The Relationship Between Training and Employees' Turnover Intentions and the Role of Organizational Commitment

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Abstract

Firms offer training to employees to receive better company results. But training can also lead to more turnover intentions because better skilled employees are more employable in other firms. This is stated by the human capital theory of Becker (1962). Regarding the reciprocity theory, training can lead to more commitment and subsequently can reduce the turnover intentions of employees. This thesis describes the direct and indirect effects between training hours and employees' turnover intentions, and also the role of organizational commitment. Results in this study are based on 79 employees working at a Dutch bank, who filled in the online questionnaire. After executing the preliminary analyses and Pearson's correlation analysis, hierarchical multiple regression analyses are executed to test the hypotheses of this study. None of the four hypotheses were confirmed, because control variables played an important role in the relationships between the variables.

Keywords: training, organizational commitment, turnover intentions, human capital theory, reciprocity theory, social exchange theory (SET).

Introduction

Retaining employees is important for firms to generate organizational success. Firms invest in employees to increase the knowledge and productivity in the firm, but also to keep the employee satisfied and decrease their mobility. Retaining important employees (i.e. decreasing turnover intentions) can be a critical success factor for receiving competitive advantage. Theories confirm the link between investing in human resources and the effects on employees' turnover intentions, wherein training is an often used investment of firms (Becker, 1962; Mincer, 1962; Mincer, 1988; Levine, 1993; Egan, Yang & Bartlett, 2004). Training is defined by Mincer (1962) as 'an investment in acquisition of skill or in improvement of worker productivity' (p. 51). Investing in human resources is called in Becker's theory (1962) as 'investing in human capital', which is an often used theory in training researches. Firms can invest in employees by offering training programs but this can also be a pitfall, because better skilled employees are also more employable in other firms (Becker, 1962).

The training – turnover intention link is explored in earlier studies. Different conclusions were found. On the one hand training leads to less turnover intentions because employees act reciprocally towards the firm's investment and therefore show increased commitment to the firm (Gouldner, 1960; Leuven, Oosterbeek, Sloof & van Klaveren, 2005). Second, training also leads to better skilled employees, who are more employable in other firms (Becker, 1962). This means that training can affect employees' turnover intentions while the current firm pays all the training costs.

This study examined the research question '*What are the effects of training on employees' turnover intentions and what is the role of organizational commitment*?'. Direct and indirect effects of training on turnover intentions are discovered. The direct effect is examined based on the human capital perspective, that training contributing to a worker's human capital improves his chances on the outside labour market. The indirect effect occurs through the mediation of the training – turnover link by organizational commitment. The rationale behind this indirect effect is that training might improve commitment by appealing to the reciprocity norm and thus reduces turnover intentions. Besides, organizational commitment is one of the most important predictors of turnover intentions (Farrell & Rusbult, 1981). This study focuses on employees of a Dutch bank. The gathered data includes the measurement of training by asking the amount of training hours wherein the employee participated the last year and the last three years. Organizational

commitment is divided into three different types: affective, continuance and normative commitment. The variable turnover intentions is measured by three questions about the intentions to stay or leave the firm and how likely it is that employees leave the firm in the next year. Besides, control variables like age, gender, education level, function scale, job satisfaction, wage growth, work location and job tenure are added to the research. These control variables are chosen to find out if they affect the relationship between training and turnover intentions and to examine differences between employee groups.

The study contributes to the current literature by getting more insights in the effects of training on turnover intentions and other predictors. Different conclusions were found in previous researches. Organizations can use the results in order to decrease unnecessary mobility of their workers by knowing the causes of the turnover intentions and to find the right balance between employee and organization. The aim of this study is to get more insights in the factors that lead to turnover intentions of the individual worker, with emphasis on the variables training and organizational commitment. Results show no significant effects between the variables from the hypothesized model. None of the hypotheses are confirmed. After including control variables, the models became significant. Further research is necessary in order to get significant results.

In the next section the theoretical framework follows, which includes the hypothesized model and the description of the direct and indirect effects of the relationship between training and turnover intentions. Thereafter the method section follows, including measures and analyses. Subsequently, the results section shows the outcomes from the executed analyses, appointed in the method section. Finally, the discussion section follows wherein outcomes, conclusions, limitations, implications and recommendations for future research are described.

Hypothesized model

The graphic illustration of the hypothesized links of this study is presented in figure 1. It illustrates two effects that training may have on turnover intentions: direct, through increasing one's chances by boosting one's human capital, and indirect, through affecting organizational commitment which in turn influences turnover intentions.

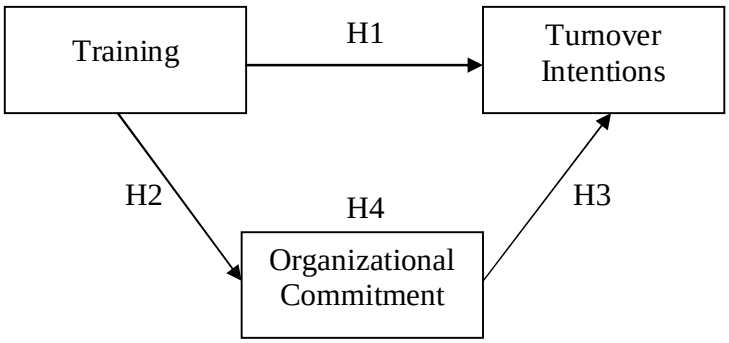

Figure 1. Hypothesized model

The direct effect

A well-known and often used theory to explain the effects of training on turnover intentions is the human capital investment theory of Becker (1962). It points out that firms invest in training programs to affect the workers' productivity. Becker (1962) distinguishes general training and specific training. General training is not only useful in the current firm, but also in many others. The risk of this type of training is that workers get more employable in other firms and intentions to leave the organization will increase. When this leads to actual turnover, general training brings in no returns. On the other hand, specific training is mainly effective on the productivity in the current firm. Specific training doesn't increase the employability in other firms (Becker, 1962). However, as Loewenstein and Spletzer (1999) suggested in their study about general and specific training, distinguishing between different types of training is quite difficult. On-the-job training is mostly general and almost every acquired skill and knowledge is useful to other companies. In fact, general training is strongly correlated with productivity growth, whereas specific training has no significant relationship with productivity, shown in the study of Barrett and O'Connell (2001). Little recent evidence confirms the different types of training and their effects. Therefore, this study focuses on employer-provided training as such, without separating into general and specific.

