different results at different times. Meanwhile, this study also examines how the ITP's turnover intention is influenced by career satisfaction, and perceived job alternatives. What considerations lead an IT professional to switch jobs when they are currently satisfied; i.e. when their career anchors are satisfied?

Therefore, this study expected to reconstruct the career anchor theory of ITP, then use this theory to understand turnover intention of ITP deeply; further, hopes the results will not only make a contribution to academics, but also provide organizations with a clear direction to manage the career anchors of their ITP, and at the same time, increase their career satisfaction, thereby reducing their turnover intention whilst improving their performance, as well as their organizational competence.