



## Antecedents of turnover intentions among salespeople – a systematic literature review

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### Abstract

This article presents a systematic literature review on 30 selected empirical studies conducted in a cross sectional time horizon with a total of 9,121 sales persons from 8 different countries using different methods to analyze data with the objective of attempting to expose antecedents of turnover intentions of salespeople. All studies are quantitative and data are collected with surveys through questionnaires. The summary of the results are categorized into 19 different outcomes but most of them can be broadly presented under three main antecedents; Organizational Climate, Organizational Culture and Organizational Commitment. Future studies are suggested to pay emphasis on Hofstede Cultural Dimensions when interpreting results.

**Key Words** –Organizational Climate, Organizational Commitment, Organizational Culture, Sales, Turnover Intentions

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### I. INTRODUCTION

The aim of literature reviews is to summarize and integrate the existing knowledge about a topic (Rowley and Slack, 2004). A standalone review article of the literature for a specific topic is one of the methods used by researchers to explore the available knowledge on an identified topic (Okoli, 2015). The Systematic Literature Review is a specific methodology that allow for the creation of a whole article based on reviewing the literature without collecting empirical data. They try to answer a research question, usually about the status quo of a field of research. In research areas with a broad range of literature which is fragmented and based on inconsistent terminologies, a systematic review can help to consolidate the topic in the sense of a “status quo of current research” (Kraus, Breier & Dasi-Rodríguez, 2020). This article was constructed based on the salient points mentioned above.

#### 1.1. The Research Question – Antecedents of Turnover Intentions of Salespeople

Sales is a stressful profession, but it is also an attractive field, providing autonomy, clear standards and high earning potential tied directly to effort (Loveland, Lounsbury, Park & Jackson, 2015). Understanding the reasons that salespeople choose to stay or leave their job is important to organizations (DeConnick, 2011). Realizing the antecedents of turnover of salespeople is important because of its costs to organizations (Griffeth and Hom, 2001). These direct costs can be substantial given the high rate of turnover among salespeople (Richardson, 1999). Thus, understanding reasons for sales force turnover is important to organizations if they are to reduce costs associated with attrition. Recent data indicate that the most difficult job to fill is that of salesperson (Rivera, 2007). In fact, the difficulty is created by high turnover among salespeople, with more than half of that voluntary turnover (Adidam, 2006). Decades of research have examined the turnover issue (Futrell and Parasuraman, 1984), and recent research indicates the problem still persists (Aggarwal, Tanner, and Castleberry 2004). Richardson (1999) broke direct and indirect costs of sales force turnover into four primary dimensions: direct costs of sales losses, indirect dimensions of separation costs, replacement costs, and training expenses. Not only do companies find recruiting salespeople difficult, but it is costly when they leave. Further, the difficulty in replacing salespeople means greater direct costs in lost sales as territories may remain open for long periods of time (Fournier, Tanner, Chonko and Manolis, 2010). Sales force turnover is identified as a key consequence of cost prioritization given that turnover remains a serious problem with ensuing complications (Skiba, Saini & Friend, 2016). The organizations face the issues of escalating training costs, lengthening training

periods, rising starting salaries for sales trainees, escalating compensation for experienced salespeople and shrinking pool of qualified replacements as a result of rising turnover rates (Sager, 1990). The detrimental effect of high sales force turnover rates has extensive implications for the firm because the salesperson is actively involved in the customer relationship-building process from acquisition to retention. The negative effect of salesperson turnover is reflected in losses of revenue through customers and losses in terms of investments made by the firm through training and incentives (Sunder, Kumar, Goreczny and Maurer, 2017). In many cases, salespeople are the only point of contact between the firm and the customer. Thus, losing the major point of contact could jeopardize the customer relationship (Bendapudi and Leone, 2002). Indeed, sales force turnover could fundamentally change the nature of the customer relationship, leading to customer switching, short-term unprofitable purchase behavior, and even long-term unprofitable purchase behavior (Subramony and Holtom, 2012). When a salesperson quits, not only is customer relationships harmed in the present, but a concern arises regarding who should replace the salesperson (Darmon, 2008). Major costs of replacement include costs of recruitment and “new hire” training as well as the time required for the new salespeople to establish themselves in their territories and generate acceptable revenue streams (De Coninck and Johnson, 2009).