In this study the choice is made for turnover *intentions* instead of *actual* turnover because there is no information available about employees who already left. Thereby, work related attitudes are assumed to affect withdrawal cognitions. This has, in turn, a direct relation with actual turnover (Mobley, Horner & Hollingsworth, 1978). Turnover intentions can be described

as thinking about leaving the organization and the intentions to search for another job (Mobley et al., 1978; Benson, 2006). There are a lot of predictors of turnover intentions, for example: age, education level (Bright, 2008), job satisfaction (Egan et al., 2004), tenure, promotion, organizational commitment (Benson, 2006) and so on. Organizational commitment and job satisfaction are often used variables in studies that examine effects between job behaviour, or job attitudes and the withdrawal decision process, which leads to turnover intentions and subsequently to actual turnover (Tett & Meyer, 1993).

Workers can increase their productivity on the job by following training programs. These programs are limited based on the related costs such as material costs, teaching costs and the costs for time and effort (Becker, 1962). The advantages of these programs consists of the improvement of employees' capacities and knowledge, which means that training improves the job performance. This is also concluded by Bartel (1995) and Dearden, Reed and Van Reenen (2006), who confirmed the relationship between training and productivity. Dearden et al. (2006) even concluded that training is a better predictor for productivity than wages. Productivity is an important variable because firms have to compete with other companies in their market to get competitive advantage. The workers' value plays an important role in this. Firms can achieve a better market position when the resources of the firm are valuable, rare, difficult to imitate or difficult to substitute (Barney, 1991). Companies invest in their human resources to increase the workers' value, in terms of job performance and productivity, and subsequently to achieve competitive advantages (Barney, 1991). At the same time, improving productivity through training can affect turnover intentions by increasing worker's employability in other firms (Becker, 1962). Therefore, it is important to make a good balance between the organizational goals and the individual goals to decrease unnecessary mobility of workers.

Empirical evidence already examined the direct relationship between training and turnover intentions. Mincer (1988) found a positive and significant relationship between training and staying in the firm, and Benson (2006) found a negative relation between on-the-job training and turnover intentions. So based on these studies there will be a negative relationship between training and turnover intentions. On the other hand, Levine (1993) found that there is no negative significant effect between on-the-job training and turnover intentions in the US and Japan. Egan et al. (2004) found a weak significant and negative effect between the learning culture and turnover intentions. The link became stronger when the variable job satisfaction is included. The

next hypothesis, based on the human capital theory of Becker (1962), explores if the amount of training that a firm offers will affect the employees' intentions to leave the firm:

Hypothesis 1: *There will be a positive direct effect between training and turnover intentions.*

The varying outcomes of earlier studies can be explained by the existence of other variables that affect the relationship between training and turnover intentions. Variables that were found to have an effect on the direct relationship are organizational commitment (Benson, 2006), job satisfaction (Egan et al., 2004), and wage growth (Pencavel, 1972; Mincer, 1988).

The role of organizational commitment

The direct effect of training on turnover intentions, based on the human capital perspective, may be not positive for retaining employees but training can have positive effects on other variables important for predicting turnover. The prediction of turnover (intentions) is tested in several studies. In the study of Mincer (1988) the importance of wage growth in decreasing turnover is underpinned. Egan et al. (2004) concluded in their study that job satisfaction is an important predictor of turnover intentions. Job satisfaction is found to be a mediator between the learning culture and turnover intentions. Benson (2006) found that training has a significant and positive influence on organizational commitment, and that organizational commitment has a significant and negative effect on turnover intentions. This leads to the important role of organizational commitment, that might also occur as a result of offering training.

This study is focused on the role of organizational commitment in predicting turnover intentions and other important variables, like wage growth and job satisfaction, are added as control variables. The reason why organizational commitment might occur when firms offer training to the employee is based on the *reciprocity theory*. This theory suggests that the employee will react on the received training by wanting to reward the firm which he now perceives as being kind to him (Gouldner, 1960; Leuven, Oosterbeek, Sloof & van Klaveren, 2005). One way of acting reciprocally to the firm is by showing increased organizational commitment. The social exchange theory (SET) also emphasizes the reciprocity rules (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Relationships between employer and employee change over

time and can result in mutual trust and commitments. Reciprocity is an interdependent phenomenon between two parties. The investments from one party have an effect on the responses from the other party, which is called a 'reciprocal exchange' (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Translating to this study, the investment of the firm in terms of offering training will lead to a response from employees by acting more committed to the firm.

Meyer and Allen (1997), suggested that a "committed employee is one who will stay with the organization through thick and thin, attends work regularly, puts in a full day (and maybe more), protects company assets, and who shares company goals" (p. 3). An earlier study of Meyer and Allen (1991) created a three-component model of organizational commitment, which includes three types of commitment: "affective commitment reflects a desire to maintain membership in the organization that develops largely as the result of work experiences that create feelings of comfort and personal competence" (p. 82), "continuance commitment reflects a need to remain, and results from recognition of the costs associated with leaving" (p. 82), and "normative commitment reflects a feeling of obligation to continue employment. Employees with a high level of normative commitment feel that they ought to remain with the organization" (p. 67). This last type of commitment includes the feeling of employees that they have to reciprocate the organizational investment and have to repay that in terms of commitment (Scholl, 1981).

Reciprocity can be seen as an exchange relationship that hold workers into the firm (Scholl, 1981; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). In this way it can be seen as a commitment device. Employees might act more committed when they receive training because they appreciate the companies' offer and will respond on that investment. Committed workers are beneficial for the firm because they are more valuable in terms of better performances, more effectiveness and the willingness to stay at the current firm (Scholl, 1981). In summary, investments in training can lead to committed employees through the repayment of the firm's investment.

