Linking Stress Offset Score (SOS), Work Satisfaction, and Organizational Commitment to Intentions to Quit

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, Jane Lippert and Bob Teschke, who have fully supported me from the beginning of my studies.

Also, this thesis is dedicated to my husband, Haven Alexander, who has been a great source of motivation and inspiration.

Finally, this thesis is dedicated to my family and friends, who offered me support throughout the course of this thesis.
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In addition, acknowledgement and thanks to my colleagues at the Brock University Workplace Health Research Laboratory who have assisted me in the completion of my thesis.
The purpose of this study was to identify the impact of stressors and offsetting satisfiers, measured in this study with Stress Offset Score (SOS), on intentions to quit and examine the mediating and moderating effects of three facets of work satisfaction (job satisfaction, pay satisfaction, and satisfaction with supervisor) and two facets of organizational commitment (affective and normative commitment) on this relationship. The sample was composed of 2990 employees from 21 public and private organizations. The interaction of each type of work satisfaction and organizational commitment, with SOS, was tested using Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) procedures. Intentions to quit was the dependent variable.

The research questions were determine: (1) Does SOS predict intentions to quit? (2) Does work satisfaction mediate the predictive relationship of SOS on intentions to quit? (3) Does organizational commitment mediate the predictive relationship of SOS on intentions to quit? (4) Does work satisfaction moderate the predictive relationship of SOS on intentions to quit? and (5) Does organizational commitment moderate the predictive relationship of SOS on intentions to quit? The results indicated that SOS was negatively correlated with intentions to quit. Each of the types of work satisfaction and organizational commitment variables showed a partial mediated relationship with SOS and each relationship was highly significant, while normative commitment explained more of the relationship then other mediators. The study also tested for interactions but no statistical significant relationships where established between any of the interaction terms (e.g., SOSxJob Satisfaction and SOSxAffective Commitment) and intentions to quit.
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Turnover is a major problem for organizations and is a primary concern for the human resource management industry. For instance, when an employee involuntarily leaves an organization, the cost to that organization ranges between 50-150% of the departing person’s annual salary (Johnson, Griffith, & Griffin, 2000; Klaff, 2001). Given these costs, it is obvious that preventing employee turnover is a high priority. In order to do this, it is necessary to be able to predict who is most likely to quit, and for what reasons. Understanding the predictors of intentions to quit would provide direction to managers and researchers as to where efforts for institutional change should be targeted. In the organizational behaviour literature, the most commonly used measure to study this phenomenon is self-reported intention to quit (Dalessio, Silverman, & Schuck, 1986; Griffeth & Hom, 1988; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Mercer, 1979; Mobley, 1982). Although not a direct measure of turnover, it is nevertheless an important measure of behavioural intention, i.e., a strong predictor of quitting (Mobley, 1982). Indeed, intentions to quit is important in its own right because it can be used as a signal or warning sign that problems related to human resource management exists within organizations.

Two widely studied predictors of intentions to quit are job satisfaction and organizational commitment (c.f., Cameron, Horsburgh, & Armstrong-Stassen, 1994; Dole and Schroeder, 2001; Jaros, 1997; Lambert, Hogan, & Barton, 2001; Meyer, Allen, & Smith, 1993; Mynatt, Omundson, Schroeder, & Stevens, 1997; O’Neill & Mark, 1998; Paré, Tremblay, & Lalonde, 2001; Sagie, 1998; Scott, Bishop, & Chen, 2001; Shields & Ward, 2001; Somers, 1995; Whitener & Walz, 1993). Strong relationships between job satisfaction and organizational commitment have been demonstrated with intentions to
quit (c.f., Arnold & Feldman, 1982; Bluedorn, 1982; Hollenbeck & Williams, 1986; Lee, 2000; Lum. Kervin, Clark, Reid, & Sirola. 1998; Mueller and Price, 1990; Shore and Martin, 1989; Williams and Hazer, 1986). While job satisfaction and organizational commitment are recognized as important predictors of intentions to quit, most research conducted to date, has used one or the other, rather than simultaneously using both variables. This is problematic because these constructs, while considered independent in most research, are correlated. Therefore, by failing to include both measures in the same analysis, most previous work has not been able to estimate the relative contributions of each construct to predicting employee turnover.

Another equally important variable that appears to play an important role in affecting intentions to quit is workplace stress (Cavanaugh, Boswell, Roehling, & Boudreau, 2000; Chen & Spector, 1992; Gupta & Beehr, 1979; Leontaridi & Ward, 2002; Maslach, 1979; Maslach & Jackson, 1978; Maslach & Jackson, 1979). However, most of the work on workplace stress has relied on single measures of stress. Contemporary theorizing in workplace stress holds that the stress is experienced when the balance between perceived demands and efforts, and their respective contingencies, control and reward that an employee has over his/her job, is tipped toward the former (Shain, 1999). In other words, stress is created when the demands placed on the individual, and/or the effort required to perform the job are high, and control and reward are low. The balance or stress-offset approach recognizes the fact that exposure to stress in and of itself does not as fully account for negative outcomes such as employee turnover; as stress can be managed, and may even be beneficial if other positive factors are also operative (e.g., fair reward for efforts). When stress is experienced and other aspects of the job such as control over
workload or decision-making is absent, the effects of stress can be especially deleterious. The stressor variables used in this study are job demand and job ambiguity. This study examines stress using this balanced approach. This stress score will measure employees’ experiences of stress (demand and ambiguity) as employees’ are affected by reward and control (satisfiers). This is quite different from other studies that measure only the negative experiences of stress. This current study appears to be the first to use a demand/ambiguity—reward/control measure of stress, as well as examining the mediating and moderating effects of satisfaction and organizational commitment on the relationship between stress and intentions to quit. In this study, workplace stress, therefore, will be a score that takes into account the positive (reward and control) offsetting the negative (demand and ambiguity) which will be referred to as the Stress Offset Score (SOS). This measure of workplace stress will be referred to as the Stress Offset Score (SOS), capturing a more complete measure of workplace stress. The term stress will refer only to the negative stressors and the use of the phrase “stress-offset” will refer to the “Stress Offset Score” (SOS). Therefore, in this study, the SOS is considered to be exogenous to intentions to quit and to be related to other more proximal influences on intentions to quit.

Very little research has included workplace stress as a predictor of intentions to quit, while simultaneously testing effects of job satisfaction and organizational commitment. In fact, only one study to date has measured the mediating and moderating effects of all three of these variables with intentions to quit (Elangovan, 2001). Considering there has only been one research study that has simultaneously used workplace stress, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment to predict intentions to quit, this thesis will
provide a significant contribution to our knowledge of the relationships between these variables as it combines the elements of satisfaction offsets to stressors as an original contribution. This study will look at three facets of work satisfaction: job satisfaction, pay satisfaction, and supervisor satisfaction, which is described concomitantly as work satisfaction. Job satisfaction, however, will be referred to in the review of literature as defined by the original writers, whereas in the rest of this thesis, job satisfaction will be referred to as a facet of work satisfaction. This study will look at two types of organizational commitment, affective commitment and normative commitment. The term organizational commitment will be used when referring to both types of commitment. As previously mentioned, the term stress-offset / Stress Offset Score (SOS) will be used as a measure of the degree to which negative stressors are being offset by satisfiers. It is hoped that the use of this more complete score in this study will demonstrate its usefulness to human resource professionals, and those working in organizations.

1.1 Conceptual Model

The following review of literature will suggest workplace stress, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment are all related to intentions to quit. In this study I propose to test a model that examines the impact of Stress Offset Score (SOS) on intentions to quit as well as examine the mediating and moderating effects of work satisfaction and organizational commitment on this relationship.

The conceptual model is comprised of SOS, work satisfaction, organizational commitment, and intentions to quit. In the theoretical model (see Figure A1), intentions to quit is the dependent variable.
Figures A2a and A2b, presents two models that depict mediating effects. The first model portrays work satisfaction as a factor that intervenes between SOS and intentions to quit. The second diagram describes organizational commitment as a factor that intervenes between SOS and intentions to quit. In both instances, it is hypothesized that higher SOS, (i.e., balance between stress and satisfaction factors is tipped toward satisfaction, which means a positive Stress Offset Score) will be related to higher levels of work satisfaction, higher levels of organization commitment, both leading to lower intentions to quit.

Presented in Figures A3a and A3b, are two models, which show moderating effects. In both cases, these diagrams suggest that the impact of SOS on intentions to quit is influenced by both work satisfaction and/or organizational commitment, but not necessarily in a uniform manner. For example, at different levels of perceived work satisfaction, the impact of SOS may be lesser or greater depending on the employees’ level of satisfaction. As hypothesized above, at low levels of work satisfaction the impact of SOS on turnover intention may be quite strong. For those employees with high levels of work satisfaction, SOS may not be related to intentions to quit. These are described in the stress process literature as stress moderators (e.g. Pearlin, 1989), for they differentially impact on the association between stress exposure and stress-related outcomes.

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this study was to present and test a model that identifies the impact of SOS, work satisfaction, and organizational commitment on intentions to quit. A model will be developed and tested which will include SOS, work satisfaction, and
organizational commitment as antecedents to the construct of intentions to quit.

Moreover, interactions between SOS, work satisfaction, organizational commitment, and intentions to quit will be examined.

1.3 Primary Research Questions

To address the purpose of this study, the primary research questions addressed are: (1) Does SOS predict intentions to quit? (2) Does work satisfaction mediate the predictive relationship of SOS on intentions to quit? (3) Does organizational commitment mediate the predictive relationship of SOS on intent to quit? (4) Does work satisfaction moderate the predictive relationship of SOS on intentions to quit? and (5) Does organizational commitment moderate the predictive relationship of SOS on intentions to quit? The five research questions will be used to guide the empirical investigations of the conceptual model, see Figure 1.

1.4 Definitions

The following major variables have been defined in this thesis as follows:

1. Stress Offset Score (SOS): SOS is a variant of the SSOS as outlined by Shain (1999). SOS is composed of two satisfiers (reward and control) and two stressors (demand and ambiguity). To create the SOS, job control and job reward were added together to create the “satisfaction offset” value and job demand and job ambiguity were added together to create the “stressor” value. The SOS was then calculated by subtracting the satisfaction offset value from the stressor value for each respondent.

