

A Meta-Analytic Review of Job Embeddedness and Turnover Intention in South-East Asia

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Executive Summary

This meta-analytic study examines the relationship between job embeddedness and turnover intention across Thailand and Indonesia, addressing whether job embeddedness theory — developed primarily in Western contexts — retains predictive validity in South-East Asian settings. The authors synthesised 22 independent samples totalling 8,196 participants drawn from diverse sectors including healthcare, hospitality, banking, manufacturing, and IT, covering studies published between 2011 and 2021. The analysis finds a significant negative association between overall job embeddedness and turnover intention (corrected $r = -.49$), with organisational embeddedness ($r = -.51$) emerging as a stronger predictor than community embeddedness ($r = -.22$). Among the three sub-dimensions, fit ($r = -.32$) and sacrifice ($r = -.33$) demonstrated significant negative correlations, while the link dimension ($r = -.10$) did not reach statistical significance. Job embeddedness outperformed conventional retention predictors including job satisfaction ($r = -.30$) and organisational commitment ($r = -.46$). The authors conclude that job embeddedness theory generalises to South-East Asian populations, though the non-significance of the link dimension suggests cultural and technological contextual factors may attenuate certain theoretical pathways.

Key Insights

1. Overall job embeddedness shows a moderate-to-strong negative correlation with turnover intention ($r = -.49$) across South-East Asian samples, supporting cross-cultural applicability of the construct.
2. Organisational embeddedness ($r = -.51$) is a substantially stronger predictor of turnover intention than community embeddedness ($r = -.22$), indicating that work-specific attachment drives retention more than broader social ties in these contexts.
3. The link dimension of job embeddedness is not a statistically significant predictor of turnover intention in this sample, diverging from Western findings and suggesting that the number of interpersonal connections may matter less than fit and sacrifice in Thailand and Indonesia.
4. Job embeddedness demonstrates stronger predictive power for turnover intention than established variables such as job satisfaction ($r = -.30$) and organisational commitment ($r = -.46$), positioning it as a potentially more discriminating retention construct.
5. Gender did not significantly moderate the job embeddedness–turnover intention relationship across the sampled populations.

Practical Takeaways

- Organisations operating in Thailand and Indonesia may find that investments in person-job and person-organisation fit, along with tangible workplace sacrifices such as benefits and development

programmes, are associated with lower turnover intention more strongly than efforts focused on quantitative relationship-building.

- Retention assessment tools that incorporate organisational embeddedness dimensions — particularly fit and sacrifice — may offer stronger predictive signal than job satisfaction or organisational commitment measures alone in South-East Asian workforce contexts.

Frameworks Mentioned

Job Embeddedness — A retention framework conceptualising employee attachment through three dimensions — fit (compatibility with job and organisation), links (connections to people and the community), and sacrifice (perceived costs of leaving) — examined here at both organisational and community levels.

Critical Analysis

Strengths: The study aggregates 22 independent samples with a combined N of 8,196, providing adequate statistical power for meta-analytic estimation. Coverage of multiple sectors and a decade of studies (2011–2021) enhances generalisability within the two-country scope. The use of corrected correlation coefficients and confidence intervals adds methodological rigour. The direct comparison with job satisfaction and organisational commitment benchmarks contextualises the findings usefully. **Limitations:** The geographic scope is confined to Thailand and Indonesia, limiting claims of broad South-East Asian applicability — other ASEAN nations with distinct cultural profiles are excluded. The study relies on self-reported turnover intention rather than actual turnover behaviour in most included studies, which introduces common-method variance concerns. The non-significance of the link dimension is attributed qualitatively to cultural and technological factors without empirical testing of these moderators. Approximately 64% female representation across studies may not reflect all sector demographics. The article's practical implications section edges into prescriptive language ('should prioritise'), which extends beyond what meta-analytic evidence strictly supports. Publication bias, a standard concern in meta-analyses, is not explicitly discussed in the available abstract. The conclusions assume relatively uniform applicability across sectors that may have structurally different labour markets.

Organizational Practice

The article describes organisational practices related to employee retention assessment across healthcare, hospitality, banking, manufacturing, and IT sectors in Thailand and Indonesia. Practices include measuring person-job and person-organisation fit, structuring workplace benefits and development investments as retention mechanisms, and using embeddedness dimensions as inputs to HR retention planning.

Strategic Implications

The finding that job embeddedness outperforms job satisfaction and organisational commitment as a predictor of turnover intention suggests that PMS frameworks centred solely on satisfaction metrics may have limited retention forecasting utility in South-East Asian contexts. The differential predictive power of organisational versus community embeddedness indicates that workplace-specific attachment mechanisms are more closely tied to retention outcomes than broader social integration in Thailand and Indonesia. The non-significance of the link dimension raises questions about whether relationship quantity metrics commonly embedded in engagement surveys translate into retention signal in these cultural

settings. Organisations expanding PMS frameworks in the region may find value in distinguishing between embeddedness sub-dimensions rather than treating the construct as unitary.

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