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A Study on the Relationship among Industrial Relations Climate, Dual Commitment and Turnover Intention during the Period of Economic Transition in China

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Abstract

With the transition of industrial relations in China, industrial relations in companies are becoming increasingly complex and diverse, which leads to more and more contradictions and conflicts between companies and workers, and the resulting problems become the focus of scholars, especially employee turnover. This paper adopts 450 employees from Shandong, Guangdong and other places as samples, structuring a conceptual model of the relationship between industrial relations climate and turnover intention through bringing in dual commitment as mediator, and use multiple linear regression method to verify it. Research finds: (1) industrial relations climate has a negative effect on turnover intention; (2) dual commitment plays as mediator in the process. This paper can not only supplement relative study on industrial relations climate in China, but lead managers to pay more attention to establish harmonious industrial relations in companies to decrease turnover rate.

Keywords: Industrial Relations Climate; Dual Commitment; Turnover Intention.

1. Introduction

Nowadays, China is in the period of market economy transition and leads to a phenomenon of existing various economic entities in a short term, which brings out unprecedented complexity of industrial relations so that labor disputes occur frequently. For example in 2015, the laboratory of the Supreme Court released the trial implementation of all kinds of cases all over the country and cases of labor disputes and labor contract disputes had risen markedly. Cases of labor disputes were 483311 in total, rising 25.02%; cases of labor contract disputes were 162920 in total and rose 38.69%, the two accounted for 58.66% of the civil and commercial cases. These cases result in the problem of employee turnover and improve the turnover rate of companies. Besides, turnover of employees especially core employees makes companies get into trouble and has a negative impact on their operation. This shows that the problem of industrial relations has become an inevitable major issue during the period of economic transition, so how industrial relations climate impacts turnover intention is the focus of this paper to explore.

In the study on the relationship between industrial relations climate and behavior management, Li (2012) and Ye (2015) think industrial relations climate has a negative effect on turnover intention, especially in positive, innovate and impartial industrial relations climate, employees' turnover rate will decrease obviously. Foreign scholars also find that industrial relations climate is an antecedent variable of dual commitment (Kim & Rowley, 2006). Based on the theory of social exchange, employees will perceive that company and union meet needs of them and make some behavior to conform to interests of company and union when the industrial relations climate is harmonious, because company, union and employees have mutual trust, also company and union fulfil their duties. Meanwhile, dual commitment is an antecedent variable of turnover intention (Banerjee-Batist & Reio, 2016), employees will stay in company in a long term and reduce their turnover intention when the level of their commitment is high. So whether industrial relations climate can has impact on turnover through dual commitment or not is a question to answer. Though there are many studies on the relationship between industrial relations climate and relative variables in foreign countries, researches on these issues especially influencing mechanism in China are less. Thus, this paper exploringly brings in dual commitment as mediator to study the relationship between the two.

To sum up, this paper primarily aims at studying the impact of industrial relations climate to turnover intention in Chinese companies during the period of economic transition, and bringing in dual commitment as mediator to explore the influencing mechanism. The conclusion of this paper will help managers to adopt corresponding management measures to establish harmonious industrial relations climate and reduce turnover rate.

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis

2.1 The Definition of Concepts

2.1.1 Industrial Relations Climate

The first research about industrial relations climate began in the late of 1970s. Kelly (1980) argues that industrial relations climate is the product of industrial relations and organizational climate. After testing many times, Dastmalchian, Blyton & Adamson (1989) compiled 26-project scales of the industrial relations climate, and put forward the five dimensions: harmony, apathy, hostility, opening, quickness. Although industrial relations climate is invisible, it plays an important role in the psychological perception of employers, and the direct performance of members' psychological state is their behavior. Cui and Wu (2011) integrate the concept of industrial relations climate, and build the concept model. Through analyzing the effect factors, main content and influencing mechanism, they define that industrial relations climate is the perception of industrial relations behavior and practices, which is affected by different factors and forms in the process of interaction between employees and managers. He also thinks that it is an important reflection and measure standard of the quality of enterprise's industrial relations.

2.1.2 Dual Commitment

The earliest research on dual commitment began in the 1950s. Purcell (1954) first proposed the concept of dual commitment. He finds that employees can simultaneously play two roles, namely employees and members of unions, and employees can commitment to both organizations. In Angle & Perry's (1986) view, dual commitment of employees must have three characteristics: a strong desire to continuously be a member of the enterprise and unions; agreement with the values and goals of the business and unions; efforts for the interests of enterprises and unions. Kim (2005) thinks dual commitment has two dimensions, that is to say, attitude and behavior commitment. Western scholars believe that dual commitment affects the "attitude-behavior" mode of employees (Baruch & Winkelmann-Gleed, 2002). The direct result is that the change of the behavior output of employees such as turnover, absenteeism, and job satisfaction (Johnson, 1999). However, there is very little empirical study of domestic unions, so the empirical study on this concept is rare in China.