2. Work Satisfaction is a general measure of satisfaction of work facets in individuals current work organization and in this study it is defined as being
composed of three facets (job satisfaction, supervisor satisfaction, and pay satisfaction) combined together, consisting of 14 items that assess the degree to which individuals felt satisfied with:

a. Job Satisfaction consists of four items that refer to how interesting and satisfied individuals are about several elements of their current job.

b. Supervisor Satisfaction consists of 6 items that refer to how satisfied individuals are about several roles their supervisor.

c. Pay Satisfaction consists of 6 items that refer to how satisfied individuals are about several aspects of their pay.

3. Organizational Commitment is a general measure of commitment, defined as being composed of two facets, combined together, consisting of 11 items that assess the degree to which individuals felt commitment to their organization.

a. Affective Commitment refers to the extent to which individuals feel emotionally involved in their work organization.

b. Normative Commitment refers to the extent of duty / loyalty an individual feels towards their work organization.

4. Intentions to Quit consists of 4 items that refer to the intentions of the individuals desire to leave their current organization in the near future.
Theoretical Model:

Figure 1. Factors expected to affect turnover intentions.
1.4 Summary of Models and Research Questions

This study will present and test a model that identifies the impact of Stress Offset Score (SOS) on intentions to quit. Specifically, an examination of the mediating and moderating effects of work satisfaction and organizational commitment on this relationship will be conducted. The present study will extend the works of Elangovan (2001) and Shain (1999), in an attempt to further understand the relationships that exist between Stress Offset Score (SOS), work satisfaction, organizational commitment, and intentions to quit.
CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Intentions to quit, which is frequently used as a precursor to actual quitting, has been used as an important outcome among organizational and human resource researchers for many years (Dalessio et al., 1986; Griffeth & Hom, 1988; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Mobley, 1982; Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982; Peters, Bhagat, & O’Connor, 1981; Price, 2000; Stumpf & Hartman, 1984; Vandenberg & Nelson, 1999; Vandenberg & Sarpello, 1990). A large body of research on intentions to quit has identified job satisfaction and/or organizational commitment as antecedents of intentions to quit (Begley & Czajka, 1993; Dalton, Johnson, & Daily, 1999; Drasgow, 2000; Curivan, 2000; Lambert et al., 2001). An important factor influencing intentions to quit is workplace stress (Cavanaugh et al., 2000; Chen & Spector, 1992; Gupta & Beehr, 1979; Leontaridi & Ward, 2002). In the workplace stress literature, few have used a stress-offset measure examining the effect of stressors and their satisfaction offsets simultaneously.

What seems to be lacking in the empirical literature overall is a comprehensive analysis of the relationships between all of these variables (workplace stress, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment), and intentions to quit. In fact, only one study (Elangovan, 2001) has linked these concepts together into a unified model. Elangovan (2001) found that higher workplace stress leads to lower job satisfaction and lower organizational commitment, which in turn leads to greater intentions to quit. In other words, he did not find a direct effect of stress on turnover intentions, which is inconsistent with results from several other researchers (e.g., Cavanaugh et al., 2000; Chen & Spector, 1992; Gupta & Beehr, 1979; Jamal, 1990; Leontaridi & Ward, 2002;
Sheridan & Abelson, 1983). Instead Elangovan (2001) found a mediated relationship connecting stress to turnover through commitment and satisfaction. Accordingly, this chapter will review the literature relevant to the development of the conceptual model that is to be tested.

2.1 Intentions to Quit

Intentions to quit refers to the extent to which employees plan to leave their current organization in the near future (Mobley, 1982; Mowday et al., 1982; Vandenberg & Scarpello, 1990). Previous research highlights intentions to quit as the strongest predictor of actual turnover (Dalessio et al., 1986; Griffeth & Hom, 1988; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Mercer, 1979; Mobley, 1982). For instance, Mercer (1979) found that 79% of nurses reporting their intentions to quit, actually quit their job within one year. More than just a predictor of turnover, intentions to quit is also an important variable to analyze from an organizational perspective. Dalessio and colleagues (1986) highlight this point:

In future research, more attention should be given to the direct and indirect influences of variables on intention to quit as opposed to the actual act of turnover. From the employer’s standpoint, intention to quit may be a more important variable then the actual act of turnover. If the precursors to intention to quit are better understood, the employer could possibly institute changes to affect this intention before the actual situation deteriorates to the point where the employee leaves. However, once an employee has quit, there is little the employer can do except assume the expense of hiring and training another employee. (p. 261).

Intentions to quit is also important in its own right because it can be used as a signal or warning sign that problems related to human resource management exists within organizations. For instance, there are high costs associated with recruitment, training, and retention of employees (e.g., Bonn & Forbringer, 1992; Johnson et al., 2000; Klaff, 2001; Mercer, 1998; Taylor, 1998), thus being able to intervene early to keep good workers is critical. For example, hiring, recruiting, and training have been estimated to
cost an organization between 50-150% of the departing persons annual salary (Johnson et al., 2000; Klaflf. 2001). Once identified, it allows managers and others the opportunity to intervene to address these problems before employees actually quit. Therefore, understanding the determinants of intentions to quit provides direction for managers and researchers as to where interventions leading to positive change should be targeted.

Based on the above literature, it is clear the cost associated with losing an employee is high. In addition to the high costs for an organization, employees contemplating leaving their organizations will likely be less productive, less happy, and less engaged in their work, therefore, potentially impacting their co-workers and creating a negative work environment. In order to explore and understand intentions to quit in greater detail, we need to understand what predicts intentions to quit.

2.2. Job Satisfaction: Historical Development and Methodological Innovations

There has been a long tradition for studying the concept of job satisfaction in industrial and organizational psychology. The history and the development of job satisfaction emerged in the early 1900's with the development of a simple 4-item scale used to measure job satisfaction (Hoppock, 1935). Job satisfaction was initially measured by most academics as a global concept with facet-based measures introduced much later. For example, the Index of Organizational Reactions (IOR) (Smith, 1976) was developed, consisting of eight specific job facets: supervisor, hospital identification, kind of work, amount of work, co-workers, physical work conditions, financial rewards, and career future. The facet-based approach is generally regarded as preferable to simple global measures (i.e. overall satisfaction) because it more adequately captures the complexity of appraised work environments. Quite simply, it is more likely the case that
a worker will like some aspects of their job (e.g., colleagues) more than others (e.g., pay). By separating job satisfaction into different facets, researchers can assess whether specific aspects of the job (e.g., amount for work) are more important than others (e.g., supervisor satisfaction) in predicting organizational outcomes (e.g., intentions to quit).

Moreover, when these individual items or facets are summed together, a more accurate measure of overall job satisfaction is achieved. While early research on job satisfaction tended to look at one or two of these facets, job satisfaction is clearly a multifaceted concept (Shield & Ward, 2001). Yet, although it has been argued that global and faceted measures do not measure the same construct (e.g., Scarpello & Campbell, 1983), it has been recognized elsewhere that the job satisfaction facets are highly correlated and do, in fact, reflect one underlying construct (e.g., Judge, & Hulin, 1993). The best approach may be looking at a single measure that looks at different facets of the job, which can reveal patterns not captured by more global measures (Ghiselli et al., 2001; Lum et al., 1998; Shields & Ward, 2001).

The academic and practitioner interest in job satisfaction is tied to its relationships with other important organizational outcomes such as job performance, organizational commitment, turnover, and absenteeism. Although several definitions of job satisfaction exist, job satisfaction has been broadly defined as an affective (e.g., emotional) response resulting from an evaluation of one's own work environment (Dole & Schroeder, 2001; Locke, 1976; Mottaz, 1988). As one would suspect, a negative appraisal of one's work environment usually results in an increased desire to leave that work environment and research findings support a strong negative relationship between job satisfaction and
intentions to quit (Choo, 1986; Cotton & Tuttle, 1986; Dole & Schroeder, 2001; Rasch & Harrell, 1990).

Two of the most widely validated measures of job satisfaction (Judge, Parker, Colbert, Heller & Ilies, 2001) are the Job Descriptive Index (JD; Smith, Kendall, & Hulin, 1969) and the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ; Weiss, Dawis, England, & Lofquist, 1967). The JDI and MSQ are both multi-faceted measures of job satisfaction that have been extensively used in the literature. The JDI evaluates satisfaction with five different job facets: promotion, supervisor, pay, co-workers, and satisfaction with work itself. Each facet is measured using short phrases or words to find out if the phase or word matches the respondent’s opinion to that particular facet of the job satisfaction. The MSQ was developed to measure one’s satisfaction with twenty diverse aspects (e.g., pay satisfaction, co-worker satisfaction, and supervisor satisfaction).

One limitation in the current literature is that most of the job satisfaction measures use self-report procedures (Cameron et al., 1994; Drasgow, 2000; Elangovan, 2001; Ghiselli, LaLopa, Bai, 2001; Lambert, Hogan, & Barton, 2001; Lee, 2000; Mynatt et al., 1997; O’Neill & Mark, 1998; Scott et al., 2001; Shield & Ward, 2001; Van Scotter, 2000; Sagie, 1998). Self-reporting information about work is a simple way to measure work-related satisfaction, however, that type of measurement can suffer from self-report biases. Since the intent is to measure a subjective phenomena, it is difficult to imagine how other methods (e.g., direct observations) might be employed to measure something like job satisfaction. Thus, while imperfect, self-reported satisfaction continues to be the gold standard for measuring this phenomena in the field.
2.3 Job Satisfaction and Intentions to Quit: Is there a link?

The relationship of job satisfaction to intentions to quit has been widely studied. Several studies have shown that job satisfaction is negatively correlated to intentions to quit (Cameron et al., 1994; Dole and Schroeder, 2001; Lambert et al., 2001; Mynatt et al., 1997; O’Neill & Mark, 1998; Sagie, 1998; Scott et al., 2001; Shields & Ward, 2001). However, varying results have also been found. For instance, Camp (1993) found no evidence that job satisfaction had any effect on voluntary turnover, Elangovan (2001) found turnover intentions had no causal effect on satisfaction, and Lum and colleagues (Lum, Kervin, Clark, Reid, & Sirola, 1998) found that job satisfaction had no direct affect on intentions to remain in the organization. However, generally the job satisfaction - intentions to quit research suggests that employees who are dissatisfied with their job are more likely to leave than those who are satisfied.

