



### **D70 Determinants of Turnover Intentions, Helping, and Knowledge Sharing in Crime Laboratories**

*David D. Dawley, PhD\**, West Virginia Univ, College of Business, Box 6025, Morgantown, WV; and *Max M. Houck, PhD*, PO Box 6250, Arlington, VA 22206

After attending this presentation, attendees will have a better understanding of reasons why crime lab workers choose to quit their jobs, gaining insight into managerial tools for reducing turnover and creating a more productive workforce.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by providing the first known results from a study examining crime lab worker turnover, helping behaviors, and sharing of knowledge.

Forensic scientists are knowledge workers and are a laboratory's single greatest enduring expense. Therefore, it is imperative for forensic managers to find ways to retain employees, share knowledge, and create a cohesive, coherent team perspective. Based on a discussion with a group of FORESIGHT forensic laboratory directors in 2011, four major areas of research interest were identified: (1) reducing employee turnover; (2) increasing employees' helping behaviors with colleagues; (3) knowledge sharing among employees; and, (4) creating and disseminating a strategic vision to all employees.

Helping and knowledge sharing are also known as Organizational Citizenship Behaviors (OCBs). Job satisfaction and embeddedness would help explain turnover intentions and OCBs is surmised. It is very important to note that these two job-related constructs are very different. Whereas job satisfaction is the degree to which an employee is content with his/her job, job embeddedness refers to the psychological, social, and financial influences on employee retention and behavior. Strategic planning, vision, and employees' understanding of that plan are thought to be an important part of any organization's performance. Therefore, we would expect that employee understanding of the strategic vision would be positively associated with job satisfaction and embeddedness.

A 2000 review of the academic literature spanning the prior thirty years found job satisfaction to be the strongest predictor of employee turnover and desirable OCBs. More recently, researchers have found that employee embeddedness is an important predictor of turnover and OCBs, after controlling for job satisfaction. Therefore, we hypothesize that two direct predictor variables of turnover intentions and OCBs would be job satisfaction and embeddedness.

In addition to strategic vision, there are several other determinants of job satisfaction and embeddedness. Characteristics of the job, called work design, should have an effect on the forensic laboratory employee's degree of job satisfaction and embeddedness. Accordingly, we examine the job design attributes of autonomy, accountability, task significance, efficiency, and authentic leadership style. Autonomy refers to the amount of discretion a worker has in making decisions and scheduling tasks. Accountability suggests being held answerable for one's actions. Task significance is the extent to which employees believe their job impacts others' lives. Authentic leadership is a leadership style that subordinates see as motivational, just, transparent, and ethical. The hypothesis is that these attributes (along with strategic vision) will predict job satisfaction and embeddedness, which in turn predict turnover intentions, helping, and knowledge sharing.

Using the areas of research interest, a web-based survey containing all of the aforementioned constructs of interest was conducted. Five hundred and ninety participants from nine forensic labs in the United States and Canada participated in the survey. The statistical technique, structural equations modeling, to test the causality of the relationships discussed thus far was used.

Regarding turnover intentions, it was found that both job satisfaction and embeddedness were significant predictor variables. Job embeddedness was twice as strong as job satisfaction in predicting turnover intention. The same finding held true for predicting knowledge sharing. Job satisfaction was positively associated with helping behaviors.

Strategic vision was the strongest predictor of job embeddedness. Autonomy, accountability, task significance, and leadership style were also significant predictor variables. Autonomy was the strongest predictor of job satisfaction. Strategic vision, accountability, and task significance were also significant predictor variables.

The major findings from this study include the importance of job embeddedness, strategic vision, and autonomy in forensic laboratory employees. These variables, along with accountability, task significance, efficiency, and leadership style are manageable factors. To this end, the forensic laboratory manager offers practical ways to reduce turnover intentions and increase desirable OCBs.

**Turnover, Knowledge Sharing, Helping**