

**THE DUAL INFLUENCE OF CAREER EXPECTANCY BELIEFS
ON INTENTION TO QUIT: EXPLAINING THROUGH MARKETABILITY**

A THESIS

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by

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TO

My Family

(Here's the first of the many to come)

AND

TO

The wonderful days of our twenties my Father and I spent in

Bhopal, Dewas, Jabalpur,

&

INDORE

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Signing off and wishing you a happy reading...

Bishakha Majumdar

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ABSTRACT

Considerable dichotomy exists in research regarding the role of optimism and self-efficacy in work and career outcomes. Optimism and self-efficacy are related to performance, commitment, and engagement, but also are implied in seeing opportunities outside the organization and switching jobs. There is absence of research capturing these opposing strands of findings in the same model and providing a holistic understanding of how the expectancy beliefs operate in case of the working professional. We attempted to bridge this gap by proposing that Career-Decision Self-Efficacy and Career Optimism affect Intention to Quit by the dual mediation pathways through Internal and External Marketability. This model provides a holistic picture of the role of career expectancy beliefs on career outcomes, by considering perceived career opportunities both inside and outside one's present organization. Further, it was proposed that the pathways from Internal and External Marketability to Intention to Quit would be moderated by Need-Supplies Fit and Perceived Job Control.

The proposed model was tested on a sample of 369 Indian professionals with MBA working in the IT/ITES sector. Data was analyzed using the Partial Least Squares-Structured Equation Modelling technique. The outer measurement model was found to have satisfactory loadings, with the measurement scales displaying adequate reliability and discriminant validity. It was found that the pathways from Career Optimism and Career Decision Self-Efficacy to Intention to Quit were fully mediated by Internal and External Marketability. Further, consistent with the proposed model, Internal Marketability was found to be connected by a negative pathway to Intention to Quit and External Marketability was found to be connected by a positive pathway to Intention to Quit. With regards to the moderators, Need-Supplies Fit was found to enhance the strength of the pathway from Internal Marketability to Intention to Quit and attenuate the strength of the pathway from External Marketability to Intention to Quit. Perceived Job Control did not have any significant effect on the pathway between Internal Marketability and Intention to Quit. However, it was found to significantly reduce the strength of the pathway between External Marketability and Intention to

Quit. The blindfolding technique revealed that the model displayed predictive relevance. The Importance-Performance Matrix Analysis revealed Internal and External Marketability to be highest in terms of importance in predicting Intention to Quit, since they fully mediated the pathways between the predictors and the outcome variables.

Given the importance of the mediators in the research model, we conducted 28 post-survey interviews with working professionals having MBA degrees, to identify factors that created in them a sense of Internal and External Marketability. Important factors that emerged for Internal Marketability are competence in dealing with job challenges, perception of organizational justice, and social relationships within the organization. Factors that emerged important for External Marketability are competence in industry related skills, switching opportunities, risk propensity, and prior experience of switches.

Post-survey interviews were also conducted with 20 Human Resource professionals to understand the causes of voluntary turnover among MBAs and interventions currently practiced in the industry. Confirming the importance of External Marketability, alternative job offers emerged as the most important stated cause of turnover. Further, career need assessment and control over work conditions did not emerge as popular practices, indicating the importance of the present findings.

The contribution of the research is twofold: first, it reconciles the two strands of literature arguing opposite effects of expectancy beliefs on Intention to Quit. Further it explains the dynamics through competitive mediation. Secondly, it identifies moderators of the two pathways, indicating possible areas for organizational interventions.

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