Research has demonstrated that some facets of job satisfaction influence intentions to quit more than others. In particular, pay satisfaction appears to be an important facet associated with intentions to quit (Ghiselli et al., 2001; Lum et al., 1998; Shields & Ward, 2001). Other facets of job satisfaction that have been associated with a greater desire to quit or leave an organization are dissatisfaction with benefit packages, career advancement opportunities, workplace relations, and workload (Ghiselli et al., 2001; Shields & Ward; 2001). Satisfaction with the work itself and satisfaction with supervision were also found to be associated with turnover (Cotton & Tuttle, 1986).

Finally, the relationship between multiple facets of job satisfaction and intentions to quit appears to be quite robust, as it has been demonstrated in samples from many different countries such as (Sagie, 1998; Scott et al., 2001), across many different ethnic
groups (Ghiselli et al., 2001; Mynatt et al., 1997; Sagie, 1998), and across many different occupational groups including nurses, (Shields & Ward, 2001; Cameron et al., 1994) food-service managers, (Ghiselli et al., 2001) and business professions, (Dole & Schroeder, 2001; Mynatt et al., 1997; Sagie, 1998; Scott et al., 2001).

Most studies find a relationship between facets of job satisfaction and intentions to quit. The fact that many facets of job satisfaction are related to intentions to quit supports the idea that multiple-faceted measures of job satisfaction should be used.

2.4 Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment has been widely measured as a unidimensional construct (Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979; Porter, Steers, Mowday, & Boulian, 1974). Yet, the literature has identified at least two distinct types of organizational commitment - attitudinal or affective (Allen & Meyer, 1990; March & Simon, 1958; Mowday et al., 1982; Porter et al., 1974) and behavioural or continuance (Becker, 1960; Staw & Salancik, 1977). More recently, a third type of commitment – normative – has been added to the two-factor model (Meyer & Allen, 1990). It has been recognized that affective, continuance, and normative commitment are distinguishable components of commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991).

Over the past few years, multiple studies have administered the affective, continuance, and normative commitment scales (Allen & Meyer, 1996; Buck & Watson, 2002; Charles-Pauvers & Wang, 1999; Jaros, 1997; Ko, Price, & Mueller, 1997; Kwantes, 2001; LaMastro, 1997; Meyer, Irving, & Allen, 1998; Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002).
Affective commitment, perhaps the most common form of organizational commitment, is defined by Mowday and colleagues (1982), as "a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values; a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization; and a strong desire to maintain membership in the organization" (p. 27). The counterpart to affective commitment is continuance commitment. First popularized by Becker (1960), it is defined as the perceived costs connected with leaving the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1990). For example, investments made by the employee within their organizations, such as pension contributions, are lost costs that decrease the likelihood of quitting, particularly if their pension is not portable. A third distinguishable component of commitment, called normative commitment, was later suggested by Allen and Meyer (1990). Normative commitment is a sense of a personal obligation to remain with the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990). This form of commitment has also been referred to as "moral" commitment (Jaros, Jermier, Koehler & Sincish, 1993) where the individual is committed to an organization because they identify personally with it.

Organizational commitment is an important organizational behaviour construct that continues to be a major topic of interest in organizational/industrial psychology (e.g., Levy & Williams, 1998; Mayer & Schoorman, 1992; Meyer et al., 1998; Randall, Cropanzano, Bormann, & Birjulin, 1999). Similar to job satisfaction, this stems from the impact it has on organizational outcomes such as absenteeism, (Ko, Price, & Mueller, 1997; Sagie, 1998) intentions to quit (Sagie, 1998) and actual turnover (Ko et al., 1997) as commitment is often viewed as being a "precursor" to these productivity and cost outcomes.
2.5 Organizational Commitment and Intentions to Quit

Because organizational commitment is widely recognized as a multidimensional construct (e.g., Allen & Meyer, 1990; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990), it is not surprising that researchers have investigated whether different facets of organizational commitment (affective, continuance, and normative commitment) are differentially associated with intentions to quit. For example, Meyer, Allen, and Smith (1993) and Somers (1995) found an inverse relationship between both affective and normative commitment and intentions to quit. Results from other studies show affective commitment to be the strongest predictor of intentions to quit (Jaros, 1997; Meyer et al., 1993; Paré et al., 2001; Somers, 1995; Whitener & Walz, 1993). In sum, these findings suggest that affective and normative commitment may be better predictors of intentions to quit than is continuance commitment. These differential predictive effects of the “facets” of organizational commitment suggest that component measures rather than global measures should be used when investigating intentions to quit. Furthermore, as outlined above, not all facets of organizational commitment have been shown to be good predictors of intentions to quit. The secondary data set used in this study does not contain continuance commitment and, therefore, only affective and normative commitment can be used in this study.

Like the association between job satisfaction and intentions to quit, the significant relationship between organizational commitment, at least with regard to affective and normative components, and intentions to quit appears quite robust (Camp, 1993; Elangovan, 2001; Ferris & Aranya, 1983; Lum et al., 1998; Michaels & Spector, 1982; O’Neil & Mark, 1998; O’Reilly & Caldwell, 1980; Sagie, 1998; Stumpf & Hartman, 1984; Weiner & Vardi, 1980), with significant associations found across many
occupational groups (Buck & Watson, 2002; Currivan, 2000; Elangovan, 2001; Kong, Werthimer, Serradell, & McGhan, 1994; LaMastro, 1997; Lee, 2000; Lum et al., 1998; Meyer, Paunonen, Gellatly, Goffin, & Jackson, 1989; Paré et al., 2001; Reed, Kratchman, & Strawser, 1994; Sagie, 1998; Schwepker Jr., 2001). The relationships have also been demonstrated across diverse geographic settings such as the United States (Begley & Czajka, 1993; Camp, 1993; Currivan, 2000; Kratchman, 1994; Kwantes, 2001; LaMastro, 1997; Martin & Hafer, 1995; O’Neil; 1998; Schwepker Jr, 2001), Canada (Elangovan, 2001; Lum et al., 1998; Paré et al., 2001), Israel (Sagie, 1998), India (Kwantes, 2001), and Korea (Chang, 1999). However, similar to the findings for job satisfaction, very few studies have used heterogeneous samples of employees across different organizations to analyze the association between commitment and turnover. Given the potential for variation across job categories, it is important to employ such samples to achieve a more generalizable set of results.

2.6 Workplace Stress

Workplace stress has been defined as a negative interaction between the individual and the work environment (Perrewe, 1991). The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH, 1999) defines workplace stress as a harmful physical and emotional response that occurs when the fit of the job does not match the capabilities, resources, and/or needs of the worker. This is supported by several researchers who indicate an employee’s response to workplace stress can be either physical, psychological, or both (Cooper & Cartwright, 1994; Feldman, Kirschbaum, Kunz-Ebrecht, Marmot, Owen, Steptoe & Willemsen, 2003; Santos & Cox, 2000).
There are basically two types of stress - acute and chronic. Acute stress usually refers to "events" with a sudden onset that can last from minutes to weeks (Humphrey, 1998; Paton, 1999; Pflanz, 1999). Traumas, which can be interpersonal (e.g., sudden loss of a child or spouse) or more global (e.g., exposure to a natural disaster or an automobile accident) are often considered as acute stressors. Chronic stress, conversely, is a cumulative reaction to a continuing string of stressful incidences or ongoing situations over long periods of time (Anshel, 2000; Humphrey, 1998; Paton, 1999; Pflanz, 1999). While workers in an organization can be exposed to acute events, concern over chronic stressors, particularly those that are endemic to the job, have by far and away been the focus of most workplace stress research (c.f., Marmot, Feeney, Shipley, North, and Syme, 1995). This is understandable because, generally speaking, chronic stressors are much easier to control than events that are often random, idiosyncratic, or episodic. Since chronic workplace stress would exist in an observable or measured way it would be easier to identify critical determinants and then intervention work could be implemented to minimize exposure or to reduce the impact of those stressors in the work environment.

For some individuals, the workplace is a source of chronic stress. Chronic stress can lead to loss of productivity, increased absenteeism, increased incidence of medical problems, and eventually exhaustion, which then leads to turnover. Wright and Cropanzano (1998), for instance, indicated that emotional exhaustion was a significant predictor of voluntary turnover. Factors such as work overload or role conflict are forms of chronic stress in the workplace. For instance, Leontaridi and Ward (2002) found the physical demands of the job, such as hard work, played the largest role in aggravating workplace stress. Workplace stress has been associated with outcomes such as
absenteeism, decreased productivity, and health-related problems (e.g., Cooper & Cartwright, 1994; Quick, Quick, Nelson, & Hurrell, 1997).

Negative work outcomes associated with workplace stress are costly to both the individual and the organization. Research suggests negative work outcomes cost North American employers several hundred billion per year in lost productivity, absenteeism, turnover, and health and disability claims (Friedman, 1991; Heaney & Goetzel, 1997; Mann, 1996; Ryland and Greenfeld, 1991). Heaney and Goetzel (1997) found that health care costs were 46 percent higher for employees experiencing high levels of stress. These costs have also become an issue of great concern, both nationally and internationally. The Canadian Compensation Board (1996) found that over 60 percent of Canadians claim to have experienced “negative job stress”. In the United States, Northwest Life Insurance Company (1991) found that 35 percent of working Americans said their job was very or extremely stressful, while 26 percent said that the greatest stressor in their life was their job. In 2004, the New York Times reported that

“Workplace stress costs the nation more than $300 billion each year in health care, missed work and the stress-reduction industry that has grown up to soothe workers and keep production high” (Goldin, 2004). The cost to Britain’s economy was estimated at £3.7 to £3.8 billion with approximately 6.7 million days lost per year (Leontaridi and Ward, 2002). Clearly, stress is important individually, corporately, and socially.

2.6.1 Workplace Stress Theories

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to provide a comprehensive review of the vast literature on workplace stress. Instead, a comparison of two very influential stress models will be provided that are directly relevant to this study; the job strain model (job
demand-job control model) (Karasek, 1979), and the effort-reward imbalance model (Siegrist, 1996). Also explored is a fairly recent hybrid model called the Stress Satisfaction Offset Score (Shain, 1999), which consist of 2 single items from Karask’s Demand-Control model and 2 single items from Siegrist’s Effort-Reward Imbalance Model.

