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Influence of ethical ideology and socio-demographic characteristics on turnover intention: A study of retail industry in India

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Abstract: Ascertaining the relationship between ethical ideology, socio-demographic characteristics and turnover intention appears to be a complex phenomenon. Through this study, an attempt has been made to investigate the relationship between ethical ideologies, individual differences and turnover intention. This study is based on ethical ideology model showing two dimensions (idealism and relativism) that plays an important role in ethical evaluation and behavior. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlations, and multiple regressions. Based on a survey of 564 employees of retail industry in India, ethical ideologies (e.g. idealism and relativism) are found to be negatively associated with turnover intention. Results of the relationship between demographic characteristics, ethical ideology and turnover intention have been found to be quite interesting. The findings imply that ethical ideology and demographic characteristics will predict turnover intention in the organization.

Subjects: Behavioral Sciences; Development Studies, Environment, Social Work, Urban Studies; Economics, Finance, Business & Industry; Social Sciences

Keywords: business ethics; turnover intention; idealism; relativism; retail industry

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PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

Globalization has increased the competition in the market, which generates an extra pressure on organization to earn revenue. To meet organizational objectives, employees directly or indirectly indulge in unethical activities. Therefore, increase in globalization of businesses has increased the need of ethics in organizations. Ethics-related situations in business are becoming more complex, involving issues such as societal expectations, moral issues, fair competition, ethical decision-making, legal protection, rights, and ethical ideologies. Since last few decades, business scandals (or lapses in corporate ethical behavior) have created an increased awareness of the importance of business ethics. These unethical activities create hidden stress among the employees, and consequently have a stronger need to alleviate the stress by withdrawing from the organization. This study points out how ethical ideologies and demographic characteristics can decrease the turnover intentions of the employees.

1. Introduction

In the global competition, the increase in globalization of businesses has increased the need of ethics in organizations (Viswesvaran, Deshpande, & Joseph, 1998). Ethics-related situations in business are becoming more complex, involving issues such as societal expectations, moral issues, fair competition, ethical decision-making, legal protection, rights, and ethical ideologies. Since last few decades, business scandals (or lapses in corporate ethical behavior) have created an increased awareness of the importance of business ethics. Business ethics is important for all organizations and employees. To avoid these organizational scandals, business ethics can be one of the important tools for the organizations. Authors believe that business ethics in the organization can be created by employees, when they follow their own ethical ideologies. For instance, one of the issues has been observed in retail organizations wherein sales employees, who often work with high workloads and pressurized work environment, in order to meet the targeted results, might feel more pressure to behave unethically for getting results as per the organization's expectation (Wotruba, 1990).

Research relating ethics to job outcomes establishes significant relationships between organizational ethical values and organizational commitment (Hunt, Wood, & Chonko, 1989; Posner & Schmidt, 1993; Sims & Kroeck, 1994), role conflict (Schwepker, Ferrell, & Ingram, 1997), job satisfaction (Deshpande, 1996; Vitell & Davis, 1990; Weeks & Nantel, 1992), turnover (Sims & Kroeck, 1994), and performance (Weeks & Nantel, 1992), respectively. Numerous studies particularly in sales investigated the effect of organizational ethical climate on turnover intention and job performance (Schwepker, 2001; Valentine & Barnett, 2003; Weeks, Loe, Chonko, & Wakefield, 2004). Research has shown that ethical climate results in higher job satisfaction and organizational commitment, which leads to lower turnover intention (Mulki, Jaramillo, & Locander, 2006; Schwepker, 2001; Valentine & Barnett, 2003). Similarly, the positive effect of ethical climate on organizational commitment can result in better job performance (Weeks et al., 2004). However, individual ethics relationship to certain job-related outcomes is unknown, particularly in retail organizations.

In addition, empirical studies indicated that demographic variables are relevant with turnover intentions (Williams & Hazer, 1986). Age, income and job tenure are identified as negatively related to turnover intentions (Cotton & Tuttle, 1986; Gregersen & Black, 1982; Morrow, 1983). Although the influence of employee demographic variables on turnover intentions may differ in different international environment, however the empirical research in international context including India is insufficient (Naumann, 1993). Tyagi and Wotruba (1993) supported that very few studies have investigated the effect of employee characteristics on employee turnover.

Ethical ideology is particularly important to retail organizations. Moral philosophy is the foundation for ethics and an important factor affecting one's moral and ethical judgments (Singhapakdi, Kraft, Vitell, & Rallapalli, 1995). Henle, Giacalone, and Jurkiewicz (2005) defined ethical ideology as a system of ethics used to make moral judgments. According to Barnett, Bass, and Brown (1994) and Bass, Barnett, and Brown (1999), it is important to learn about the individual's ideology and moral philosophy in order to understand moral judgments and behavior in particular circumstances when the individual is faced with the need to solve an ethical quandary and take a decision. Indeed, Barnett et al. (1994) established that ethical judgments of employees depend on their moral ideology. Ethical ideology derives from individual moral philosophy. In addition, it relates to several dimensions, such as utilitarianism, altruism, narcissism, Machiavellianism, absolutism, opportunism, etc. However, idealism and relativism are two of the most significant constructs of ethical ideology. Forsyth (1980) suggested that individual variation in approaches to moral judgment and behavior might be conceptualized in terms of two basic dimensions: relativism and idealism