## II. SELECTION OF ARTICLES

The above explanations by many scholars define the significance of understanding the antecedents towards the sales force turnover and many researchers have attempted to conduct studies and share their findings in the academically important records. The attempt of this report was to identify a reasonable sample of 30 research articles conducted with empirical data collected from multiple countries using sales professionals and summarize their findings and interpretations to obtain a clearer picture towards the subject in hand.

Following criteria was adhered to identify the research articles for the purpose of this review.

- All research had been done with Salespeople
- Salesperson's turnover intention is measured directly/indirectly in all research works
- Data collected empirically in a cross sectional time horizon
- Research Strategy was Quantitative in all studies
- Research Method had been Survey for all studies
- Research tool was Questionnaire for all studies

The selected articles are summarized in the Table No.1.

No.	Article	Industry	Sample	Country	Key Words
1	Allen et al., (2002)	Retail and Insurance	215	USA	Not mentioned.
2	Churchil et al. (1976)	Technical Industrial products	265	USA	Not mentioned
3	DeConnink, (2010)	Manufacturing and services industries	393	USA	Ethical work climate, Organizational identification, Supervisory trust, Organizational commitment, Turnover intentions, Turnover
4	DeConnick (2011)	Manufacturing and services industries	356	USA	Not mentioned
5	DeConinck & Johnson (2009)	mixed	384	USA	Not Mentioned
6	Fournier et al., (2010)	Mixed	132	France	Not Mentioned
7	Habib et al., (2014)	Mixed	235	Pakistan	Organizational Culture, Employees, Commitment, Employees, Retention, Job Satisfaction
8	Ingram & Lee (1990)	Industrial Products	235	USA	Not Mentioned
9	Barnes et al., (2006)	IT and Food	499	USA	Not Mentioned
10	Dubinsky et al., (1990)	IT	389	USA	Not Mentioned
11	Briggs et al., (2011)	Advertising	241	USA	Not Mentioned
12	Farrell (2005)	Mixed	159	Australia	Market-oriented culture; salesperson behavior/attitudes
13	Futrell & Parasuraman (1984)	Pharmaceutical	263	USA	Not Mentioned
14	Harris et al., (2005)	Real Estate	190	USA	salesperson motivation; goal orientations;

					personality; customer orientation
15	Hom & Kinicki,(2001)	Automotive	438	USA	Not Mentioned
16	Jaramillo et al.,(2009)	Mixed	501	USA	Not Mentioned
17	Jaramillo et al., (2006a)	Finance	400	Ecuador	Ecuador, Financial institutions, Sales force, Stress, Employee turnover, Work psychology
18	Jaramillo et al., (2006b)	Retail	138	USA	Not Mentioned
19	Johnson et al., (2000)	FMCG	217	USA	Sales force, staff turnover, job satisfaction, job evaluation
20	Lewin & Sager (2010)	Chemical	495	USA	Not mentioned
21	Loveland et al (2015)	Mixed	299	USA	Personality, Selection, Sales, Career satisfaction, Job satisfaction
22	McNeilly & Russ (1992)	Food	82	USA	Not mentioned
23	Mulki et al.,(2009)	Pharmaceutical	331	USA	Not Mentioned
24	Pathak & Thripathi (2010)	Insurance	350	India	insurance sector in India, employee turnover, motivation, employee retention
25	Pettijohn et al.,(2007)	Retail	113	USA	salesperson ethics, ethics and business relationships, ethics and job satisfaction, ethics and turnover, ethics measures
26	Tyagi & Wotruba (1993)	Mixed	491	USA	Not Mentioned
27	Weeks et al (2006)	Consumer Durables	232	USA & Mexico	Not Mentioned
28	Wren et al (2014)	Consumer and Industrial	604	USA	Managers, Employee attitudes, Behavioral sciences, Sales force
29	Wimalana (2017)	FMCG	264	Sri Lanka	FMCG, Sri Lanka, Sales Force Turnover
30	Wang & Ma (2013)	Mixed	210	USA	Not mentioned

Table No. 1 – Summary of the selected studies

The above studies had been conducted in 8 countries covering a wide range of industries using 9,121 sales personnel. In all research studies, the main focus have been to identify the antecedents towards sales force turnover intentions directly or indirectly. Certain studies carried out to find the job satisfaction of the sales personnel are indirectly linked to the turnover intention with the mediating effect of the same variable as the relationship between those two variables have been explained by many scholars through their research studies. Griffeth & Hom (2001), Richardson (1999), Griffeth et al., (2000) and Martin (2007) are few of them who have explained that phenomenon in their findings. Another variable that has a direct impact on the turnover intention of the sales persons is the organizational Commitment (Allen et al., 2002; Ingram & Lee, 1990; Briggs et al., 2011). Some of the studies who have attempted to ascertain the level of the organizational commitment also have been considered as those come under indirect category.