A theoretical model used extensively to evaluate workplace stress is Karasek’s (1979) job demand-job control (job strain) model. This model states that when employees face high psychological workload demands coupled with low control and low support from others while trying to meet these demands, it can create the highest risk for physical and mental health from stress. This model differentiates between the work pressures and demands (excessive workload) and the decision latitude (control) of the worker. In particular, the focus of this model is on the disparities that exist between work demands associated with the job and the degree of control the employee possesses. Conversely, an individual with high demands and perceived low control will experience the most workplace stress. Whereas, high demands and high control, produce the least harm for an individual, it is the degree of control relative to the demands of the job that results in stress.

An equally important theoretical framework is Siegrist's (2001) Effort-Reward Imbalance (ERI) model, which expands the concept of control used by Karasek (1990) to include promotional prospects and job security as forms of personal reward for efforts. The ERI model defines stressful working conditions as the result of a "mismatch between high workload (high demand) and low control over long-term rewards" (Siegrist, 2001). Basically, if efforts spent and rewards received are not perceived as sufficient for the
amount of effort or demand required, the resulting imbalance creates stress, that in turn may lead to adverse health outcomes. Stress is more likely to occur when an individual feels they are under-appreciated. For example, an individual who works in a demanding, unstable job, and constantly strives towards attaining a higher position, may experience more stress if he/she lacks a material reward such as a career advancement or financial gain. Although there are some important differences between these models/theories, there are also many synergies. For example, both focus on the nature of the work in terms of demand exerted on the individual. In Karasek’s and Siegrist’s models, job demand is typically conceptualized in terms of workload (Karasek, 1990; Siegrist, 2001). While Karasek (1990) and Siegrist (2001) both focus on demands, the other part of the equation is different. For instance, while the job demand-job control model is also about the perceived level of control the worker has on their job, the effort-reward imbalance model focuses on the reward individuals perceive they receive from their work efforts. In that sense, Siegrist’s model is more behaviouristic in its orientation for it focuses on reward as a motivator. Karasek’s model could be considered more social cognitive because perceived control, which is close to Bandura’s (1991) concept of self-efficacy, is the most important offsetting or stress buffering factor.

In more recent years, attempts have been made to synthesize elements from both these models to form a more unified paradigm for understanding workplace stress. Perhaps the best example of this theoretical work is Martin Shain (1999), and his Stress Satisfaction Offset Score (SSOS) model. In this framework, the conditions that led to or remove stress are conceptualized as the combination of both effort and demand along with their respective “satisfier offsets”, control and reward. Ultimately, it is the balance between
these four factors that determines whether an individual occupies a stressful work environment, which in turn leads to deleterious effects on well-being and negative impacts on other organizationally relevant factors such as turnover. The stress-offset construct is operationalized using a construct called the Stress Satisfaction Offset Score (SSOS) (Shain, 1999), which consists of four items assessing an individual’s perception of the amount of demand, control, effort, and reward within his/her work environment. The following four items were used by Shain (1999) in the creation of the SSOS: "I can complete my assigned workload during my regular working hours;" (demand), "I consider my workload reasonable" (effort), "I have a say in decisions and actions that impact on my work;" (control), "I get adequate recognition from my immediate supervisor when I do a good job." (reward). The first two questions (demand and effort) capture the stressors, while the control and reward questions capture the offsetting satisfactions. Using a 5-point likert scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree” a score is calculated by adding together the reward and control score and subtracting the demand and effort score. The range of the final score of Shain’s (1999) work is -2 to +2. The SSOS score can either be positive (above zero or +1), which means satisfaction exceeds stressor; zero, which means satisfactions and stressors cancel each other out, or negative (below zero or -1), which means stressors exceed satisfactions (Shain, 1999). The SSOS has been piloted in a number of Canadian organizations and has shown strong correlations to various measures of mental and physical health problems (Shain, 1999). This study will expand the work of Shain (1999) by using a stress-offset made up of a more robust set of variables that are all multi-item scales with high reliability and factorial validity.
Unfortunately, Job Effort was not a scale in the WHRL database, whereas, Job Clarity was available. Job Clarity is the logical opposite of Job Ambiguity, as is Role Clarity the logical opposite of Role Ambiguity. Job Ambiguity has a very long history as being identified as a stressor in the job stress literature. For instance, Hellriegel, Slocum, Woodman (1992) state, “role conflict and role ambiguity are particularly important sources of much job-related stress” (p. 286-287). Moreover, many theoretical models in work stress literature include job/role clarity or job/role ambiguity. Kahn and Byosiere (1992) cite seminal stress literature from Ivanevich and Matteson (1980) referring to work overload, role conflict, and role ambiguity as individual stressors in there model for organizational stress research. As well, Kahn and Byosiere (1992) also cite Marshall and Cooper’s (1979) model where role ambiguity and role conflict are given a central position as work environment related stressors. Further, Kahn and Byosiere (1992), as a part of their thorough review of stress literature, created a theoretical framework for the study of stress in organizations and named role ambiguity as a psychosocial stressor in organizational life. Therefore, in an attempt to develop a balanced SOS model, job effort was substituted with job ambiguity in this study.

In sum, the models reviewed attempt to explain the relationship / correlation between an individual and his/her perceived work demands, e.g., level of workload. The next section will examine workplace stress research with intentions to quit, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment.

2.6.2 Workplace Stress and Intentions to Quit

Stress has been linked to actual quitting (see Begley and Czajka, 1993; Cavanaugh, et al., 2000; Dobreva-Martinova, Villeneuve, Strickland, & Matheson, 2002; Jamal, 1990;
Leontaridi & Ward, 2002; but also see Leong, Furnham & Cooper 1996). For example, work overload, role ambiguity, and resource inadequacy were significantly related to turnover intention in a sample of nurses (Jamal, 1990). Since intention to quit is a precursor to turnover, it stands to reason that stressors and stress are also related to intentions to quit. The following is a review of the small number of studies that have linked stress to intention to quit.

Several studies have found high levels of workplace stressors (in one form or another) associated with intentions to quit (Cavanaugh et al., 2000; Chen & Spector, 1992; Gupta & Beehr, 1979; Leontaridi & Ward, 2002; Maslach, 1978; Maslach & Jackson, 1979). For example, using a database consisting of organizations drawn from 15 countries and a sample of 9,240 cases, Leontaridi and Ward (2002) found that individuals experiencing some work related job stress were 10-14 percent more likely to consider leaving their current job than those without any workplace stress.

While this work supports that workplace stressors are related to intentions to quit, further research is needed to examine how workplace stressors translates into increased desire to quit. Two extensively studied organizational concepts - job satisfaction and organizational commitment would seem to play an important role between workplace stressors and intentions to quit. Bhagat, McQuaid, Lindholm, and Segovis (1985) suggested workplace stress exerts a negative affect on employees’ job satisfaction and organizational commitment, which further leads to exacerbated negative attitudes such as alienation from work. Job related stress is found to be associated with both low job satisfaction and intentions to quit (Dobreva-Martinova et al., 2002). In one meta-analysis, Mathieu and Zajac (1990) found individuals who perceived more stressful work
situations tended to report less commitment to the organization and commitment is a precursor to turnover intentions.

2.7 Summary of Workplace Stress, Job Satisfaction, Organizational Commitment, and Intentions to Quit

Despite the vast amount of work that has tested the individual relationships of workplace stress, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment on intentions to quit, very few studies have tried to link them together. In fact, I could locate only one study in the published research literature that examines the interrelationships between work related stress, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and intention to quit (Elangovan, 2001). In an analysis of 155 graduate business students from a Canadian University, Elangovan (2001) found that perceived work stress did not directly affect turnover intentions. Rather, he found that higher stress was associated with lower job satisfaction, while in turn was associated with lower commitment, lower commitment to the organization was associated with greater intentions to quit. Based on these results, it would appear that work stress, indirectly, led to turnover intentions through lowered commitment.

While compelling, there are some limitations with Elangovan’s (2001) study and analysis. For example, Elangovan (2001) used a small sample of 155 graduate business students enrolled at a public university. Furthermore, it is not clear that Elangovan (2001) examined different facets of work related stress, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. As mentioned, the facet-based approach more adequately captures the complexity of the appraised work environment compared to using global measures (i.e., overall satisfaction). For instance, low pay satisfaction may lead to higher
intentions to quit, whereas, global satisfaction may not have any influence on intentions to quit. It seems examining facets of each measure would advance our understanding over what Elangovan (2001) has previously done. Moreover, it is not evident from this work that Elangovan (2001) considered or examined the potential interactive associations between stress and each of job satisfaction and/or commitment. For example, the effect of work related stress on intention to quit may be different across levels of job satisfaction and commitment.

While it is likely the case that, in general, job satisfaction is related to intentions to quit (or remain), some facets may be more important to this relationship in some occupations than others. For example, while pay satisfaction may be universally linked to intention to quit across all occupational groups, satisfaction may be more important to some occupations (e.g., sales representatives on commission compared with teachers). Of course, heterogeneity with regard to individual-level characteristics is also important when considering the impact of different facets of satisfaction on turnover. For a young, single male, satisfaction with benefits may be less important for intentions to quit than for a middle-aged women with children. Studies using more heterogeneous (diverse) samples with regard to both occupation and individual-level characteristics, may provide more generalizable results concerning the influence of satisfaction on turnover. Among individuals who report high job satisfaction, work-related stress may not be associated with turnover intentions. Conversely, at lower levels of job satisfaction, the correlation between work-related stress and intention to quit may be quite strong. Therefore, a research study that considers the potential interactive relationships between Stress Offset Score (SOS), work satisfaction and organizational commitment on turnover intentions is
an important conceptual and pragmatic step forward for research in this area. The next chapter presents the research methodology utilized to investigate the relationships among intentions to quit and its antecedents.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the research methodology used to investigate the relationships between Stress Offset Score (SOS) and employees’ intentions to quit. A description of the sample characteristics, research instruments, and the methods that were used to collect the data are presented.