2.1.3 Turnover Intention

Turnover intention, as a signal before employees' departure, is a kind of psychology, which has been used by many scholars at home and abroad as an important variable for measuring and predicting employees' turnover (Miller and Kateberg, 1979; Shore and Martin, 1989). Porter et al. (1974) believes that turnover intention is the withdraw of employees due to the unsatisfactory with the differences between current work expectations and realities. Mobley (1977) defines that it is the employees' intention trying to leave their current enterprise after working some time and making comparison. Xia (2009) finds that many factors can affect turnover intention, including organizational commitment, job satisfaction, departure loss, support from supervisors, salary and so on. Although based on different perspectives and research objectives and the definition of turnover intention is slightly different, turnover intention as valid predictors of turnover behavior is widely accepted by scholars.

2.2 Research and Hypothesis

2.2.1 Relationship between Industrial Relations Climate and Turnover Intention

At present, many scholars have verified the effects of industrial relations climate on employees' turnover intention. Turnover intention as an effective variable predicts staff's turnover, and to some extent, it reflects the employees' identification of their organizations as well as their satisfaction with the working relationship between them. Through empirical study in Hong Kong, Snape (2000) proposes that industrial relations climate is an effect factor of dual commitment. Through the investigation of banks in Taiwan, Li (2003) finds that industrial relations climate and turnover intention of members have significantly negative correlation, that is to say, employees in organization can feel their managers' concern and attention, and then try to maintain the good internal relationship, and create harmonious industrial relations climate, which will be conducive to enhance members' dependence and identity of enterprises and reduce their turnover intention. In addition, Huang (2006) finds that "non-hostile" industrial relations climate has a significantly positive impact on employees' retention commitment. If employees feel that industrial relations climate is "non-hostile", employees will be more inclined to stay in the organization. Through surveying Indian enterprises, Talukdar (2013) finds that industrial relations climate has significant positive effect on employees' motivation, job satisfaction and values, thereby reducing employees' turnover intention.

Because industrial relations climate and turnover intention are dynamic concepts, there may be an indirect relationship between them, or more complex relationship. In addition, in China, due to the cultural differences, differences in interpersonal relationships, impact of industrial relations climate on turnover intention perhaps has differences in Europe and the United States. So the paper needs to further verify the relationship between the two and makes the following hypothesis:

H1: Industrial relations climate has negative effect on turnover intention.

2.2.2 Relationship between Industrial Relations Climate and Dual Commitment

By surveying 22012 members of unions in the U.K. and other six countries, Johnson & Patterson (1999) finds that the harmony degree of industrial relations climate has relation to dual commitment. Through comparing and analyzing dual commitment of China and Korea, Lee (2005) finds that industrial relations climate, job satisfaction as well as motivation are the antecedents of dual commitment. In addition, in the study of the antecedents of dual commitment, some scholars have referred to the industrial relations climate and think that active and cooperative industrial relations climate has a positive impact on dual commitment (Snape & Chan, 2000 ; Kim & Rowley, 2006). Chen (2011), based on the survey of employees in the enterprises having unions in the Yangtze River Delta and the Pearl River Delta region, thinks that industrial relations climate has significant positive effects on dual commitment and it plays a mediating role between union practices and dual commitment. Through surveying 433 employees in Jiangsu area as

the positive samples to conduct empirical research, Hu (2012) finds that in the context of socio-economic transition in China, industrial relations climate has a significant positive impact on dual commitment. So the paper makes the following hypothesis:

H2: Industrial relations climate has positive effect on dual commitment.