## 2.1. Perceived antecedents studied by the respective scholars in the sample

The scholars who conducted the selected empirical research have attempted to find various antecedents towards the turnover intention of the sales persons that are been considered in this article as a direct approach. Those who have attempted to understand the antecedents of job satisfaction and organizational commitment of the sales persons have been considered as an indirect approach towards identifying reasons towards turnover intentions. The variables as antecedents checked by all 30 selected articles can be summarized in the Table 2 below.

No.	Article	Identified antecedents for the study
1	Allen et al., (2002)	Perceived Organizational Support
2	Churchill et al. (1976)	Organizational Climate
3	DeConnink, (2010)	Ethical Work Climate

4	DeConnick (2011)	Leader–Member Exchange (LMX), Organizational Identification
5	DeConinck & Johnson (2009)	Organizational Justice on Perceived Organizational & Supervisor Support
6	Fournier et al., (2010)	Ethical climate
7	Habib et al., (2014)	Impact of organizational culture
8	Ingram & Lee (1990)	Organizational Commitment
9	Barnes et al., (2006)	Organizational Culture
10	Dubinsky et al., (1990)	The Influence of Role Stress
11	Briggs et al., (2011)	Potential barriers to career advancement
12	Farrell (2005)	Effect of the Market-oriented culture
13	Futrell & Parasuraman (1984)	The effect of salespeople's performance
14	Harris et al., (2005)	Relationships between personality influencers and work satisfaction.
15	Hom & Kinicki,(2001)	How job dissatisfaction progresses into turnover
16	Jaramillo et al.,(2009)	the impact of leadership on turnover intention
17	Jaramillo et al., (2006a)	stress in the effect of perceptions of time wasted
18	Jaramillo et al., (2006b)	Ethical climate
19	Johnson et al., (2000)	sales force turnover functionality
20	Lewin & Sager (2010)	The Influence of Self-Efficacy and Coping Style
21	Loveland et al (2015)	The relationship between personality traits and job satisfaction
22	McNeilly & Russ (1992)	Performance as a moderator variable in relationships involving job satisfaction and turnover intentions
23	Mulki et al.,(2009)	Relationships among lone wolf tendencies, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions
24	Pathak & Thripathi (2010)	Issues of recruitment, retention and turnover
25	Pettijohn et al.,(2007)	Perceptions of the ethics and the relationship with job satisfaction and turnover intentions.
26	Tyagi & Wotruba (1993)	Directions of causality between selected work-related variables and quitting intentions.
27	Weeks et al (2006)	Perceived ethical climate
28	Wren et al (2014)	Sales manager's ability to predict high levels of propensity to leave
29	Wimalana (2017)	The influence of External, Organizational, Work related and Personal factors
30	Wang & Ma (2013)	Salespeople's creativity and voluntary turnover intention

Table No. 2 – Variables checked by each study

## 2.2. Relevance of the variables selected by the researchers for the study

The variables selected for each study cover a wide spectrum of previously proposed antecedents related to the sales force turnover intentions. Other than the two variables discussed earlier; Job Satisfaction and Organizational commitment, many other factors mentioned in the above table have been tested by various scholars. Russ & McNeilly (1995) and Newman, Thanacoody, & Hui (2012) along with many others have explained in their research work the significance of the perceived organizational support towards the turnover intention of the sales people. The climate of the organization; whether ethical or unethical, has an effect of the turnover intention of the sales people according to many research studies (Weeks, Loe, Chonko & Wakefield. 2004; DeConinck & Lewis, 1997; Schepker, 1999). The Meta Analyses conducted by Gerstner & Day (1997) have suggested significant relationships between Leader – Member exchange (LMX) and turnover intentions.