3.1 Design of the Study

This study analyzed data drawn from a series of surveys previously collected through the Brock University, Workplace Health Research Laboratory (hereinafter referred to as WHRL). Therefore, this thesis involves analyses of secondary data. As Colby (1982) notes, “secondary data analysis allows one to examine evidence based on data collected using several designs, cohorts, or types of samples”. In this study, one major advantage of using WHRL as a data source is that the data have been collected from many different organizations, mainly in Ontario, with some from other provinces, which ensures a diversity of workers in this sample.

3.2 Sample

This study used a sub-sample of all the data collected by WHRL using their proprietary Employee Feedback System (©EFS) surveys. The original sample contained a total of 7291 employees from 21 work organizations, representing diverse work sectors (e.g., healthcare, manufacturing, finance). From this, 1746 individuals were excluded (23.9% subject loss) because they did not respond / answer the organizational commitment scales or the scales were not present in their surveys leading to a interim sample of 5545 from 21 organizations (76.1% of original sample). After a list-wise deletion of cases with missing values, this sub-sample was further reduced to the final
sample size of 2990 individuals from a total of 21 organizations (53.9% of interim sample). The final study sample (N=2990) was compared with the original sample (N=5545) in terms of gender, age, organizational tenure, and employee status and the samples were found to be very similar (see Table B4). For example, the original sample consisted of 33.5% males and 66.5% females and the final sample consisted of 35.8% males and 64.2% females and the mean age of the original sample was 42.38 and the mean age of the final sample is 41.90.

The methods used for administrating the survey varied from one organization to the next. Mail-out scannable surveys, self-administered surveys collected via drop boxes and/or mail, and/or web-based surveys, were the choices available to the employees within the organizations. This variable is left uncontrolled, but internal documents at WHRL indicate that across-forms measurements are stable (Yardley & Noka, 2005)

3.3 Dependent Variable: Intentions to Quit

Intentions to quit is measured with four positive items assessing whether respondents would “not” leave their work organization. Individuals were asked: (1) I would not leave this organization if an equivalent job opportunity became available elsewhere (2) I would not leave this organization if a promotion became available elsewhere (3) I rarely think of applying to other organizations for a job (4) Overall, I intend to remain in this organization. Seven possible responses were possible: “strongly disagree”, “disagree”, “somewhat disagree”, “neither agree nor disagree”, “somewhat agree”, “agree”, “strongly agree”. These were originally coded from 1 to 7. In order to measure intentions to quit, each item was reverse coded. The measure is scored such that higher scores reflect increasing levels of intentions to quit (M=3.78, SD=1.68) with the lowest
possible average equaling 1 and the highest value is 7. Based on the full sample, the internal reliability (Cronbach Alpha) for this scale is alpha = 0.92.

3.4 Independent Variables: Stress Offset Score (SOS)

The SOS was calculated using an adaptation of a methodology used by Shain (1999). Averages were calculated for each respondent’s control (4 items), reward (5 items), demand (5 items), and ambiguity (4 items). Individuals were asked to rate each item using the following seven-point Likert scale: “strongly disagree”, “disagree”, “somewhat disagree”, “neither agree nor disagree”, “somewhat agree”, “agree”, “strongly agree”. These were originally coded from 1 to 7. SOS is measured by a combination of four different scales in this analysis: Job Demand, Job Control, Job Ambiguity, and Job Reward (see Table B2). Please note, as outlined in Chapter 2, the SOS differs from the SSOS variable in using job ambiguity as a stress element rather than job effort. In total, there are 18 items that compose this scale. To create the SOS, job control and job reward were added together to create the “satisfaction offset” value and job demand and job ambiguity were added together to create the “stressor” value. The SOS was then calculated by subtracting the satisfaction offset value from the stressor value for each respondent. The following equation was used to create a new Stress Offset Score (SOS) consisting of satisfiers (control and reward) and stressors (demand and ambiguity):

\[(\text{Respondent’s Average Control + Reward}) - (\text{Respondent’s Average Demand + Ambiguity})\].

The resulting SOS measure has a range where the lowest obtained value for a respondent is -11.80 and the highest obtained value is +11.60. The overall mean for the sample of 2990 for SOS is M=.813, SD=4.37. The SOS can either be positive, zero, or
negative. If the score is positive, it means the sum of the satisfactions offsets the sum of the stressors: when the score is zero, the sum of the satisfactions and stressors cancel each other out; and when the score is negative, the sum of the stressors is greater than the sum of the satisfactions. Based on the full sample, the internal reliability (Cronbach Alpha) of the SOS scale is \( \alpha = 0.90 \).

3.5 Independent Variables: Work Satisfaction

Work Satisfaction was measured using scales measuring three facets of work: Job Satisfaction, Satisfaction with Supervisor, and Pay Satisfaction (see Table B3). In this study, when referring to work satisfaction, I am referring to the three facets combined together, which consisted of 14-items that assessed the degree to which individuals felt satisfied with these three aspects of the workplace. This measure has a low range of 14 and a high range of 98 and is scored such that higher scores reflect higher levels of work satisfaction. Individuals answered each item by selecting one of the following responses: "strongly disagree", "disagree", "somewhat disagree", "neither agree nor disagree", "somewhat agree", "agree", "strongly agree". These were originally coded from 1 to 7. The internal reliability for work satisfaction is \( \alpha = .91 \). Both the total scale, and the sub-scales will be used in the statistical analysis.

3.6 Independent Variables: Organizational Commitment

Organizational Commitment was measured by eleven-items using the affective commitment and normative commitment scales (see Table B4). Affective Commitment is the extent to which the individual is emotionally involved in the organization. Normative Commitment is the extent of duty/loyalty the individual feels towards the organization. Throughout this thesis, when referring to both Affective and Normative
Commitment, I will use the term Organizational Commitment. Again, the 7-point response scales ranged from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”. These were originally coded from 1 to 7. The internal reliability for organizational commitment is $\alpha = .94$. Again, both the full and the sub-scales will be used in the analysis.

3.7 Control Variables: Age and Socio-demographic Controls

Age is negatively related to intentions to quit (George and Jones, 1996; Lucas, Atwood, & Hagaman, 1993; Parasuraman; 1989; Rosin and Korabik, 1995) and was, therefore, used in this study as a control variable. Age was an ordinal variable coded in ten-year intervals (26-35, 36-45, 46-55) except for the first and last interval, which included those aged 25 and younger, and aged 56 and older. Five dummy variables were created and entered into each regression model (ages 56 and over were the reference category).

In addition to age, I included three other control measures: gender, years working in the organization (organizational tenure) and employment status. Gender is coded 2 for females and 1 for males. Organizational tenure was entered using 4 dummy variables spaced by 3 years with the final variable capturing above 10 years, i.e., less than 3 years, 3-6 years, 7-10 years, and more than 10 years. This variable was included because previous research has demonstrated varied results. For instance, organizational tenure has been found to be negatively associated with an employee’s intent to quit among accountants and sales people (Gregson, 1990; George, 1989). Conversely, in a more heterogeneous sample of employees, organizational tenure was not significantly related to intentions to quit (Rosin and Korabik, 1995). Employment status was coded 1 “hourly employee” and 2 “salaried employee”.

3.8 Testing for Mediating Effects

As established by Baron and Kenny (1986) and outlined on their website http://davidakenny.net/cm/mediate.htm, the following steps, directly quoted from David A. Kenny's website: http://davidakenny.net/cm/mediate.htm, are required to establish mediating effects, which is based on their original publication (Baron and Kenny, 1986):

Step 1: Show that the initial variable is correlated with the outcome. Use Y as the criterion variable in a regression equation and X as a predictor (estimate and test path c). This step establishes that there is an effect that may be mediated.

Step 2: Show that the initial variable is correlated with the mediator. Use M as the criterion variable in the regression equation and X as a predictor (estimate and test path a). This step essentially involves treating the mediator as if it were an outcome variable.

Step 3: Show that the mediator affects the outcome variable. Use Y as the criterion variable in a regression equation and X and M as predictors (estimate and test path b). It is not sufficient just to correlate the mediator with the outcome; the mediator and the outcome may be correlated because they are both caused by the initial variable X. Thus, the initial variable must be controlled in establishing the effect of the mediator on the outcome.

Step 4: To establish that M completely mediates the X-Y relationship, the effect of X on Y controlling for M (path c) should be zero. The effects in both Steps 3 and 4 are estimated in the same equation.

![Diagram](image)

Path c is called the *direct effect*. The mediator has been called an *intervening* variable. Complete mediation is the case in which variable X no longer affects Y after M has been controlled and so path c is zero. Partial mediation is the case in which the path from X to Y is reduced in absolute size but is still different from zero when the mediator is controlled.
3.9 Testing for Interactions

The procedure for testing the presence of all interactions was the Ordinary Least Squares regression (OLS) as described by Jaccard, Turrisi and Wan (1990). Interactions are entered into a base model containing all lower order terms. R-square values for base models and models containing interaction terms are compared using an incremental, or hierarchical F test procedure that tests for the presence of a statistical interaction.

For each facet of work satisfaction variable and each facet of organizational commitment, the following procedure was used. The block of control variables and the predictor SOS was entered on Step 1. This was followed by entering each facet of the overall predictor variables (i.e., work satisfaction and organizational commitment variables) separately in Step 2. The predictor variables were: job satisfaction (JS), satisfaction with supervisor (SS), pay satisfaction (PS), normative commitment (NC), and affective commitment (AC). On Step 3, five two-way interaction terms were entered in separate regression equations. The 2 way interaction terms were the cross – products of: SOSxJS, SOSxSS, SOSxPS, SOSxNC, and SOSxAC. In order to reduce multicollinearity between the cross-product terms and their constituent variables, each variable was centered before creating the cross-product term (Jaccard, Turrisi and Wan, 1990).

It is assumed that the variables are measured at the interval-ratio level when the regression approach to modeling interactions uses continuous variables. Although some researchers have felt that bias is introduced when the data are not interval-ratio (Busemeyer and Jones, 1983), others argue that the assumption of intervality of linearity of responses is suitable with non interval-level data (Borgatta and Bohrnstedt, 1980).
Even though the data in these analyses are ordinal, as is common in the social sciences, the variables used in this study estimate interval-level characteristics and as a result, it is reasonable to proceed with a standard regression approach (Jaccard et al., 1990).
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of the statistical analyses of this study’s data. It begins with descriptive statistics of variables included in the analyses and describes the general characteristics of the sample. Next, the results of the Ordinary Least Square regressions (OLS) of the study are presented.