Steers (1977) explored in his study the prediction and outcomes of organizational commitment. The conclusion of his research contains also the assumption of exchange, in which he stated that firms have to respond on employees' desires, needs and expectations in order to get them attached to the organization. Bartlett (2001) stated in his study that training has positive effects on organizational commitment. He found a positive relationship between hours spent on training and affective commitment. Benson (2006) found also a significant and positive effect

between on-the-job training and organizational commitment. Based on the reciprocity theory (Gouldner, 1960) and SET (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005), training might lead to more committed employees. Relating to the different types of commitment, training probably affects affective commitment positive because employees want to create work experience and competencies and the offered training will generate that expectation. Normative commitment might also be influenced positive by training because training emphasizes the feeling to reciprocate. On the other hand, continuance commitment might be influenced negative by training because training leads to betters skilled employees, who are probably less afraid off the costs associated with leaving the firm. This is related to the Human Capital theory of Becker (1962). Employees that participated in training, are better employable in other firms. This leads to hypothesis 2:

Hypothesis 2a: *There will be a positive direct effect between training and affective commitment.*

Hypothesis 2b: *There will be a negative direct effect between training and continuance commitment.*

Hypothesis 2c: *There will be a positive direct effect between training and normative commitment.*

Additionally, committed workers might have more intentions to stay in the firm because commitment is an important predictor of turnover, according to the study of Farrel and Rusbult (1981). In the study of Steers (1977) there is found that the most important result of increased commitment is a stable workforce, which means more intentions to remain in the firm and less employee turnover. If the motivation and challenges of employees decreases, they probably get more intentions to change jobs. Jaros (1997) tested the effects of the three different types of commitment from the three-component model of Meyer and Allen (1991) on turnover intentions. He concluded that all three types of organizational commitment have a significant and negative relationship with turnover intentions, with affective commitment being the strongest predictor of all. Therefore, it is important to separate these different types of commitment in their effects on

turnover intentions. It is important to explore the effects of commitment on turnover intentions to find out if the investments of the firm are valuable, given the direct effect with turnover behaviour (Mobley et al., 1978; Sjöberg & Sverke, 2000). If managers are aware of the predictors of organizational commitment, they can focus on the modulation of it, which will affect employees' turnover behaviour. In order to have influence on this, it is important to also explore the effects between organizational commitment and turnover intentions. Also regarding the reciprocity theory, it is not right to leave a firm that helped the worker (Scholl, 1981). This leads to hypothesis 3:

Hypothesis 3a: *There will be a negative direct effect between affective commitment and turnover intentions.*

Hypothesis 3b: *There will be a negative direct effect between continuance commitment and turnover intentions.*

Hypothesis 3c: *There will be a negative direct effect between normative commitment and turnover intentions.*

Based on the direct effect mentioned in hypothesis 2 that training will lead to more organizational commitment, and the expectation that there is an effect between commitment and turnover intentions (hypothesis 3), an indirect (mediation) effect arises between training and turnover intentions. This means that training might affect the employees' turnover intentions, through the mediation effect of commitment:

Hypothesis 4a: *The negative effect between training and turnover intentions will be mediated by affective commitment.*

Hypothesis 4b: *The positive effect between training and turnover intentions will be mediated by continuance commitment.*

Hypothesis 4c: *The negative effect between training and turnover intentions will be mediated by normative commitment.*

Sample and procedure

The study company is a Dutch-bank. The bank is a large international organization with hundreds of locations around the Netherlands. The sample consists of different types of randomly selected employees from different levels of the organization. The questionnaire is distributed to about 250 employees, 100 respondents filled in the questionnaire and 79 were usable for the study. The other respondents did not fill in the questionnaire completely, so the output contained too many missing values. The job functions that the sample included vary (e.g. account managers, HR assistants, advisors, secretaries). 62,0% of the respondents are female, 38,0% are male. The mean age is 38,95 years with a range of 22-58 years. 55,7% of the respondents are HBO educated, 8,9% finished an university program. 26,6% are MBO educated, the other respondents are lower educated. The mean job tenure is 14 years and the working hours based on the respondents contract are 40 hours (1,3%), 36 hours (53,2%), 32 hours or less (45,6%). Cross-sectional data is gathered by a web-based questionnaire to reach different locations in the Netherlands quickly. 58,2% of the respondents are located at location A, 24,1% at location B, 12,7% at location C and 5,1% worked elsewhere.

The questionnaire is sent to several HR-managers and HR-accountants of the bank and they have sent it to the employees randomly. The questionnaire included a cover letter with information about the content of the study and to guarantee the anonymity of the respondents. All respondents filled in the questionnaire online.

Measures

In this section, the variables from the questionnaire are explained based on the content of the questionnaire, reliability and the answer scales. Descriptives, means and standard deviation are shown in table 1.

Training is measured with a two item questionnaire to examine the amount of training the employees received the last year and the last three years, offered by the firm. The variable is measured with the following questions: 'How many hours of training have you attended in the

last year?' and 'How many hours of training have you attended in the last three year?'. The mean training hours in the last year were 108 hours with a range from 0-655 hours and the mean training hours in the last three years were 233 hours with a range from 0-1965 hours.

Organizational commitment is measured with a 15-item questionnaire of de Gilder, van den Heuvel and Ellemers (1997). This Dutch questionnaire separates affective, continuance and normative commitment and is based on the three component model of Meyer and Allen (1991). Nine items of the scale of Meyer and Allen (1991) are omitted because of the changed reliability through the translation from English to Dutch (de Gilder et al., 1997). An example of the five-item scale of affective commitment is 'This organization means a lot to me'. The five-item scale of continuance commitment includes for example 'It would be very hard for me to leave my organization right now, even if I wanted to'. The subscale normative commitment includes 'Jumping from organization to organization does not seem at all unethical to me'. The answer scale consists of a seven-point Likert scale ranging from totally disagree (1) to totally agree (7). The reliability of the total scale in this study is good with a Cronbach's Alpha of .861. The reliability of the subscales affective commitment ($\alpha = .833$), continuance commitment ($\alpha = .853$) and normative commitment ($\alpha = .836$) were good.

The dependent variable *turnover intentions* is measured with a questionnaire from Meyer, Allen and Smith (1993) consisting of three items. It includes the following items: 'How frequently do you think about leaving your current employer?, 'How likely is it that you search for a job in another organization?' and 'How likely is it that you actually leave the organization in the next year?'. The first item is answered with a seven point scale ranging from never (1) to always (7). The second and third item is also answered with a seven point scale, but those were ranging from likely (1) to unlikely (7). The reliability of the scale is good ($\alpha = .855$).