The effect of the organizational culture towards the employee turnover is a subject that has been explained by many scholars for many decades. Harrison (1972), Handy (1976), Schein (1980), Deal and Kennedy (1982) and Johnson and Scholes (1992) are some of the well-known researchers who have examined this subject. They have already studied and recorded the relationship between the two variables. Most of them have presented their own theories and explained in detail how the particular cultures affect the employees on their intentions to quit. Cameron and Quinn (2011) have explained the relationship on these two variables in the context of sales people as well. Schrodt (2002), Barnes (1993) and Herndon (1992) in their studies have explained the same theory of Organizational Culture and how that affects the turnover intentions of sales persons. The relationship between the salespeople's performances and turnover intentions has been studied by many researchers and the outcomes between the variables have been recorded (Sager, Varadarajan & Futrell, 1988; Jones, Chonko, Rangarajan, & Roberts, 2007). According to the available literature, Fern, Avila and

Grewal (1989) and Johnston & Futrell (1989) have been identified as some of the early researchers on the subject of role stress of the sales persons and it's connectivity with their turnover intentions.

Personality traits concern human attributes which encompass biological, social, and cognitive factors that make a person different from others (Jeswani and Dave, 2012). Many scholars have taken the Big Five Personality Traits and explained the effect of them on the turnover intentions of the employees (Zimmerman, 2008; Jeswani and Deve, 2013; Jenkins 1993; Barrick & Mount, 1996 & Schermerholn, 1996). The subject of Sales Person's Personality Traits have a long standing history as an article published by Richard W. Husband, in 1935 under the caption of 'Personality traits of salesmen' can be seen in the Journal of Psychology. Many other scholars who studied this phenomenon have recorded their findings in the area of salespeople's turnover intentions linked with their Personality Traits (Matzler & Renzl, 2007; Lounsbury, Foster, Levy, & Gibson, 2014). Relationships between Job satisfaction and personality traits or personality influencers of the sales persons also are covered by the above studies. Although the traits like lone wolf tendencies are not directly linked to those research works, some aspects are indirectly covered under certain elements of the personality traits studied. When those studies discuss personal characteristics of sales persons, self-efficacy can be found in different forms. The creativity of the sales people are not directly related to the personality traits but that can be somewhat attributed to the sales peoples characteristics. Salespeople are not often recognized as creative, as creative employees generally refer to knowledge workers. But the studies conducted by certain scholars have brought in some elements related to the sales person's creativity and the effect of that on their job satisfaction (Brooks 2002; Wang and Netemeyer 2004) and the job satisfaction has been directly linked with turnover intention.

The impact of leadership on turnover intentions has been identified as an antecedent by many scholars in the very early stages of academic research on the subject of the relationship between the two variables (Fleishman & Harris, 1962; Dansereau , & Graen, 1973). The same studies have been conducted by many scholars with regard to the effect of the different leadership styles on the turnover intentions of sales persons (Brashear, Boles, Bellenger, & Brooks, 2003; Brashear, Manolis, & Brooks, 2005). It is not the leader-member relationship but the style of the leadership of sales managers and how that impacted on the job satisfaction of their sales persons resulting in a positive relationship with their intention to quit by sales people (Griffeth & Hom, 2001; Richardson, 1999; Griffeth et al., 2000 & Martin, 2007).

Some researchers have conducted studies to find the factors influencing the turnover intentions of the sales persons with a broader view. They have identified some clusters and divided many individual factors identified through literature into these categories such as external, organizational, personal etc. While some studies are conducted with a focus on one of these categories, some others have attempted to look at the broader picture and have tried to test many variables through the same study. All their findings have been recorded and presented in their research articles (Leigh, Lucas, & Woodman, 1988; Fern et al., 1989, Griffeth et al., 2000). Career advancement, the non-availability of a career path and many other careers related variables have been identified within the organizational or personal factors. However many scholarly studies can be found in literature which have been conducted purely on the career aspects of the sales persons related to their turnover intentions (Jackson, Hollmann, & Gallan, 2006; Chancharoen, 2011; Prince, 2003).

### **2.3. Data analysis methods used for the studies**

The studies selected for this systematic analysis have attempted to find reasons for the sales force turnover through their own empirical researches. The research method followed by all studies is the same as that was taken as selection criteria of this study. The objective of all studies was to identify antecedents of the sales force turnover. The points they attempted to study through each research was explained in the Table No.2. After collecting data from a total of 9,121 sales persons from 7 different countries, the researchers have used many different methods to analyze the collected data. Those methods are explained in the below table.

