Job Embeddedness

A Summary of Workforce Research Evidence Relevant to the Child Welfare Field

What is job embeddedness?

Job embeddedness refers to the extent to which employees are connected to their jobs through a social web. It includes three aspects, each of which is considered in light of the job or organization ("on-the-job embeddedness") and the community ("off-the job embeddedness"): (a) links—the extent to which people have links to other people or activities, (b) fit—the extent to which their job and community are similar to or fit with the other aspects in their life space, and (c) sacrifice—what they would give up if they left, especially if they had to move to another city or home (Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, Sablynski, & Erez, 2001).

Why is job embeddedness important?

Job embeddedness is important because it is positively associated with job satisfaction, affective organizational commitment (an aspect of organizational commitment that is based on identification with, involvement in, and emotional attachment to the organization; Allen & Meyer, 1990), and job performance (Jiang, Lu, McKay, Lee, & Mitchell, 2012). Most important, as a variable intended to describe why people stay, it is negatively related to job search behavior, turnover intentions, and turnover, particularly in public organizations (Jiang et al., 2012; Rubenstein, Eberly, Lee, & Mitchell, 2017). On-the-job embeddedness is more strongly predictive of both performance and turnover than off-the-job embeddedness (Jiang et al., 2012).

How can job embeddedness be increased?

Research on job embeddedness thus far has focused on assessing factors that are merely associated with embeddedness, not on testing strategies for improving it or on examining whether improving it affects outcomes like turnover. Nonetheless, typical suggestions for improving it include activities that establish connections at work and at home, such as work parties, informal gatherings, good opportunities and benefits, use of teams and committees, ensuring a good fit between a person's skills and the job, flexible scheduling, and access to community attractions (Crossley, Bennett, Jex, & Burnfield, 2007; Lee, Burch, & Mitchell, 2014).

QIC-WD Takeaways

► Job embeddedness is moderately predictive of turnover and minimally predictive of performance.

- On-the-job embeddedness is more strongly predictive of both performance and turnover than off-the-job embeddedness.
- Research is needed to develop and test strategies to improve job embeddedness and to test whether improving job embeddedness reduces turnover.
- Suggested, but untested, strategies for improving job embeddedness generally involve establishing employees' connections at work and at home.

References

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Author(s)

Megan Paul, PhD, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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