Control variables were included in the study to find out if other variables affect the relationship between training, organizational commitment and turnover intentions. The control variables were chosen because they might influence the variables commitment and turnover intentions according the literature. The control variables gender and location were chosen to find out if there are differences between male and female and between different locations, because not every bank has the same approach. To exclude the possibility that there are differences between locations, this control variables is added to the study. The included control variables in this study were gender, age, function scale, education level, working hours, job tenure, job

satisfaction, location and wage growth. The job satisfaction scale is measured with a Dutch 9-item questionnaire from the VBBA of Van Veldhoven (2002). The answer scales consists of two answer possibilities: yes or no. The Cronbach's Alpha of the job satisfaction scale is .62. Wage growth is measured with two items: 'Did you receive wage growth after or during a training program?' and 'Do you think this wage growth is adequate based on your qualifications and the market position?'. Table 1 shows that only 14.9% of the respondents received wage growth after a training program. 55.3% thinks this wage growth is adequately based on qualifications and market position.

In the next table, the descriptive, means and standard deviation of the used variables are shown.

Table 1. Descriptive, means and standard deviation

	Mean	*SD*
Descriptives		
Age	38.95	9.8
Education level[a]	5.58	1.0
Job tenure	14.1	12.3
Working hours	32.1	5.4
Function scale[b]	5.9	1.6
Dependent variable		
Total turnover intentions	8.39	4.1
Independent variables		
Training hours last year	108.3	140.3
Training hours last three years	233.1	353.2
Organizational commitment		
Affective commitment	25.1	5.4
Continuance commitment	20.5	7.1
Normative commitment	19.2	5.6
Job satisfaction	17.3	1.1
Wage growth[c]		
Wage growth adequately	1.4	0.5

Notes. N = 79

[a] Coding education level: (1) primary school, (2) lower secondary school, (3) Mavo/VMBO, (4) Havo, VWO, Gymnasium, (5) MBO, (6) HBO, (7) University.

[b] Coding function scale is ranging from (1) low to (10) high.

[c] 14.9% received wage growth after a training program

Preliminary analysis

The analysis started with excluding missing values, outliers and correcting errors that occurred in the data set. Also negatively wording items are recoded before calculation was possible. The normality of the scales is assessed by examining the Skewness and Kurtosis values and by comparing the mean and the 5% Trimmed Mean. The commitment scale is normal distributed and the turnover intention scale is reasonably normal distributed. The linearity and homoscedasticity between the variables is indicated with a scatter plot (Pallant, 2007, p. 124). The assumptions were not violated.

A one-way between-groups analysis of variance (ANOVA) is executed to explore the differences between the groups gender and location. No significant differences were found between men and women or between locations. This means that gender and location did not influence organizational commitment or turnover intentions in this study. The control variables gender and location were no longer taken into account in this research.

In order to test the strength and direction between the variables, Pearson's correlation analysis is used. As can be seen in table 2, more training hours leads to less turnover intentions. This is not corresponding with hypothesis 1 of this study. Control variables that have a significant correlation with turnover intentions are job satisfaction ($r=.325$, $sig<0.01$) and wage growth ($r=-.317$, $sig<0.01$). Age, job tenure and job satisfaction have significant correlations with (types of) commitment. These types of commitment have a non significant, but negative correlation with turnover intentions. This negative effect is expected in hypothesis 3, although the correlations are not very strong. Overall, the correlations from the Pearsons's correlation analysis are low.

The training hours variables are highly correlated with each other ($r=.714$) as can be seen in table 2. In order to not violate the multicollinearity problem, the training hours variables are added in the regression analysis separately.

Model analysis

In order to test hypothesis 1, a single regression analysis is executed. The variable turnover intentions is entered as dependent variable and training as the independent variable. Separate analyses were executed for training hours last year and training hours last three years. Multiple

Table 2. Correlation matrix

Scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. Training hours last year	1	.714**	-.081	-.006	-.118	-.038	-.180	-.084	-.038	.081	.102	.206	-.177
2. Training hours last three years		1	-.137	-.123	-.139	-.032	-.093	-.095	-.059	.141	.117	.167	-.027
3. Total commitment			1	.633**	.810**	.747**	.525**	.479**	-.311**	-.192	-.081	-,270*	-.137
4. Affective commitment				1	.241*	.240*	.177	.142	-.415**	.030	-.014	-.193	-.129
5. Continuance commitment					1	.433**	.594**	.555**	-.119	-.165	-.117	-.284*	-.082
6. Normative commitment						1	.301**	.303**	-.190	-.266*	-.031	-.098	-.093
7. Age							1	.877**	-.279*	.038	-.235	-.291**	-.037
8. Job tenure								1	-.058	-.151	-.085	-.291**	-.058
9. Total satisfaction									1	.069	-.194	.117	.325**
10. Function scale										1	-.016	.330**	.181
11. Wage growth											1	.183	-.317**
12. Working hours												1	-.106
13. Total turnover intentions													1

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

regression is used to test if the control variables have influence on the direct effect. In order to test hypothesis two, a regression analysis of the dependent variable organizational commitment and the independent variable training is executed. In the same way, hypothesis 3 is tested with organizational commitment as independent variable and turnover intentions as dependent variable. Next, running a regression analysis with turnover intention as dependent variable, organizational commitment as mediator and training as independent variable is necessary. With these analyses the mediation effect can be interpreted (Baron & Kenny, 1986). Finally, the control variables are added.

The Model Summary shows the R Square, which means the overall variance explained by the model, and also shows the significance of the model as a whole. The ANOVA table shows the regression of the models and significance of the separate models by a F-test. In the Coefficients table, the significance of the variables and the Beta values can be found.

Results

The results from the regression analysis in table 3 and table 4 show that there is no significant relationship between training hours last year and turnover intentions nor between training hours last three years and turnover intentions. The *p*-values are above the limit of significance ($p>0.05$). In contradiction to the human capital theory and hypothesis 1 of this study, the Beta-values are negative instead of positive. Therefore, the human capital theory is not confirmed and there is not enough evidence to accept hypothesis 1. Hypothesis 2 is based on the reciprocity theory that training leads to more organizational commitment. This theory is also not confirmed in this study, as shown in table 5. The variable training hours has no significant relationship with any type of organizational commitment. Besides, the results in table 6 show that the types of organizational commitment have also no significant effect on turnover intentions. Therefore, hypothesis 3 is also not confirmed in this study. Based on the rejection of hypothesis 2 and 3, the mediation effect of organizational commitment (hypothesis 4) is also not confirmed.