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

In Table 1, the descriptive statistics are provided for the demographics, independent variables, and dependent variable. The gender composition of the sample is 64.2% female and 35.8% male. The mean age of respondents is 41.9 years (SD=9.5 years), with two thirds of the respondents falling between the ages of 32 years and 51 years. The employees’ average length of time working at their organization (organizational tenure) was 10.5 years (SD=8.8 years). Slightly more than half were hourly employees (57.0%), 41.5% were salaried employees (employee status), with the remaining 1.5% consisting of ‘other’ category (e.g., contract employees).

The independent variables (i.e., SOS, job satisfaction, satisfaction with supervisor, pay satisfaction, normative commitment, and affective commitment) were assessed for normality. This analysis, and other descriptive statistics for those variables are shown in Table 1. The mean of intentions to quit, the dependent variable, was 3.78, (SD=1.68). The mean and standard deviation values for the scales, coupled with the relatively low skew and kurtosis values indicate no obvious ceiling or floor effects, suggest that adequate variation was being captured across the sample, and that there were no serious violations of distributional assumptions (e.g. normality).
Table 1

**Descriptive Statistics of Variables for the Research Sample (N=2990)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Kurtosis</th>
<th>Skewness</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Stress Offset Score (SOS)</td>
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<td>4.37</td>
<td>- .363</td>
<td>-.374</td>
<td>23.40</td>
<td>-11.80</td>
<td>11.60</td>
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<tr>
<td>Job Satisfaction</td>
<td>5.57</td>
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<td>1.95</td>
<td>-1.37</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>7.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with Supervisor</td>
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<td>-.858</td>
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<td>Intentions to Quit</td>
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<td>.239</td>
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<td>Age</td>
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<td>9.48</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>17</td>
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<td>Organizational Tenure</td>
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<td>Hourly Employee</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>Salaried Employee</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
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A bivariate correlation matrix is presented in Table 2. Of particular note, SOS is significantly and negatively correlated with intentions to quit \((r=-.491, p<.001)\), although the strength of this correlation was moderate. This suggests that when SOS is high (i.e., the stressors, demand and ambiguity are offset by the satisfiers, rewards and control), intentions to quit is low and when SOS is low (i.e., the stressors, demand and ambiguity are not offset by the satisfiers, rewards and control), intentions to quit is high. Both normative commitment \((r=-.684, p<.001)\) and affective commitment \((r=-.646, p<001)\) were also significantly and negatively correlated with intentions to quit. This suggests that as both types of commitment increase, the intent to leave the organization declines. The measures of satisfaction with supervisor \((r=-.398, p<.001)\), job satisfaction \((r=-.448, p<.001)\) and pay satisfaction \((r=-.376, p<.001)\) were negatively and moderately significantly correlated to intentions to quit suggesting that lower satisfaction with job, supervisor, and pay is associated with a greater intent to quit.
**Bivariate Correlations among the Study Variables (N=2990)**

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<tr>
<td>(1 = Male, 2 = Female)</td>
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<tbody>
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<td>-.114**</td>
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<td>-.491**</td>
<td>-.448**</td>
<td>-.398**</td>
<td>-.376**</td>
<td>-.684**</td>
<td>-.646**</td>
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</table>

Unstandardized coefficients are reported with standardized error in parentheses

*** p < .001, ** p < .01, *p < .05

SOS = Stress Offset Score  
PS = Pay Satisfaction  
JS = Job Satisfaction  
NC = Normative Commitment  
SS = Satisfaction with Supervisor  
AC = Affective Commitment  
IQ = Intentions to Quit
4.2 OLS Regressions

This study tested both mediating and moderating effects of facets of work satisfaction and organizational commitment variables on the relationship between Stress Offset Score (SOS) and intentions to quit.

Table 3 reports models where blocks of mediating variables were introduced. According to Baron and Kenny (1986), there are 4 steps required to establish mediation. Step 1 requires that SOS correlates with intentions to quit. This is demonstrated in Table 3, Model 1, where SOS was significantly correlated with intentions to quit (b=-.189, p<.001), prior to entering the covariates. This step clearly indicated there was an effect between SOS and intentions to quit that could be mediated by facets of work satisfaction.

In addition to the method outlined by Baron and Kenny (1986), four demographic variables (gender, age, organizational tenure, and employment status) were chosen as control variables. Model 2 shows the relationship between SOS and intentions to quit, adjusted for the demographic control variables (gender, age, organizational tenure, and employment status). In Model 2, there is a negative relationship between SOS and intention to quit (b=-.198, p<.001), which suggests that the more stressors (i.e., demand and effort) are offset by satisfiers (i.e., reward and ambiguity), the less likely the employee is to contemplate quitting. Age, organizational tenure, and employment status are also significant but gender is non-significantly related to intentions to quit. In addition, age is negatively associated with intentions to quit (b=-.019, p<.001) suggesting older employees are less likely to want to quit the organization. Organizational tenure is also negatively associated with intentions to quit (b=-.021, p<.001) suggesting the longer
Table 3

*OLS Regression of Intentions to Quit on Stress Offset Stress (SOS), Work Satisfaction, and Organizational Commitment* $N=2990$

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th>Model 3</th>
<th>Model 4</th>
<th>Model 5</th>
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<td>-.105***</td>
<td>-.086***</td>
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<td>(.006)</td>
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<td>(.007)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with Supervisor</td>
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<td>-.039*</td>
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<td>(.020)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(.017)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pay Satisfaction</td>
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<td>(.024)</td>
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<td>Age</td>
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<td>-.011***</td>
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<td>(.003)</td>
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<td>(.003)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenure</td>
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<td>-.021***</td>
<td>-.013***</td>
<td>-.014***</td>
<td></td>
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<td>(.004)</td>
<td>(.003)</td>
<td>(.003)</td>
<td>(.003)</td>
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<td>(.040)</td>
<td>(.039)</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Intercept</td>
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<td>4.365</td>
<td>3.889</td>
<td>3.890</td>
<td>3.759</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adjusted R-square</td>
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<td>.280</td>
<td>.385</td>
<td>.553</td>
<td>.571</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unstandardized coefficients are reported with standardized error in parentheses

*** $p<.001$, ** $p<.01$, * $p<.05$
employees stay with their organization the less likely they will want to quit. Employee status is positively associated with intentions to quit (b=.207, p<.001).

Step 2 requires that SOS is correlated with the proposed mediators, i.e., in the study’s model, facets of work satisfaction and organizational commitment variables. In all five cases, there were modest, but highly significant correlations between SOS and each mediator (see Table 2). As an example, job satisfaction and SOS are significantly correlated (see Table 2, r=.396, p<.01) as is normative commitment and SOS (see Table 2, r=.466, p<.01).

Step 3 requires that the mediator correlates with the outcome. As an example, job satisfaction and intentions to quit are significantly correlated (see Table 2, r=-.448, p<.01) as in normative commitment and intentions to quit (see Table 2, r=-.684, p<.01).

Step 4 requires the effect of the SOS on intentions to quit to be established while controlling for the mediator. In order to assess whether the facets of work satisfaction or organizational commitment account for a greater proportion of the effect of SOS on intentions to quit, each of these groups of variables were entered as “blocks” into the base model containing only SOS and the controls. As an example, Model 3, shows the effect of introducing all the work satisfaction facets (job satisfaction, satisfaction with supervisor, and pay satisfaction) simultaneously into the base model (i.e., as a block). All three satisfaction variables show a significant negative relationship with intentions to quit. Moreover, the coefficients are all significant at the p<.001 level. The addition of these variables significantly reduces, by 47.0%, the unstandardized coefficient for SOS, however, SOS remains significant as a predictor. The value for the adjusted R-square statistic shows that the addition of the block of work satisfaction variables accounts for
38.5 percent of the variation in intentions to quit which is an incremental improvement, in Model 3, of 10.5% from Model 2. Also in Model 3, the control covariates, age, tenure, and employment status in the model all remain significant and gender becomes significant at the p<.001 level.

In a parallel fashion, Table 3, Model 4 shows the effect of introducing the block of organizational commitment (normative commitment and affective commitment) into the base model containing SOS and the covariates. Similar to the findings for the work satisfaction facets in Model 3, in Model 4 the unstandardized coefficients for normative commitment and affective commitment show significant negative relationships with intentions to quit.

The value for the adjusted R-square statistic shows that the commitment variables along with SOS and the demographic control variables account for 55.3 percent of the variation in intentions to quit. As well, the addition of these variables significantly reduces, by 56.6%, the coefficient for SOS but again, SOS remains a significant predictor in the model. However, in this model among the demographic control variables, only age, tenure, and employment status remain significant at the p<.001 level, with gender no longer significant.

The effect on SOS of simultaneous of introducing all the satisfaction and commitment variables is demonstrated in Table 3, Model 5. This model demonstrates that while each predictor variable is reduced in effect size they all remain significant predictors of intention to quit. Also, SOS is reduced in the size of its coefficient compared to Model 2, but again, it too remains significant. The addition of all of the predictor variables simultaneously significantly reduces, by 70.7%, the coefficient for SOS from Model 2.
The value for the adjusted R-square statistics shows that all of these variables account for 57.1 percent of the variation in intentions to quit in this sample, which is the largest amount of variation accounted for in all models.

In order to assess whether job satisfaction, satisfaction with supervisor, pay satisfaction, normative commitment, or affective commitment account for a greater proportion of the effect of SOS on intentions to quit, each of these variables were entered individually instead of as a "block" (see Table 4). In Table 4, Model 6, shows SOS is highly significantly correlated with intentions to quit, but so is job satisfaction (i.e., the mediator), as well as gender, age, organizational tenure, and employment status (i.e., the control variables). These results demonstrated that the relationship of SOS and intentions to quit was only partially mediated by job satisfaction because the unstandardized coefficient was reduced in size, but still remains significant. The addition of job satisfaction in Model 6 significantly reduced the unstandardized coefficient for SOS by 22.7 percent from Model 2. The value for the adjusted R-square statistic shows that the addition of job satisfaction accounts for 34.8 percent of the variation in intentions to quit which is an overall improvement in Model 6 of 6.8% from Model 2.