<b>Journal article No.</b>	<b>Analytical Method Used</b>	<b>Total</b>
1, 5, 11, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 23, 24, 27, 30	Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA)	12
2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 22, 25, 26, 29	Correlation and regression analyses	11
10, 13	Multiple regression and path analysis	2
15, 17	Structure equation modeling	2
19, 28	Multiple group discriminant analysis	2
21	Latent profile analysis	1
		30

Table No.3

Many articles have used Confirmatory factor Analysis and Correlation and Regression Analysis to extract the expected information from collected data through the survey using a questionnaire. Only few scholars have turned to some other methods to find solution for their hypotheses. All above analytical tools are well accepted methods in the management research. Therefore, the outcomes of the researches conducted by all scholars should produce authentic results to a greater extent if all data gatherings were properly conducted. It was important to understand the above methods before looking at the various antecedents identified through the above selected studies. As those methods are used by scholars' very frequently to analyze their data, the outcomes should not be affected by the analytical methods used by them.

#### **2.4. Identified antecedents through the studies under review**

All the antecedents identified by the researchers through the selected 30 articles are summarized below in the table No.4.

No.	Antecedents of turnover Intention
1	Poor perceived organizational Support
2	Poor Organization Climate
3	Perceived unethical climate of the Organization
4	Poor organizational identification and leader - member relationship
5	Poor perceived Supervisor Support
6	Perceived unhealthy Organizational Culture, salesperson - Organization culture Fit
7	Weak Organizational Commitment
8	Role Stress
9	perceived barriers to career advancement
10	Poor performances or lack of promotions and recognition for the high performers
11	Non-adoption of the customer Orientation of the organization
12	Believe of that their time or efforts have been wasted
13	Low self-efficacy
14	Low in Personality Traits of emotional stability and extraversion
15	Poor satisfaction on Social and Self Esteem needs
16	Dissatisfaction with pay and compensation plan
17	Low family commitment
18	High level of education
19	Unhealthy climate for innovations

Table 4 – Antecedents explained by all selected scholars

### **III. THE SYNTHESIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE FINDINGS**

The above points are not mentioned into any order but based on the listing of the articles above on the Table No.1. Many studies selected for this review have mentioned the same antecedents and therefore those points were not repeated as they are already included in the list. Based on the outcomes of the studies selected for this systematic literature analyses, the following points can be explained as the salient points as the antecedents towards the sales force turnover intentions.

#### **3.1 Organizational Climate**

The studies of Churchill et al. (1976), DeConnink (2010), Fournier et al. (2010), Jaramillo et al. (2006), Pettijohn et al. (2007), Tyagi and Wotruba (1993) and Weeks et al (2006) from the selected articles for this review had been directly focusing on the effect of the Organizational Climate on the turnover intentions of sales people. Wang & Ma (2013) who studied the salespeople's creativity and voluntary turnover intention using the psychological organizational climate too can be included into the same basket. The oldest study amongst the selected research works on this variable is done by Churchill et al. in year 1976. According to him, the most common view of the organizational climate is that it represents the worker's perceptions of his objective work situation, including the characteristics of the organization he works for and the nature of his relationships with

other people while doing his job. Thus, climate is conceptually distinct from, and either causes or moderates, the worker's affective evaluations and attitudes concerning his job and his work environment (Churchill et al., 1976). However, the definition given by James et al. (1977, p. 230) is that the Organizational climate refers to the individual's internalized representations of organizational conditions and interrelationships among these conditions and reflects a cognitive restructuring of perceived situational influences in the situation. That does not deviate from the explanation presented by Churchill et al. (1976) after collecting information from salespeople and analyzing the results which revealed that the Poor Organization Climate explained by weak Supervision, inability to influence in determining standards, restrictions on frequency of communication with supervisors, feeling that they need to find their own solutions, role ambiguity and role conflict are positively related to the turnover intention of the sales persons. Tyagi and Wotruba (1993) have mentioned after conducting their study that the quitting intentions were more instrumental in affecting the perceptions of organizational climate. This indicates that when sales people begin to think about quitting possibilities, they no longer see the organization as an important vehicle for development and accomplishment of personal goals and rewards. Similarly, their perceptions of other aspects of organizational climate characteristics, such as management concern and awareness, and leadership trust and support, begin to decline (Tyagi and Wotruba, 1993).