Effects of training hours variables on employees' turnover intentions

The results from the hierarchical multiple regression analysis for predicting turnover intentions by training hours last year are shown in table 3. Different regression analyses are executed for training hours last year (table 3) and training hours last three years (table 4) because of the multicollinearity problem. In table 3, only the independent variable training hours last year is included in model 1. The mentioned values in the tables are standardized

coefficients (Beta-values). Model 1 explains 3.1% variance, F=1.994, p>0.05. This means that the model is not significant. The direction of the variable is not as expected, because it is expected that there is a positive effect between training hours and turnover intentions. In model 2, all the control variables were included. The total model explains 30.9% of the variance, with F=3.075 and p<0.01. Model 2 predicts 27.8% more variance than model 1, which is a significant change (p<0.01). Only job satisfaction has a significant contribution in predicting turnover intentions (β=-.375, p<0.05). Employees who are satisfied about their job have less intentions to quit.

Table 3. Hierarchical multiple regression analysis predicting total turnover intentions by training hours last year, including control variables

Model	1	2
	β	β
Training hours last year	-.177	-.073
Job satisfaction		-.375*
Wage growth		-.218
Education level		.286
Working hours		-.216
Function scale		.143
Job tenure		.003
Age		.020
R^2	.031	.309**
F	1.994	3.075
Change (R^2)		.278**

Notes. *: p < 0.050 **: p < 0.010 ***: p < 0.005

In table 4, the hierarchical multiple regression analysis is executed with the independent variable training hours last three years and the dependent variable turnover intentions. In model 1, only the independent variable is included. The R square of the model is only 1%, F=0.046, p>0.05, which means a non significant effect of training hours last three years on turnover intentions. The independent variable was also not significant after including control variables. In model 2 all the control variables were included. The total variance explained by model 2 is 30.8% (F=3.053, p<0.01). Model 2 predicts 27.8% more variance than model 1, which is a significant change (p<0.005). There are two control variables that have an significant contribution in predicting the dependent variable turnover intentions: job satisfaction (β=-.412, p<0.01) and education level (β=.325, p<0.05). Higher educated and dissatisfied workers have more intentions to quit.

Table 4. Hierarchical multiple regression analysis predicting total turnover intentions by training hours last three years, including control variables

Model	1	2
	B	β
Training hours last three years	-.027	.050
Job satisfaction		-.412**
Education level		.325*
Wage growth		-.209
Working hours		-.236
Function scale		.107
Job tenure		-.056
Age		.110
R^2	.001	.308**
F	0.046	3.053
Change (R^2)		.307***

Notes. *: p < 0.050 **: p < 0.010 ***: p < 0.005

Overall, the R square in model 1 is not significant for both training hours variables, but after adding the control variables in model 2, a significant change is observable. This means that the control variables explain the dependent variable better than the training hours variables. All predictors have a statistical and significant contribution in the variance of the dependent variable turnover intentions because model 2 is significant for both training hours variables. The control variables explained more variance in total turnover intentions than the training hours variables. Thereby, the training hours variables do not make a unique contribution in predicting turnover intentions. The control variables largely determine the dependent variable, regarding the direct effect mentioned in hypothesis 1.

Effects of training hours variables on organizational commitment

In table 5 an hierarchical multiple regression analysis is executed to explore the relationship between training hours last year and organizational commitment. As can be seen in model 1, training hours last year has no significant effect on the types of organizational commitment. The direction of the values are negative, which is only expected in hypothesis 2b. After including control variables in model 2, the models which predict affective commitment (F=2.631, p<0.05;) and continuance commitment (F=4.991, p<0.005) become significant. The R square change is respectively 27.7% (p<0.05), 40.7% (p<0.005) and for normative commitment a non significant change of 19.4%.

Table 5. Hierarchical multiple regression analysis predicting affective commitment (AC), continuance commitment (CC) and normative commitment (NC) by training hours last year, including control variables

	AC		CC		NC	
Model	1	2	1	2	1	2
	β	β	β	β	β	β
Training hours last year	-.006	.000	-.118	.086	-.038	.015
Job satisfaction		.499**		-.166		.153
Education level		.222		.213		.033
Wage growth		-.176		.089		-.028
Working hours		-.156		-.098		.114
Function scale		.053		-.286*		-.329
Job tenure		.630		-.527		.080
Age		-.541		.862*		.240
R^2	.000	.277*	.014	.421***	.001	.196
F	0.002	2.631	0.877	4.991	0.091	1.675
Change R^2		.277*		.407***		.194

Notes. *: p < 0.050 **: p < 0.010 ***: p < 0.005

The normative commitment model has no significant change after including control variables. For affective commitment, the only control variable that has a significant contribution in the prediction of the variable is job satisfaction (β=.499, p<0.01). This means that workers who are satisfied about their job, are also more affective committed to the organization. For the prediction of continuance commitment, two control variables have a significant contribution. Function scale has a negative effect in predicting continuance commitment. How higher the function scale of workers, how less committed they are. For age there is a positive significant effect (β=.862, p<0.05) in predicting continuance commitment. This means that older people score higher on continuance commitment than younger people.

In table 6 the hierarchical multiple regression analysis with the independent variable training hours last three years is shown. As can be seen in model 1, the explained variance is not significant. Also here the direction of the values are negative, which is not expected as described in the theory section of this study, only for continuance commitment. The variance explained in predicting affective commitment is 1.5% (F=0.946), continuance commitment 1.9% (F=1.218) and for normative commitment 1.0% (F=0.064). After including the control variables in model 2, the R square of the models increased with respectively 27.3% (p<0.01), 39.6% (p<0.005) and for normative commitment again a non significant change of 19.5%. In

the prediction of affective commitment, there are two control variables that have a significant effect: job satisfaction (β=.516, p<0.01), and job tenure (β=.640, p<0.05). Satisfied people that work longer at the company score higher on affective commitment. In predicting continuance commitment, age has a significant effect (β=.765, p<0.01). Older people score higher on continuance commitment than younger people. In predicting normative commitment, only function scale has a unique contribution (β=-.328, p<0.05). People with a higher function score lower on normative commitment.