2.2.3 Relationship between Dual Commitment and Turnover Intention

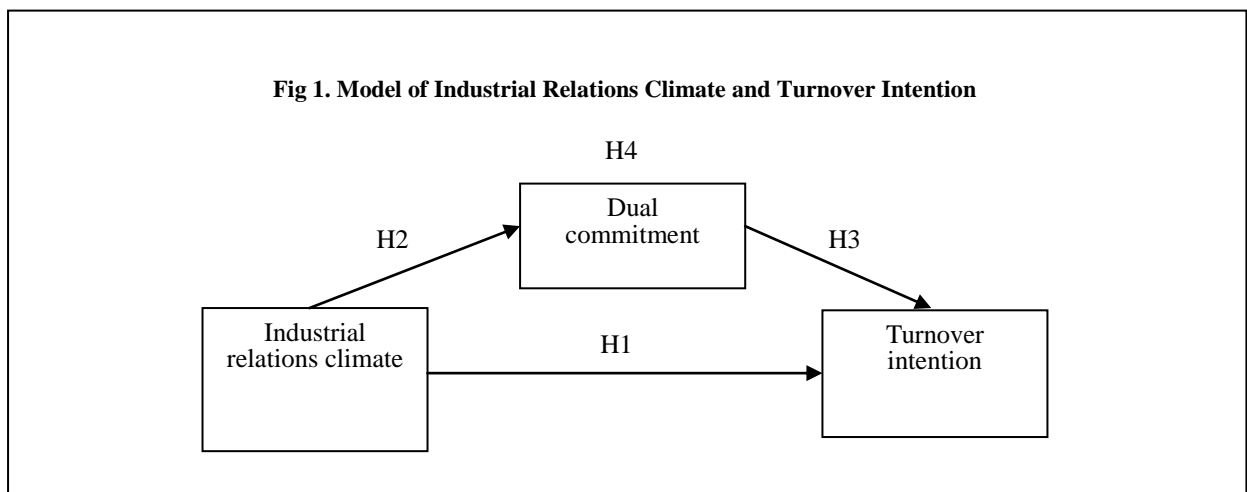
The job role is just one of employees' multiple roles. Based on interactive models, Kabanoff (1980) thinks that multiple roles affect each other and also affect staff's behavior. Therefore, double roles of dual commitment can affect employees' behavior, which have an impact on staff's turnover. Employees with low commitment in the enterprise often have a strong turnover intention, Liu (2002) and Cui (2003) argue that commitments have a significant impact on employees' turnover intention. Making Australian 305 subsidiaries under the international banks as samples of study, Derry & Iverson (2005) thinks that dual commitment is proportional to productivity, service quality and the rate of absenteeism. Employees with dual commitment demonstrate high productivity, service quality, and a lower turnover rate. Using Korean enterprises as the study samples of empirical research, Kim & Rowley (2006) finds that there is a significant negative correlation between turnover intention and dual commitment. Through surveying Korean 2568 electronic employees from electronics industry, Sean et al. (2012) finds that employees can be loyalty to both unions and enterprises and employees with dual commitment have much lower turnover intention. After investigations in non-public enterprises in China, Shan (2014) believes that dual commitment can predict staff turnover intention. Investigating companies in the U.K., Redman & Snape (2016) finds that when the industrial relations climate is harmonious in the company, employees will have dual commitment, and employees with high levels of commitment to the enterprise and union will have lower turnover intention.

This paper argues that when the industrial relations climate is harmonious, employees are able to perceive harmonious cooperation between enterprises and unions and they will commit themselves to enterprises and unions. Employees with high commitment also be more loyal, who reduce their intention to leave the enterprise. Based on the above analysis, the paper makes the following hypothesis:

H3: Dual commitment has negative impact on turnover intention;

H4: Dual commitment plays a mediating role between industrial relations climate and turnover intention.

To sum up, on the basis of the above hypothesis, the paper constructs the conceptual model, which makes dual commitment as mediator in the influence of industrial relations climate on turnover intention in the context of the period of economic transition in China, as shown in Figure 1:



3. Methodology

3.1 Research Samples and Data Collection

Questionnaires are used in this paper to collect data and scale is mainly based on abroad mature scale. Due to differences in cultural backgrounds, after in reference to the recommendations of the experts and senior managers, the reliability and validity of these scales should be verified in Chinese background. Official survey was made from September 2015 to June 2016, for English scales, paper adopts double blind translation method to make participants easy to understand. Besides, questionnaires have been detected before to make sure they are available and use statistic methods to remove items that don't meet requirements.

Samples are employees from Shandong, Guangdong, Jiangxi, Jiangsu and Tianjin provinces, which contain ordinary employees, technical staff and managers. This study is totally issued 450 questionnaires. 358 valid questionnaires were recovered. Effective recovery rate is 79.6%. Respondents were from the manufacturing sector, among them, 52.2% were male, 47.8% were female, 52.9% were married, 47.1% were not married, 77.2% were bachelors and 22.8% were common staff. In addition, the average age of respondents was 29 years old and average length of service was 7 years. Length in participating unions was 5 years and their average monthly income was 3000-6000RMB. In general, samples have great representation and meet thesis requirements.