Under the umbrella of the Organizational Climate, several studies have been conducted on the Ethical Climate out of the studies selected for this analysis. Many of these studies have confirmed that the perceived positive ethical climate of the organization has a negative relationship with the turnover intention of the sales persons (DeConnink, 2010; Fournier et al., 2010; Jaramillo et al., 2006; Pettijohn et al., 2007 and Weeks et al, 2006). Also it influences salespersons' organizational identification and supervisory trust (DeConnick, 2010), and can have a major negative effect on the high performers in the sales force as they exhibit higher level of intention to leave when ethical climate is low (Fournier et al. 2010). Studies indicate that ethical climate results in lower role conflict and role ambiguity (Jaramillo et al., 2006), and results show a positive relationship existing between salesperson perceptions of business ethics and the salesperson's job satisfaction (Pettijohn et al., 2007). Also it appears there is consistency in a positive significant relationship between ethical climate and individual commitment quality (Weeks et al., 2006). Looking at another angle through the organizational climate for Innovations, Wang & Ma (2013) have argued that Perceived Climate for Innovations intrinsically motivate salespeople to learn new knowledge and job skills, which is a fulfilling experience, leading to enhanced job satisfaction. Learning and job satisfaction in turn affect creativity and associate negatively with the turnover intention of salespeople. Therefore, when you consider all above findings, it can be combined and record that the Organization Climate is a strong antecedent of the salespeople's turnover intention.

### **3.2 Organizational Culture**

Organizational Culture can be defined as the pattern of shared values and that helps individuals understand organizational functioning and thus provide them norms for behavior in the organization (Deshpande and Webster, 1989, p. 4). Taking a further step beyond this definition, Williams and Attaway (1996, p. 35) note that these characteristics of culture "norms to change and control the behavior of individual members". The studies selected for this analysis have indicated the relationship between the organizational culture and the sales force turnover intention. It is the organization-person fit that is considered under this concept. Person-organization fit is defined as congruency between the values, beliefs, and goals of the organization and those of its employees (Netemeyer et al. 1997). The cultural strength between the organization and the sales persons has a negative relationship with the turnover intention (Habib et al., 2014; Barnes et al., 2006). After conducting the study with a Fortune 500 company, the scholars say that the Cultural strength is positively related to the value congruity and job satisfaction of the sales persons thus negatively related to their turnover intention. Strong culture creates an environment conducive of values among the members of the sales team (Barnes et al., 2006). After conducting a research in Pakistan with the sales persons, Habib et al, (2014) conclude that the findings of their research reveal a positive and significant correlation among Impact of organizational culture on sales force turnover intentions as they found that Organizational culture is an important element which highly influences the employee's retention.

Briggs et al., (2011) in their study have attempted to define the culture-fit between the sale persons and the organization and its effect on the turnover intentions. Employees evaluate their membership in social groups that coexist in an organization and the out-group employees experience a lack of fit to the organizational culture. Jaramillo et al., (2009) have studied the impact of the leadership on the culture of the organization and have suggested that the leadership styles influence the organizational culture significantly. They have focused on the Servant Leadership style of the leadership and have concluded that the organizational culture developed by servant leaders help create a positive work climate in which salespeople feel a strong sense of shared organizational values, become more committed to the organization and thus express a deeper desire to stay with the firm. The effect of the organizational culture on customer orientation has been studied by many scholars

including Deshpandé et al (1993), Williams & Attaway (1996) and Lee et al., (2015). We find a similar study amongst the selected journal articles for this analysis and that research has been conducted by Harris et al., (2005). Conducting a study the influence of customer orientation on work satisfaction of the salespeople they have found a positive and significant relationship between the two variables thus indicating a negative influence on the turnover intention.

The study conducted by Dubinsky et al., (1990) has suggested that the Role Stress of the salespeople as an antecedents for their turnover intention. Under the main theme of role stress, they have studied three main elements related to the subject; role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload. The research findings explains the probable solutions towards the reduction of role stress by having continues dialog between the management and the salespeople, identifying the importance of the role partners, developing a culture of empowerment for salespeople to take decisions within the given parameters, developing a training culture where salespeople look at training as an important tool to clear their doubts and advocating a performance driven culture. When you look at some of these points, it shows a link towards the organizational culture. There is a strong relationship of this research with the study conducted by Hom & Kinicki,(2001) who emphasized on the inter-role conflict and its consequences towards the turnover intention of the salespeople. They have suggested non-traditional work methods as solutions to mitigate the damage and those are directly linked with the culture of the organization. Outside of the selected articles for this review, Knight, Kim & Crutsinger (2007) in their study of the sales people have suggested a relationship between the culture of the organization and role stress of the salespeople confirming that the organizational culture conducive to the practice of customer orientation affect the degree to which salespeople experience role stress. Joiner (2001) also has studied the same and concluded saying that there is a significant relationship between the organizational culture and the role stress. The summary of all above clearly defines that the Organizational Culture is a significant antecedent of the turnover intention of sales persons.