Table 6. Hierarchical multiple regression analysis predicting affective commitment (AC), continuance commitment (CC) and normative commitment (NC) by training hours last three years, including control variables

	AC		CC		NC	
Model	1	2	1	2	1	2
	β	β	β	β	β	β
Training hours last three years	-.123	-.110	-.139	-.028	-.032	.020
Job satisfaction		.516**		-.128		.155
Education level		.197		.174		.032
Wage growth		-.172		.077		-.031
Working hours		-.143		-.078		.115
Function scale		.078		-.252		-.328*
Job tenure		.640*		-.091		.090
Age		-.568		.765*		.229
R^2	.015	.288*	.019	.416***	.001	.196
F	0.946	2.779	1.218	4.889	0.064	1.677
Change R^2		.273**		.396***		.195

Notes. *: p < 0.050 **: p < 0.010 ***: p < 0.005

In short, from the hierarchical multiple regression analysis in predicting the types of organizational commitment can be concluded that the control variables largely predict the explained variance of the dependent variable. The significant change after including the control variables is for all types of commitment significant, except for normative commitment. But also regarding this variable, the control variables explain more variance than the training hours variables.

Effects of organizational commitment on employees' turnover intentions

In table 7, the hierarchical multiple regression analysis with the types of commitment as independent variables is shown (hypotheses 3a, 3b and 3c). In the first model, only the types of commitment are included as independent variables. None of the commitment types have a significant effect on turnover intentions. Also the whole model, which explains 2.1% of the variance, is not significant (F=0.439, p>0.05). In the second model, the control variables are included, which leads to a significant improvement of 30.4% (p<0.005). The total model explains 32.5% of the variance (F=2.555, p<0.05). Three control variables are significant in this model: education level (β=.358, p<0.05), job satisfaction (β=-.386, p<0.05) and working hours (β =-.266, p<0.05). Thus high educated, dissatisfied workers have more intentions to quit and employees with a contract with less working hours have more intentions to leave the firm than employees with more working hours.

Table 7. Hierarchical multiple regression analysis predicting total turnover intentions, including the types of organizational commitment and control variables

Model	1	2
	β	β
Affective commitment	-.108	-.099
Continuance commitment	-.033	-.138
Normative commitment	-.053	.089
Job satisfaction		-.386*
Education level		.358*
Wage growth		-.211
Working hours		-.266*
Function scale		.117
Job tenure		-.010
Age		.130
R^2	.021	.325*
F	0.439	2.555
Change (R^2)		.304***

Notes. *: p < 0.050 **: p < 0.010 ***: p < 0.005

Overall, the regression analyses showed that the control variables predict more explained variance than the commitment variables in predicting turnover intentions. The models became significant, only after including the control variables. The direction of the effects of affective, continuance and normative commitment is, as also expected, negative. So there is a negative effect between organizational commitment and turnover intentions, but in this study there is

not enough evidence to support hypotheses 3a, 3b and 3c. Through the results that not show significant outcomes for hypotheses 2 and 3, a significant mediation effect of organizational commitment would also not occur. This means that there is not enough evident to support hypotheses 4a, 4b and 4c.

Discussion

The goal of this study was to answer the research question by examining the effects of training on the turnover intentions of employees based on the human capital theory of Becker (1962) and investigating the mediation effect of organizational commitment, whereby the underlying notion comes from the reciprocity theory (Gouldner, 1960; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). The human capital investment theory of Becker (1962) is based on the assumption that people get more employable in other firms when they receive training. Thus with the expectation that training would positively influence turnover intentions. No significant relationships were found. The reciprocity theory is based on the assumption that people get more committed when they receive training because they want to repay the organizations' investment which has subsequently a decrease in turnover intentions as result. This theory is also not confirmed. No significant effects occurred, not even between organizational commitment and turnover intentions, which is a regularly found significant relation (Cotton & Tuttle, 1986; Tett & Meyer, 1993; Jaros, 1997; Benson, 2006). Only after adding control variables, the models became significant.

Relationship between training and turnover intentions

Based on the human capital theory, the expectation was that training would have a positive influence on turnover intentions because employees get more employable in other firms. But the effects of training hours on turnover intentions turned out to be negative. More studies, as for example a recent study of Benson (2006), found this conclusion also. Some explanations could be given for the negative outcomes. First of all, the outcomes that derive from the regression analyses were not very convincing because the values were close to zero. Second, the measurement of a training variable is difficult when looking to the many options that are available to measure this independent variable. Training can be measured by quantity or quality but can also be divided into types of training (specific, general, informal, formal), timing, funding and purpose. In this study is chosen for training offered by the company and the measurement based on training hours. Possibly, there is an exchange relation between the

employee and the firm, but, as also concluded in the study of Benson (2006), the direction is negative instead of positive.

Control variables played an important role in the prediction of turnover intentions. Probably, people get intentions to leave the organization based on more than one reason. In this study is found that job satisfaction is an important element for employees to stay or leave. Satisfied employees are less likely to leave a firm, also confirmed by Egan et al. (2004). Differences are also found based on employees' characteristics. High educated people have more intentions to quit after receiving more training hours. This can be explained by the goals that employees expect to reach. It is more difficult to fulfill the expectations, needs and desires of high educated workers than to fulfill the expectations for lower educated workers (Steers, 1977). This might explain the significant effect of the control variable education level, because high educated workers have a higher employability, especially when they received many skills and knowledge by participating in training programs.

Relationship between training and organizational commitment

The expectation was that training leads to higher commitment, except for continuance commitment. The effects of training on organizational commitment were not significant. The prediction of organizational commitment is also based on other variables next to the training variables because the model became significant after including control variables. The variables that affect organizational commitment are probably more diverse, which is also stated by Steers (1977). Job satisfaction and job tenure have a significant effect on affective commitment. This is a logical finding when looking to the meaning of affective commitment, because affective commitment contains a desire to remain as a result of work experience. People working longer for the company score higher on affective commitment, because of their gained work experience. Thereby, satisfied people score higher on affective commitment. For continuance commitment, age and function scale are significant control variables. This could have a relationship with the few alternatives that remain after quitting. Older workers and workers in a lower function scale are more afraid of the uncertain consequences after leaving the company and thus score higher on continuance commitment. For normative commitment, only function scale is a significant control variable. Workers at lower functions are less normative committed to the firm, so they have not the feeling to reciprocate.