Using the same procedure, Models 7, 8, 9, and 10 (see Table 4) demonstrates that the relations of SOS and intentions to quit were partially mediated, in turn, by satisfaction with supervisor, pay satisfaction, normative commitment, and affective commitment. Comparing all models, normative and affective commitment are the strongest mediators.

However, SOS remains highly significant (although the coefficient is more markedly reduced in size), so even the commitment variables do not fully mediate the SOS - intentions to quit relationship.
Table 4

*OLS Regression of Intentions to Quit on Stress Offset Score (SOS), Work Satisfaction, and Organizational Commitment* N=2990

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
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<th>Model 7</th>
<th>Model 8</th>
<th>Model 9</th>
<th>Model 10</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
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<td>.251***</td>
<td>.172**</td>
<td>.325***</td>
<td>.278***</td>
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<tr>
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<td>(.051)</td>
<td>(.048)</td>
<td>(.050)</td>
<td>(.049)</td>
<td>(.041)</td>
<td>(.042)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
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<td>4.365</td>
<td>4.009</td>
<td>4.236</td>
<td>4.262</td>
<td>3.825</td>
<td>4.132</td>
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<td>Adjusted R-square</td>
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<td>.280</td>
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<td>.304</td>
<td>.316</td>
<td>.523</td>
<td>.499</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unstandardized coefficients are reported with standardized error in parentheses

*** p<.001, ** p<.01, * p<.05
In the presence of normative commitment and affective commitment (see Models 9 and 10), the control variable, gender, is now non-significant. When comparing all models (see Table 4), Model 9 demonstrates that the addition of normative commitment significantly reduces the unstandardized coefficient for SOS by 51.5 percent from Model 2, which is the largest reduction in the size of SOS among all models. In Model 9, the value for the adjusted R-square statistic shows that SOS, normative commitment, and the control variables account for 52.3 percent of the variation in intentions to quit (i.e., this model accounts for the most explained variance for intentions to quit).

4.3 Tests for Interactions

Having established a statistically significant relationship between SOS and job satisfaction, pay satisfaction, satisfaction with supervisor, normative commitment, and affective commitment, tests were then carried out to test whether or not the relationship between SOS and intentions to quit was moderated by these variables. Each of the independent variables used in the model were centered prior to creating the interaction term with SOS and these centered variables were used together with their product. Centering was done to ensure multicollinearity effects were reduced between each variable and their interaction term (Baron and Kenny, 1989). All controls and independent variables were entered in the first step. In step 2, each interaction term was entered one at a time. For example, interaction terms between SOS and pay satisfaction were created and entered into a regression model. The same procedure was used for each interaction between SOS and job satisfaction, satisfaction with supervisor, normative
commitment, and affective commitment. There were no significant results among the 5 interactions tested. Therefore research questions 4 and 5 were not supported.
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

The primary purpose of this study was to understand the relationship among SOS, and the facets of work satisfaction and organizational commitment on intentions to quit. From a practical standpoint a secondary purpose was to contribute to applied research efforts to provide work organizations with information regarding how they can positively impact turnover intentions.

Since the analysis in this thesis was organized around specific research questions, the findings will be discussed in relation to each of these questions. The research questions developed in this paper were:

1. Does Stress Offset Score (SOS) predict intent to quit?

The study found that employees with high SOS have lower intentions to quit than employees with low SOS. For individuals whose stress was offset by perceived greater rewards and control, those rewards appeared to reduce the impact of the stressors with a concomitant reduction in intentions to quit. This study used a modified version of Shain’s (1999) Stress Satisfaction Offset Score (SSOS), which to my knowledge is the first comprehensive test of this construct (SOS) in Canada (i.e., these results demonstrate correlational evidence that stressor effects can be reduced by the presence of satisfiers). The results also complement and reinforce the theoretical notions first advanced by Karasek (1979) and his colleagues (e.g., Siegrist (1996) who found that satisfiers such as control could offset stressors such as demand.

These positive results support the theoretical utility of using a stress-offset type of measure to examine intentions to quit. Also, from a practical, management perspective, the results support the proposition that greater control over demanding job conditions,
and higher levels of recognition and reward for higher workload are keys to minimizing the potentially negative impact of these stressors elements (e.g., demand and ambiguity) on intention to quit.

2. Does work satisfaction mediate the predictive relationship of SOS on intentions to quit?

Work satisfaction was found to partially mediate the predictive relationship of SOS on intentions to quit. In fact, as a block, all three satisfaction facets (Job, Supervisor, and Pay) showed significant negative relationships with intentions to quit. Therefore, for researchers studying intentions to quit, these results indicate the need to measure and use all 3 constructs in their modeling. For practitioners interested in reducing turnover, all three facets clearly are important when designing interventions. Unlike some previous work (e.g., Scarpello & Campbell, 1983), the measures of work satisfaction in this study were facet based, which allowed the assessment of whether specific components of a construct were more strongly related to intention to quit than others. Although the strength of relationships differed, the major result (Table 4, Model 10) indicates all are significantly important. This study supported similar previous findings (e.g., Cotton & Tuttle, 1986) in that both job satisfaction and satisfaction with supervisor were significantly and negatively associated with intentions to quit. This strong finding for direct effects of job satisfaction and satisfaction with supervisor demonstrates both are important for organizations to focus on if they wish to reduce intentions to quit. It also reinforces the anecdotal notion that good jobs and good bosses can have a major effect on turnover in work organizations.
Findings suggest that various facets of work satisfaction mediate the influences of workplace stress on intentions to quit. Previous literature indicate, in particular, pay satisfaction is an important facet associated with intentions to quit (Ghiselli et al., 2001; Lum et al., 1998; Shields & Ward, 2001). However, in this study a statistically significant relationship was found for each facet of work satisfaction: job satisfaction, satisfaction with supervisor, and pay satisfaction, individually, in a block with other work satisfiers and in the presence of covariates and SOS. The fact that each was significant in all models is evidence that they have independent effects on intentions to quit. In fact the strongest predictor was job satisfaction not pay. The findings suggest that organizations should not only focus on work satisfaction as a whole, but also focus on each facet of work satisfaction to help create environments that promote these facet satisfactions in order to offset high levels of workplace stress and ensure a high level of employee performance and organizational productivity. Of course, it is possible that there are widely varying levels of importance attached to various facets of work satisfaction so in some instances some of these satisfactions will predict intentions to quit more than others.

Organizations can promote job satisfaction and satisfaction with supervisor by ensuring there is a match between employees interests and abilities and the job, thus, promoting job stimulation, providing clear organizational and supervisory expectations for employees, and lowering job ambiguity and reducing intentions to quit. Another area that organizations can affect to help reduce intentions to quit is making sure employee salaries are appropriate for the particular work being done, and the salaries are within the expected ranges for the particular position and work location. Organizations that
consider these factors in their salary programs have reported lower intentions to quit (Cascio, 1991), and this study reinforces this previous finding.

(3) Does organizational commitment mediate the predictive relationship of SOS on intention to quit?

Again, using the Baron and Kenny (1986) approach, the results of this study indicate that both affective and normative commitment partially mediated the predictive relationship of SOS on intentions to quit. In this series of tests SOS was correlated with intentions to quit. As well, SOS was correlated with organizational commitment, and organizational commitment was related to intentions to quit. After controlling the effect of SOS on intentions to quit by controlling for organizational commitment, the results demonstrated that organizational commitment partially mediated the SOS and intentions to quit relationship. Therefore, employees with higher perceptions of organizational commitment have lower intentions to quit. Researchers have investigated whether different facets of organizational commitment are differentially associated with intentions to quit (e.g., Allen & Meyer, 1990; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). For instance, Meyer, Allen, and Smith (1993) and Somers (1995) found an inverse relationship for both affective and normative commitment and intentions to quit. Supporting their previous findings, this study found a highly significant inverse relationship for both affective and normative commitment. Normative commitment was the strongest predictor (i.e., had the largest effect) on intentions to quit, which is contrary to some previous studies which have showed affective commitment to be the strongest predictor of intentions to quit (e.g., Jaros, 1997; Meyer, Allen, & Smith, 1993; Pare et al., 2001; Somers, 1995; Whitener &
Walz, 1993). There are no obvious reasons for this difference in strength, though it should be noted that both forms of commitment were strong predictors.

(4) Does work satisfaction moderate the predictive relationship of the SOS on intentions to quit?

No statistically significant moderating effects were found between SOS and each of work satisfaction facets; job satisfaction, satisfaction with supervisor, and pay satisfaction on intentions to quit. There are a number of possibilities for this null finding. It is possible that more sensitive measures of work satisfaction facets are required to indicate interactions, e.g., more reliable and/or more valid measures of work satisfaction facets. It is also possible that other facets of work satisfaction are moderators of the SOS and intentions to quit relationships e.g., benefits, co-worker, and psychosocial work environment. These are all areas for further research.

Another reason may be due to the sample selection because the sample is highly dominated by females and it is possible that gender interactions may occur and an interaction might exist for males and/or other demographic groups (e.g., younger or older workers). To test this, possible future research would need to locate samples with higher proportion of males than this study.

Finally, interactions are notoriously difficult to establish with lower power, which is related to sample size. Although this study had nearly 3,000 respondents it is possible for interactions to be found with a larger sample.
Does organizational commitment moderate the predictive relationship of SOS on intent to quit?

No statistically significant moderating relationships were found for SOS, organizational commitment (affective and normative commitment) and intentions to quit. The organizational commitment scales measure employees’ feelings about their level of personal involvement and sense of belonging at their organization. Again, the same arguments presented in the section immediately above for work satisfaction apply to the null findings in the section.