3.2 Variable Measurement and Validity Analysis

The scale of industrial relations climate adopt industrial relations climate with two dimensions scale developed by Chen (2011), who revises it in the context of China based on the scale developed by Dastmalchian et al. (1989). According to the concept of industrial relations climate and characteristics of companies, industrial relations climate contains positive industrial relations climate (6-items), and negative industrial relations climate (4-items). The scale use Likert 7-items scale, which is measured from "1=strongly disagree" to "7=strongly agree", the highest score represents the most harmonious industrial relations climate. The credibility of three dimensions is 0.802 and 0.799.

Dual commitment is measured by the scale of organizational commitment and union commitment developed by Angle & Perry (1986), including 17 items. The scale use Likert 7-items scale, which is measured from "1=strongly disagree" to "7=strongly agree", the higher the score, the higher level of dual commitment, and the credibility is 0.877.

The scale of turnover intention adopts Farh's (1998) scale including 4 items. The scale use Likert 7-items scale, which is measured from "1=strongly disagree" to "7=strongly agree", the higher the score, the stronger intention to turnover and the credibility of the scale is 0.841.

For control variables, many researches find that characteristics of staff, gender, age, degree of education and so on are factors of industrial relations climate and turnover intention. So control variables contains gender, age, enterprise term, union term, degree, marriage status, positions status, salary conditions.

4. Data Analysis and Results

4.1 Analysis of Correlations

The average and correlation matrix of each variable are shown in Table 1. Table 1 shows, industrial relations climate and turnover intention are negatively correlated ($r = -0.371$, $p < 0.01$). H1 is supported. Industrial relations climate and dual commitment has a significant and positive correlation ($r = 0.403$, $p < 0.01$), H2 is supported; dual commitment and turnover intention are negatively correlated ($r = -0.416$, $p < 0.01$), H3 is supported. Therefore, the variables can explain the mediator and mediator can explain variables, which has been validated. If there are multi-co-linearity

issues, the corresponding thresholds will generally exceed 0.75. Table 1 shows that paper's data does not exist significant multi-co-linearity problems.

Table 1: Table of Variables Correlation Coefficient					
Variables	Average	SD	Industrial relations climate	Dual commitment	Turnover intention
Industrial relations climate	3.094	0.714	1.000		
Dual commitment	3.273	0.513	0.403**	1.000	
Turnover intention	2.755	0.652	-0.371**	-0.416	1.000

** represents significant at the 0.01 level, * indicates significant at the 0.05 level. Diagonal displays internal consistency coefficient of each variable.

4.2 Analysis of Hypothesis Results

Making dual commitment as the dependent variable, followed by introducing control variables and the industrial relations climate as independent variables, the paper makes model 1 and model 2. The regression results show that, the explanatory power of the model 2 is bigger than model 1 and the statistic of model 2 is statistically significant ($\beta_2=0.466$, $p<0.001$, $\Delta R_2=0.177$). That is to say, industrial relations climate has significantly positive effects on dual commitment. H2 is supported. Making dual performance as dependent variable, control variable and industrial relations climate as arguments, the paper makes model 3 and model 4, which are the results of the control variable return on turnover intention and the regression results of industrial relations climate on turnover intention. After joining the industrial relations climate, the explanatory power of the model 4 is greater than model 3 and is notable ($\beta_4= -0.229$, $p<0.01$, $\Delta R_2=0.055$), that is to say, industrial relations climate have significantly negative effects on turnover intention. H1 is supported. Results are shown in Table 2. From the regression results we can know that industrial relations climate have a significant correlation between dual commitment and turnover intention.

Model 5 shows regression results of industrial relations climate and dual commitment on turnover intention. According to Baron and Kenny (1986)'s test method of intermediary role, when variables can explain for changes of variable and variables can explain changes of intermediary variables get validation, control intermediary variables. If variables' effect on variable can be significantly reduced, and intermediary variables' effect on variables equal to zero, it can proves part of mediating role exists. By comparing the model 4 and model 5, joining the dual commitment to the variables of the model 5, industrial relations climate on turnover intention by model 4 ($\beta_4= -0.229$, $p<0.01$, $\Delta R_2=0.055$) significantly reduce to the model 5 ($\beta_5= -0.335$, $p<0.01$, $\Delta R_2=0.161$), and dual commitment has negative impact on turnover intention and is not zero ($\beta_5= -0.204$, $p<0.01$), which suggests that dual commitment is part of the influence mediators of industrial relations climate on turnover intention. The H3, H4 is supported.