Relationship between organizational commitment and turnover intentions

The effects between organizational commitment and turnover intentions were not significant, but do have a negative value. This is expected in hypothesis 3 of this study.

Education level has a significant influence on turnover intentions, also found in the study of Freund (2005), who stated that education is negatively related with organizational commitment and therefore with turnover intentions. This can be explained by the firm's responds on desires and needs of employees. High educated employees have desires and needs that are more difficult to fulfill than those of lower educated employees, as mentioned earlier. When firms cannot respond on these needs and desires, there is less exchange and employees get less attached, which can subsequently lead to more intentions to leave the firm. Steers (1977) agrees with this assumption and thinks that 'more highly educated people would be less committed to the organization and perhaps more committed to a profession or trade' (p. 53). Also in this relation, job satisfaction leads to less turnover intentions.

Limitations

First of all, there are several limitations due to the generalizability of the data. The study is based on cross-sectional data. The data is obtained at the same time, which makes causal interpretations not possible. With longitudinal data it is possible to increase the generalizability. Second, the studied sample contains only 79 useful respondents. For generalizing the results to the population more respondents are needed. The data of this study is collected at one company. This is beneficial regarding the bias that occurs when different people from different organizations have to answer the questions about training. Most organizations offer different training programs and do not have the same rules and policies. This sample feature might also lead to a limitation because the results from this data set might not be representing the population as good as a data set with respondents representing different firms.

Although the scales of the questionnaire are reliable, it is possible that the questionnaire has some limitations, which can explain the non significant effects in this study. First of all, the training questions are only based on the amount of training hours employees participated in. The training questions are divided into kinds of training, specific for the particular organization. This facilitates the interpretation for the respondents. Probably, this is not reliable enough for achieving significant results. Other possibilities of classification in training variables could be type of training (general, specific, informal, formal), quality, quantity, duration, founding or purpose. Another possibility could be that respondents did not

know the exact amount of participated training hours in the last year or last three years. It could be that the respondents gave an estimation, which can lead to biased data.

The commitment – turnover intentions link is not significant in this study. The scales turned out to have a good reliability. The non significant findings are a possible result of the small sample size. Besides, everyone reacts differently on reciprocity (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Another reason for the lack of significance can be due to the correlation between commitment and job satisfaction. Job satisfaction can influence the relationship between the core variables and can be a better predictor for turnover intentions than commitment, because these variables are highly correlated with each other.

It can be concluded that training is a difficult variable to measure, because of the many possible ways to develop the questionnaire in order to receive reliable data and because of the interpretation that respondents give to the questions. This can be a possible reason for the lack of significance in this study.

Implications and future research

More research is necessary to confirm the relationship between training and commitment and training and turnover intentions. This study found negative effects between training and turnover intentions, although the effects were not significant. Previous studies did found positive effects where training increases the employees' chances on the labor market, as mentioned in the theoretical framework. Further research is needed in order to give practical recommendations to firms. A possibility for improvement is taking the variable training more broadly. In future research it is important to explore the relationship between commitment and job satisfaction because of the high correlation between these two variables. An interesting addition for future research is to include job satisfaction as a core variable in researching the effects between training, organizational commitment and turnover intentions. A larger study sample and a longitudinal study is necessary to generate causality. In order to confirm the human capital theory, the direct effect between training and turnover intentions needs to be researched. At last, creating the training variable more precisely will give a research better support and will decrease bias.

Conclusion

The expectations of this study are not met, because of the lack of significance. None of the hypotheses were confirmed. This study emphasizes the important exchange relationship

between employee and organization, which needs more future research in order to achieve significant outcomes.

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Appendix

Someren, juni 2011

Geachte heer/mevrouw,

Voor mijn afstudeerscriptie aan de opleiding Human Resource Studies te Tilburg voer ik een wetenschappelijk onderzoek uit naar de effecten van training op het verloop van medewerkers. Naar aanleiding hiervan heb ik samen met de uw werkgever een vragenlijst opgesteld met verschillende aspecten zoals training, betrokkenheid en verloop van medewerkers.

Deze vragenlijst bevat 17 vragen of stellingen (met deelvragen) en het invullen ervan kost u vijftien minuten. Vul het antwoord in dat het beste bij u past. Het invullen van de vragenlijst is volledig anoniem en antwoorden zullen niet verstrekt worden aan de organisatie of derden. Er worden alleen uitspraken gedaan op basis van kring of op groepsniveau.

Ik stel het zeer op prijs als u tien minuten van uw tijd gebruikt om deze vragenlijst in te vullen. Alvast hartelijk dank.

Met vriendelijke groet,

Jenny Verhees

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Algemene informatie

Er volgen eerst wat algemene en persoonlijke vragen. Deze antwoorden worden gebruikt om conclusies te trekken over verschillende groepen.

1. Wat is uw geslacht? ☐ Man ☐ Vrouw
2. Wat is uw leeftijd? ☐
3. Wat is uw opleidingsniveau?

   ☐ Basisschool ☐ MBO

   ☐ Lager middelbaar onderwijs ☐ HBO

   ☐ MAVO / VMBO ☐ Universiteit

   ☐ Havo / VWO / Gymnasium ☐ Anders, ….

4. Hoeveel jaar bent u al werkzaam bij uw huidige werkgever? ☐
5. Hoeveel uur werkt u per week (volgens uw contract)? ☐
6. Wat is uw functie? ☐
7. Wat is uw functieschaal? ☐
8. Bij welke vestiging (kring) werkt u?

   ☐ Vestiging A

   ☐ Vestiging B

   ☐ Vestiging C

   ☐ Vestiging D

TRAINING

Nu volgen er een aantal vragen over het aantal trainingsuren die u gevolgd heeft in het laatste jaar en de laatste drie jaar. Het betreft trainingen waaraan u deelgenomen heeft, die aangeboden zijn door uw werkgever. Probeer dit zo precies mogelijk in te vullen.