### **3.3 Organizational Commitment**

Organizational commitment appears to be a relevant attitudinal variable when predicting propensity to leave and actual turnover, since commitment is viewed as an internal feeling, belief, or set of intentions that enhances an employee's desire to remain with an organization (Hunt, Chonko and Wood, 1985). According to Mathieu and Zajac (1990), two types of organizational commitment are commonly studied namely calculated commitment and attitudinal commitment. Attitudinal Organizational Commitment, which has typically been used in sales force research is the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization (Mowday, Steers and Porter, 1979). Many of the studies within this analysis have identified the strong relationship between the Organizational Commitment and the turnover intention of the sales persons. They all singlehandedly propose that their studies have indicated that organizational commitment is significantly related to withdrawal from an organization (Ingram & Lee, 1990; McNeilly & Russ, 1992; Barnes et al., 2006; Habib et al, 2014; Jaramillo et al., 2006; DeConnink, 2010; Farrell, 2005; Wren et al (2014) and Tyagi and Wotuba, 1993). The study conducted by Ingram and Lee (1993) directly targeted at finding the impact of organizational commitment on the turnover intention of the sales persons have concluded that the relative impact of organizational commitment on propensity to withdraw from the organization is negatively related with each other. Their study also provides evidence that organizational commitment constructs are significant predictors of sales force withdrawal propensity. In a similar study Wren et al., (2014) have concluded saying consistent with past research, their results indicated that employees with higher attachment and commitment to the organization are more likely to exhibit a low Propensity to Leave. Organizational commitment was the most influential predictor variable, again suggesting that this measure and the Propensity to leave scale may be reverse surrogates.

The study of McNeilly & Russ (1992) has looked at certain specific aspects of the Organizational Commitment of the sales persons. They have suggested that the job satisfaction has a more positive relationship with organizational commitment for low performers than for high performers amongst the sales people. In addition, they argue that with regard to satisfaction dimensions, satisfaction with the work itself is significant for low performers and satisfaction with promotion is significant for high performers thus developing a strong organizational commitment that leads to a negative relationship with turnover intentions. In the total sample studied by McNeilly & Russ (1992), satisfaction with work, promotion, and supervisor were all significantly related to organizational commitment. The roots of organizational culture also have been brought into the picture by Farrell (2005) in their study on the organizational commitment of the sale people under the market-oriented organizational culture. Their findings have suggested that market-oriented values were important in that they assist in sales-force employees understanding their role, minimizing role conflict, and facilitating organizational commitment. Briggs et al., (2011) have clearly suggested that the organizational commitment is significantly linked to the turnover intentions of the sale persons. Looking another aspect, they argue that the

perceived barriers in advancing the career within the organization have a significant negative relationship with the organizational commitment of the sales people.

Allen et al., (2002) have studied the effect of Perceived Organizational Support towards the Organizational Commitment of the sales persons. They have looked at the perception on supportive Human resources practices within the organization and suggest that those perceptions have a significant influence towards the turnover intentions of the sales persons through a mediation effect of the organizational commitment. In the theoretical model developed by them for the study, participating in decision making, fairness of rewards and career growth opportunities have been taken as the antecedents towards the perceived organizational support. They conclude indicating that supportive HR practices indicating investment in employees or recognition of employee contributions lead to Perceived Organizational Support, and it mediates relationships between these practices and organizational commitment which is directly linked to the turnover intention. The same concept has been studied by DeConinck & Johnson (2009) and they have concluded that the Organizational commitment mediated the relationship between Perceived Organizational Support and sales force turnover intentions. When salespeople believe that the organization cares about their well-being and values their contributions to achieving the company's goals, which belief indirectly affects their organizational commitment and ultimately the decision to stay or leave the organization.

DeConnick (2010) has added another dimension to the study of organizational commitment of the sales people and their intention to quit by researching on the Leader –Member relationship (LMX) and organizational identification. LMX theory proposes that leaders employ a different style of leadership depending on the relationship they have with their subordinates. A person's degree of identification with an Organization determines how he or she attributes and applies characteristics of the organization to him or herself and behaves similarly to other group members in the organization (Turner et al. 1987). The results of the study of DeConnick (2010) have reported that the degree to which salespeople identify with their organization and the relationship they have with their superiors determine their level of organizational commitment and provide important information into understanding turnover intentions among salespeople.