5.1 Strengths

This study improves on previous research in a number of important ways. First, this study uses a robust score by using multi-item scales that balance the effects of satisfiers with that of stressors. It does this with three of the main factors demonstrated in previous work (e.g., Karesek and Theorell, 1990, Seigrist, 1996). In addition, this work has been extended by including job ambiguity as a stressor variable to be offset by the satisfier variables. Therefore, a stress-offset approach is a significant improvement over “stressor only” studies (e.g., Leontaridi and Ward, 2002). This workplace Stress Offset Score (SOS) is composed of both stressors (demand and ambiguity) and satisfiers (control and reward) to take into account the good (satisfiers) that can offset the bad (stressors). The SOS measures the experiences of workplace stressors (e.g., demand and ambiguity) but also takes into account the effect of satisfiers (e.g., reward and control). This is a significant improvement over considerable previous research that relied on single-item measures, which are interestingly much less reliable.
The facet approach used in this study measured work satisfaction with multiple specific work satisfaction elements. This approach provides the potential to not only differentiate the main elements but practically speaking it provided a richer more diverse set of significant results. These significant results provide empirical evidence of a set of opportunities for managers and organizations to enrich worker’s work environments compared to the global approach to work satisfaction which many of the previous stress research studies examined (e.g., Scarpello and Campbell, 1983).

Another strength of this study is the generalizability of the results compared to many previous studies. For example, this study’s sample was drawn from multiple organizations, consisting of 21 organizations and a sample size of 2990 employees. This means one can better generalize the results of this study to the population or workers at large compared to those who used one organization and much smaller number of employees. The sample, although relatively homogeneous on gender, also contained a wide variety of workers on some other demographic characteristics e.g., full time and part time staff, hourly and salaried.

5.2 The Potential of Confound Among the Independent Variables

The potential for confounds among independent variables is a constant problem in social science research. This is particularly so in this study because SOS includes satisfiers (i.e., reward and control) and the facets of work satisfaction could also be considered as satisfiers. The bivariate correlations (see Table 2) shows SOS is significantly, but only moderately correlated, with each of the work satisfaction facets. Further, in this study’s preliminary analyses, a test for mulitcollinearity (i.e., VIF) found no significant issues. These two factors are strong evidence that the satisfaction measures
are sufficiently independent from the satisfiers in the SOS measure. The most important evidence, however, for a lack of confounding among these independent variables comes from the results in Table 3, Model 5. In this Model, SOS remained a significant predictor of intentions to quit while simultaneously each of the facets of work satisfaction was also significantly predictive of intentions to quit. In total all of these facts point to the conclusion that though the satisfiers were positively and significantly correlated to work satisfaction facets they were independent enough to all remain significant predictors of intentions to quit.

5.3 Limitations

As with all empirical research, this study also has limitations. First, a limitation of this study is that it used a cross-sectional design. Because it is a cross-sectional study this means the direction of causality cannot be determined, because the data was collected at a single point in time for each organization and, as well, there were no methodological controls over the strength of the predicting variables. While it might be difficult to carry out, future research needs to consider quasi-experimental, and possibly experimental, approaches to studying intentions to quit. For instance, one could find a control group which did not get an intervention for job, supervisor, or pay satisfaction interventions, which could then be compared to the intervention group to see if intentions to quit were affected.

Although I noted the heterogeneity of the sample as a strength, this study was limited by some sample characteristics. Notably, the sample was accidental and can not truly represent any population. Moreover, the sample was made up of predominantly Canadian Caucasian females. Results, therefore, should be considered as being more
generalizable to work organizations similar to those of this study, e.g., public sector, majority female. Randomly drawing a community sample would create more generalizable results.

Another methodological limitation is that all constructs are based on data from self-reported scores. As a result, self reported data, which can be biased by individual characteristics and psychological issue, such as private public self, may have caused distortions as respondents are sometimes reporting about their own behaviours. This may therefore, have affected the measurement of employees’ perceptions in self-reported surveys. This is a common issue, but in the case of this study the dependent variable, intentions to quit, is self reported and may be much different in terms of actual intent or real quitting. Using actual turnover rates would be a desirable improvement.

In this study the validity of the data collected is a consequence of the respondents’ understanding of the questions and willingness to answer them honestly is another potential limitation. Even though the questionnaire has been used in multiple organizations and the respondents were promised anonymity, invalid data may have been collected in this data set.

5.4 Future Research

An enhanced understanding of the antecedents of stressors in the workplace would result in an increased understanding of the stress factors fundamental to employees’ work related to attitudes and behaviours. It is beyond the scope of this study to explore all the antecedents and consequences of stressors in the workplace. However, continuing on from this research and expanding / examining additional antecedents and consequences would help broaden the knowledge in organizational behaviour research.
Also this study could be improved upon by collecting longitudinal or repeated measures data, i.e., data from the same survey year over year. Using the same people year over year would be an interesting way of looking at employees’ attitudes towards the variables of interest and later intentions to quit. Thus, longitudinal research is recommended as an important improvement on this study for future researchers.

One final area is that future research should include some personality or personal state variables. Although the final regression equation accounted for a fairly high amount of variance there is approximately 40 percent unexplained. These types of variables may well explain a good part of that variation as well as adding more complexity to the model.

5.5 Conclusions

The primary purpose of this study was to develop and test a model that examines the mediating and moderating role of work satisfaction facets and organizational commitment facets on the relationship between SOS and intentions to quit. The test of the model describes what factors are the most important to understanding the relationship between SOS and intentions to quit and how work satisfaction and organizational commitment impact this relationship. This study also indicates the relationship between SOS and intentions to quit across different levels of job satisfaction, satisfaction with supervisor, pay satisfaction, normative commitment, and affective commitment. In spite of the presence of these five predictors of intentions to quit and four demographics (see Table 4, Model 10), the relationship between SOS and intentions to quit is still significant. This means that the satisfiers (i.e., control and reward) are still important in offsetting the stressors (i.e., demand and ambiguity) in terms of an employee’s intention to quit the organization.
Theoretically, researchers predicting intentions to quit should include SOS as a variable of important consequences. This study provides a basis for organizational psychology researchers to further test the relationship among these variables. The findings of this study provide practitioners (e.g., HR departments, managers, supervisors, and organizational development consultants), with insight into the formation of employees’ perceptions around intentions to quit, and with some guidelines for managing employees by documenting work satisfaction and organizational commitment to draw positive attitudinal and behavioural responses from employees. Practitioners should implement programs and create interventions that increase the SOS score by increasing satisfiers (e.g., control and reward) and reducing stressors (e.g., demand and ambiguity).

In today’s organizations, many employers are interested in becoming employers of choice, making the claim their employees are their greatest resource. Therefore, attracting good employees and retaining the best available staff is important. This study examined the retention element of being an employer of choice and these findings support some important variables related to retaining employees. In addition to employee retention, this study supports the notion that there are a number of controllable factors that influence the costly organizational outcome of quitting. The results of this study suggest that organizations may be able to have some control over intentions to quit by changing the work conditions that were measured in the study. Organizations can focus on these factors in order to decrease stressors (i.e., demand and effort) in the workplace, and increase work satisfaction and organizational commitment, thereby decreasing the likelihood of quitting behaviours.
REFERENCES


Figure A1. Factors expected to affect turnover intentions.
The Mediating Effect of Work Satisfaction:

Figure A2a. Models of workplace stress mediation.

The Mediating Effect of Organizational Commitment:

Figure A2b. Models of workplace stress mediation.
The Moderating Effect of Job Satisfaction:

![Diagram of Job Satisfaction Model]

*Figure A3a.* Models of workplace stress moderation.

The Moderating Effect of Organizational Commitment:

![Diagram of Organizational Commitment Model]

*Figure A3b.* Models of workplace stress moderation.
## APPENDIX B

### Study Items

Table B1.

### Stress Offset Score (SOS) Scale Items

#### Job Control

1. I have a lot of say over what happens on my job.
2. My job allows me to make a lot of decisions on my own.
3. I have enough freedom as to how I do my work.
4. Overall, I have control over my job activities.

#### Job Reward

1. If I make a suggestion to improve something it will be taken seriously.
2. I frequently get feedback on how well I am performing my job.
3. It is likely I would get rewarded for pointing out a problem in this organization.
4. Submitting suggestions for improvement is worthwhile in this organization.
5. Overall, I am satisfied with the way individual work is recognized and rewarded in this organization.

#### Job Demand

1. My job is not stressful.
2. My workload is reasonable.
3. I rarely feel overwhelmed by my workload.
4. I have enough time to do my job adequately.
5. Overall, my workload is not stressful.

#### Job Ambiguity (recoded from Job Clarity)

1. It is clear what is expected of me on the job.
2. My manager / supervisor helps me to set clear work goals to achieve.
3. I know what job performance standards are expected of me.
4. Overall, I am clear about what is expected of me to do my job.
Table B2.

*Work Satisfaction Scale Items*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Satisfaction (α = .92)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. My current job is interesting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. My current job is not boring.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. My current job gives me a sense of accomplishment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Overall, I am satisfied with my current job.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supervisor Satisfaction (α = .95)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I trust my supervisor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I get enough praise from my supervisor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. My supervisor asks for my input.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. My supervisor gives me useful feedback on how well I am performing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I feel comfortable approaching my supervisor with a problem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Overall, I am satisfied with my supervisor.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pay Satisfaction (α = .95)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I am paid the same as people with similar backgrounds, in similar organizations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I am paid fairly for my work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I get enough pay for all the work I do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Overall, I am satisfied with my pay.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table B3.

**Organizational Commitment Scale Items**

**Affective Commitment (α = .92)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career in this organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>I really feel as if this organization’s problems are my own.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>I feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>I feel emotionally attached to this organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Overall, I feel I am personally involved with this organization.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Normative Commitment (α = .91)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>I feel an obligation to remain with this organization as my employer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>I would feel guilty if I left this organization now.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>This organization deserves my loyalty.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>I would not leave this organization right now because I have a sense of obligation to the people in it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Overall, I feel I am loyal to this organization.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table B4

*Comparison of Interim Sample to Study Sample*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Interim Sample</th>
<th>Final Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male (%)</td>
<td>33.5%</td>
<td>35.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female (%)</td>
<td>66.5%</td>
<td>64.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age (M)</strong></td>
<td>42.38 years</td>
<td>41.90 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employment Status</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hourly</td>
<td>57.0%</td>
<td>59.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salaried</td>
<td>41.5%</td>
<td>38.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organizational Tenure</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 3 years</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
<td>18.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 – 6 years</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 – 10 years</td>
<td>43.3%</td>
<td>49.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>