9. Aan hoeveel trainingsuren heeft u in *het laatste jaar* deelgenomen?

- Aantal uren team- of banktrainingen (bijv. naar aanleiding van nieuwe projecten of veranderingen) ☐
- Aantal uren training gericht op persoonlijke ontwikkeling (bijv. training voor timemanagement) ☐
- Aantal uren functiegerichte opleidingen/training (bijv. management-, HR-, bedrijfstraining gericht op uw functie en opleidingen uit de leer- en PE planners) ☐
- Aantal uren korte carrièregerichte opleidingen (korte niveauverhogende opleidingen van maximaal 2 jaar) ☐
- Aantal uren volwaardige carrièregerichte opleidingen (volwaardige MBO- of HBO-opleiding) ☐

10. Aan hoeveel trainingsuren heeft u in *de laatste drie jaar* deelgenomen?

- Aantal uren team- of banktrainingen (bijv. naar aanleiding van nieuwe projecten of veranderingen) ☐
- Aantal uren training gericht op persoonlijke ontwikkeling (bijv. training voor timemanagement) ☐
- Aantal uren functiegerichte opleidingen/training (bijv. management-, HR-, bedrijfstraining gericht op uw functie en opleidingen uit de leer- en PE planners) ☐
- Aantal uren carrièregerichte opleiding (korte niveauverhogende opleiding van maximaal 2 jaar) ☐
- Aantal uren carrièregerichte opleiding (volwaardige MBO- of HBO-opleiding) ☐

JOB SATISFACTION

11. Onderstaande stellingen gaan over het plezier dat u in uw werk heeft. U kunt de stellingen beantwoorden met ja of nee.

	Ja	Nee
Ik kan wel zeggen dat ik tegen mijn werk opzie	☐	☐
Ik doe mijn werk omdat het moet, daarmee is alles wel gezegd	☐	☐
Meestal vind ik het wel prettig om aan de werkdag te beginnen	☐	☐
Na zo'n vijf jaar heb je dit werk wel gezien	☐	☐
Ik vind mijn werk nog steeds boeiend, elke dag weer	☐	☐
Het idee dat ik dit werk nog tot mijn pensioen moet doen, benauwt me	☐	☐
Ik heb plezier in mijn werk	☐	☐
Ik moet telkens weerstand bij mezelf overwinnen om mijn werk te doen	☐	☐
Ik moet mezelf er vaak toe zetten om een werkopdracht uit te voeren	☐	☐

BETROKKENHEID

12. Nu volgen er 15 stellingen over uw betrokkenheid bij de organisatie. U kunt deze stellingen beantwoorden met zeven antwoordmogelijkheden: geheel mee oneens, oneens, enigszins mee oneens, neutraal, enigszins mee eens, eens, geheel mee eens. Kies het antwoord dat bij u persoonlijk het beste past.

Affectieve betrokkenheid

	Geheel mee oneens	Oneens	Enigszins mee oneens	Neutraal	Enigszins mee eens	Eens	Geheel mee eens
Ik ervaar problemen van deze organisatie als mijn eigen problemen	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ik voel me emotioneel gehecht aan deze organisatie	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Deze organisatie betekent veel voor mij	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ik voel me thuis in deze organisatie	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ik voel me als 'een deel van de familie' in deze organisatie	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Continuïteitsbetrokkenheid

	Geheel mee oneens	Oneens	Enigszins mee oneens	Neutraal	Enigszins mee eens	Eens	Geheel mee eens
Het zou voor mij op dit moment moeilijk zijn om weg te gaan bij deze organisatie, ook al zou ik dat willen	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Ik heb het gevoel dat ik te weinig alternatieven heb om nu ontslag te nemen	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Als ik ontslag neem wordt het moeilijk om een andere baan te vinden	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Er zou teveel in mijn leven verstoord worden als ik nu ontslag zou nemen	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ik ben bang voor wat er zou kunnen gebeuren als ik mijn baan opzeg zonder meteen een nieuwe baan te hebben	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Normatieve betrokkenheid

	Geheel mee oneens	Oneens	Enigszins mee oneens	Neutraal	Enigszins mee eens	Eens	Geheel mee eens
Ik ben opgegroeid met de gedachte dat het waardevol is om loyaal te blijven aan een organisatie	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Het is onbehoorlijk om van de ene organisatie naar de andere over te stappen	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Het zou een goede zaak zijn als werknemers het grootste deel van hun loopbaan bij een	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

organisatie zouden blijven							
Ik vind dat iemand loyaal zou moeten zijn ten opzichte van zijn of haar organisatie	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Een van de belangrijkste redenen waarom ik bij deze organisatie blijf, is dat ik loyaliteit belangrijk vind	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

LOONSTIJGING

13. Hebt u tijdens of na een training loonstijging ontvangen? U kunt meerdere antwoorden aankruisen.

☐ Ja, na alle soorten trainingen.

☐ Ja, na training gericht op persoonlijke ontwikkeling (bijv.: timemanagement).

☐ Ja, na team- of banktrainingen (bijv.: bij nieuwe projecten, veranderingen).

☐ Ja, na functiegerichte trainingen (bijv.: managementtrainingen).

☐ Ja, na korte carrièregerichte trainingen (korte niveauverhogende opleiding van maximaal 2 jaar).

☐ Ja, na volwaardige carrièregerichte trainingen (HBO-opleiding, MBO-opleiding).

☐ Nee

☐ N.v.t

14. Vindt u dat deze loonstijging over het algemeen adequaat is, gezien uw kwalificaties en de marktcondities?

Ja / Nee / N.V.T.

TURNOVER INTENTIONS

De laatste drie vragen gaan over uw intenties om de huidige organisatie te verlaten. De eerste vraag kunt u beantwoorden met: nooit, zelden, soms, regelmatig, vaak, bijna altijd, altijd. De tweede en derde vraag kunt u beantwoorden met: erg groot, groot, redelijk groot, niet groot/niet klein, redelijk klein, klein, erg klein.

	Nooit	Zelden	Soms	Regelmatig	Vaak	Bijna altijd	Altijd
15. Hoe vaak denkt u eraan om uw huidige werkgever te verlaten?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Erg groot	Groot	Redelijk groot	Niet groot/niet klein	Redelijk klein	Klein	Erg klein
16. Hoe groot is de kans dat u opzoek gaat naar een baan in een andere organisatie?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
17. Hoe groot is de kans dat u de organisatie werkelijk verlaat in het komende jaar?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Dit is het einde van de vragenlijst. Hartelijk dank voor uw medewerking! Indien u nog vragen of opmerkingen heeft kunt u contact opnemen met onderstaande contactgegevens.

Met vriendelijke groet,

Jenny Verhees

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