It is worth to mention that Johnston et al. (1990) who studied salespeople's organizational commitment found that even moderate levels of commitment can have a strong restraining effect on the employee's intention to leave the organization. Their finding of a strong negative correlation between organizational commitment and turnover intentions is the strongest relationship found in a literature review on Propensity to Leave. That summarizes the outcomes of all above studies of the selected sample of research works that the Organizational Commitment is a strong antecedent of the salespeople's turnover intention.

### **3.4 Other salient points identified as antecedents**

In addition to the above three points that has been identified in a broader view as antecedents of the salespeople turnover, some of the articles selected for this review had studied different focused areas to find solutions. Two of the articles selected have studied the effect of low and high performing sales people and the significant reasons for their intention to quit. According to Futrell & Parasuraman (1984), the lower the performance levels of the sales people, the more important the influence of satisfaction on their propensity to leave. For high performers, dissatisfaction with promotion was the only significant predictor to leave. And satisfaction with such facets as promotion and praise will be most critical for high performers. A similar result has been found by Johnson et al., (2000) during their study and they have concluded that their results have indicated that many antecedents related to the turnover intention of salespeople have been identified among different groups of high and low performers and the satisfaction of promotions has been noted as a strong antecedent of turnover intentions of the high performers.

Loveland et al., (2015) have taken their research to a different level asking a question whether sales people are born or made. In their findings, they have suggested strong affiliation of the personality traits of the sales people that affects their satisfaction and then linking that with the propensity to leave. They suggest that the biologically based traits are closely tied to core aspects of sales: emotional stability, optimism and extraversion, as well as job and career satisfaction, suggesting that people with the "right" traits may simply be more satisfied with the sales profession than salespeople who do not possess these key attributes. The results of the study conducted by Mulki et al., (2009) also have suggested a somewhat similar outcome when they researched on the lone-wolf trait of salespeople. They conclude indicating that Lone Wolf Trait of a sales person not only affect performance but also lead to higher turnover intentions. Although the emotional exhaustion cannot be considered as a trait that has a relationship with certain personality traits as that is linked with how individuals manage their emotional stress. Based on the study conducted by Jaramillo et al., (2005), salespeople are likely to quit when they believe that their time or their efforts have been wasted or used ineffectively. The study conducted by Levin and Sager (2010) examined the interactive effects of salespersons' personal characteristics and coping strategies on turnover intentions. Their findings suggested that self-efficacy combined with problem-focused coping significantly reduces salespersons turnover intentions. Self-efficacy refers to

people's belief in their capability to mobilize the cognitive and behavioral resources needed to exercise control over environmental events (Bandura and Jourden, 1991). Within their sample, salesperson self-efficacy negatively influenced turnover intentions and that also provide supporting evidence towards the effect of personal characteristics of a sales person on their turnover intention. However, another research selected for this review that has been conducted by Fournier et al., (2010) have suggested that the self-efficacy should be analyzed under the light of organizational climate.

The final two research articles of Pathak & Thripadhi (2010) and Wimalana (2017) have attempted to identify various factors influencing the turnover intentions of the salespeople based on Organizational, Work related, personal and external. Both studies have been conducted in South Asia namely India and Sri Lanka and have suggested somewhat similar results. Organizational and Work related factors have taken a significant weight with regard to the antecedents of turnover intentions of the salespeople.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The selected 30 articles have come out with many antecedents of turnover intentions of salespeople and the review of them has been able to categorize the main points of those studies into mainly three variables. Therefore it must be understood that the way an organization manages their Organizational Culture and Organizational Climate has a major bearing on the Organizational Commitment of the salespeople. The studies have suggested that the Organizational Commitment is significantly negatively related to the turnover intentions of the salespeople. Although there are many other influencing factors, if an organization is able to control the above three factors, the salespeople's turnover can be mitigated to a greater extent.

The same study conducted by Weeks, Loe, Chonko, Martinez and Wakefield (2005) with two different salespeople from two different countries, USA and Maxico, have given some interesting results. Moral ethical development has negatively associated with perceived organizational ethical climate for Mexican salespeople, while there was no such relationship for U.S. salespeople. Ethical climate has positively influenced organizational commitment for the U.S. salespeople but with no influence for Mexican salespeople. Similarly, individual commitment to quality has positively affected performance for salespeople in the US but had no impact for the Mexican salespeople. This result clearly indicates the need of considering the National Culture when interpreting results and implications for managers. That can be done with the cultural dimensions of Hofstede theory.

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