Table 2. Test for Mediating Effect

Variables	Dual commitment		Turnover intention		
	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5
Gender	-0.012	-0.132*	-0.180*	-0.127*	-0.192*
Age	0.025*	0.023*	0.232*	0.112*	0.148*
Tenure	0.241	0.155	-0.039	-0.058	-0.043
Term of union	0.014	0.156	-0.079	-0.042	-0.063
Educational background	-0.155*	-0.190*	-0.076	0.102	0.115
Marital status	0.112	0.231	0.141	0.079	0.119
Post	0.030	0.017	0.032	0.079	0.062
Salary	0.095	0.153	0.099	0.053	0.095
Industrial relations climate		0.466***		0.-229**	0.-335*
Dual commitment					0.-204**
R ²	0.054**	0.231**	0.098**	0.153**	0.314**
ΔR ²		0.177**		0.055**	0.161**

*** for P<0.001, ** for P<0.010, * for P<0.050.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1 Conclusion

This paper studies the impact of industrial relations climate to turnover intention and makes dual commitment as mediator, adopting data from questionnaire to verify and analyze hypothesis. Then paper gets the following conclusion:

- i) Paper verifies the negative relationship between industrial relations climate and turnover intention in the context of the period of economic transition in China. That is to say, in times of existing complicated industrial relations, employees will not leave their company when they perceive the positive and harmonious industrial relations, or they may turnover. This is an important supplement of turnover intention in China.
- ii) The results of the paper show that industrial relations climate has significant positive effect on dual commitment. It means that when there are harmonious industrial relations in company, employee will not only commit to organization but to unions, so managers in company should pay attention to build good relations with unions. The existing studies, mostly are about the impact of organizational support on turnover intention and rarely discuss industrial relations climate as the independent variable. While this paper studies the effects of industrial relations climate on turnover intention, which is a big complement to the research of industrial relations climate.
- iii) Paper draws conclusions that dual commitment has significant negative impact on turnover intention, dual commitment plays as mediating role in the process of the effect of industrial relations climate to turnover intention as well. Paper researches the mediating mechanism of the impact of industrial relations climate on

turnover intention. That is to say, industrial relations climate produces effects through dual commitment and verifies that dual commitment can be a mediator of the impact of industrial relations climate on turnover intention. It builds a “industrial relations climate → dual commitment → turnover intention” mechanism model, which shows a new perspective for studying the relations among industrial relations climate, dual commitment and turnover intention.

5.2 Management Inspiration

The results have some significance to the staff management of our country. Reducing turnover intention has important influences on enterprises especially those with human capital as their core, improving industrial relations climate is one way. In the business operation, to strengthen the construction of industrial relations climate, managers need to do the following:

First, unions and managers work together to build a fair and just system environment, making efforts to create a good working environment for their employees, so that employees receive the respect they deserves and impartial treatment. Promote independent unions rights and achieve economic independence of unions, so as to strengthen the unions' function. Change the employees' idea to allow more employees to join in unions so as to make unions more powerful and make them play a greater role in coordinating industrial relations.

Second, strengthen the cooperation between managers and employees. Managers of the enterprise and employees need to build mutual trust and common development cooperation mechanisms, recognizing each other's opinions, seeking common actions and sharing risks and benefits. Cooperation between managers and staff should have more levels, to achieve effective cooperation between the powers, responsibilities and interests. It is necessary to provide employees with effective employment, welfare benefits and health care, but also to find the distribution of the balance of interest between employees and enterprises. Through bilateral cooperation to foster amicable industrial relations climate.

Third, perform the role of government in industrial relations climate. Government is also one of the subjects of labor relations. Government systems, policies and laws play a very important role in the construction of industrial relations climate. Therefore, Governments need to strengthen legal construction, from macro to regulate the labor relations, thus creating the conditions for building harmonious and stable industrial relations.

5.4 Limitations and Future Research Directions

In conducting the study, due to the restrictions of research abilities, theories and experiences, inevitably there are some limitations.

First, this study uses data for employees to fill out questionnaires, so objectivity of data needs to be strengthened. Secondly, each variable in the model has not been divided into several dimensions, so in the future study can research industrial relations climate from fractal dimensions to study its impacts on employee behavior more accurately. Thirdly, it makes dual commitment as mediator of the relationship between industrial relations climate and turnover intention. Dual commitment is also worth studying. Future research can try to make dual commitment as antecedents to study the effects of dual commitment on other variables relating employees' behavior and organizations.

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