In spite of this, earlier studies also revealed that there was a significant relationship between employee's ethical ideologies and ethical climates (Karande, Rao, & Singhapakdi, 2002; Ming & Chia, 2005). Organizations have become aware that unethical practices and behaviors negatively affect their performance and their goodwill image. However, ethical intentions and behaviors depend on individual differences. Therefore, one of the important factors that play a prominent role in ethical

decision-making and moral judgments is individual ethical ideology and individual differences. Researchers accentuate the importance of studying an ethical ideology due to their importance in affecting employee's attitudes and behavior, and organizational outcomes (Forsyth, 1980; Lopez, Babin, & Chung, 2009; Trevino, Butterfield, & McCabe, 1998). With this in mind, we proposed that individual ethical ideology would serve as another alternative to external rewards so as to increase the satisfaction level and further decrease the turnover intention.

The Indian Retail sector has matured and went through a major transformation over the last decade with a noticeable shift toward organized retailing. India ranked as the 15th most attractive country for retail investment among 30 flourishing markets (Kearney, 2015). The retail market is expected to reach Rs. 47 trillion by 2016–17, as it expands at a compounded annual growth rate of 15% (The Associated Chambers of Commerce & Industry of India & Yes Bank, 2014). According to consultants, rapid growth in organized retail has raised attrition levels steep high to 96% a year, which is very high in comparison with past years. Indian retailers, big and small, are facing high personnel attrition issues across different stores. The McKinsey study claims retail productivity in India is very low compared to international peer measures. The employee productivity in Indian retail was just 6% of the employee productivity in United States in 2010. India's employee productivity in food retailing is about 5% compared to Brazil's 14%; while India's employee productivity in non-food retailing is about 8% compared to Poland's 25% (Revathy, 2012).

Some researchers contemplate turnover intention as an intended psychological willingness to leave the organization (Alniacik, Cigerim, Akcin, & Bayram, 2011; Griffeth, Hom, & Gaetner, 2000; Ohana & Meyer, 2010; Panatik et al., 2012; Tett & Meyer, 1993). Despite its importance, there was a gap of limited empirical research regarding this subject in the literature (Awang, Amir, & Osman, 2013; Rageb, Abd-El-Salam, El-Samadicy, & Farid, 2013). Understanding the antecedents of turnover is important because of its costs to organizations (Griffeth & Hom, 2001). These direct costs can be substantial given the high rate of turnover among retail sales employees (Richardson, 1999). Thus, understanding reasons for sales employee's turnover is important to organizations. In this study, the major focus is to examine whether an ethical ideology and individual factors influence turnover intentions of retail employees in India.

2. Theoretical background and research hypotheses

2.1. Ethical ideology and turnover intention

Ethical ideology is very important for any organization because it influences the ethical behavior of the employees. Employees who perceive that their organization consider ethics in organizational decision-making, exhibits stronger desires to stay in the organization. This is likely to occur, particularly, when employees feel that their personal ethical values fit into the organization's value system (Schwepker, 1999; Sims & Kroeck, 1994). Previous studies revealed a significant relationship between employee's ethical ideologies and ethical climates (Karande et al., 2002; Ming & Chia, 2005; Putranta & Kingshott, 2011), organizational commitment (Shaub, Finn, & Munter, 1993), and turnover intentions (Nikkhah Farkhani, Armoun, & Javidnia, 2013). Organizations having ethical culture have been found to exhibit positive influence on the idealistic orientation of the employees (Douglas, Davidson, & Schwartz, 2001; Karande et al., 2002; Ming & Chia, 2005).

Previous studies have explored the ability of ethical ideology to predict reactions to psychological issues (e.g. Forsyth & Pope, 1984; Schlenker & Forsyth, 1977), sexual attitudes (Singh & Forsyth, 1989), evaluations of social–sexual behavior (Bowes-Sperry & Powell, 1999), tolerance for ambiguity (Yurtsever, 2000), right-wing authoritarianism (McHoskey, 1996), Machiavellianism (Leary, Knight, & Barnes, 1986), attributions for wrong doing (Forsyth, 1981), and creativity (Yurtsever, 1998).

Studies found that ethical climates influence employee's turnover intention (Schwepker, 2001; Valentine & Barnett, 2003; Weeks et al., 2004) and from the preceding studies, it was also clearly established that the ethical climate and ethical ideology are two separate phenomenon (Putranta,

2008). The key of individual decision-making depends upon the ethical ideologies, which are of two types: (1) relativism and (2) idealism (Schlenker & Forsyth, 1977). Relativism is the extent wherein individuals believe that moral actions are dependent upon the nature of the situation. While highly relativistic individuals are not reliant on universal moral rules (Forsyth, 1980, 1992), those with low relativism believe they should act in line with such values (Davis, Andersen, & Curtis, 2001; Dubinsky, Natarajan, & Huang, 2004). Whereas, individuals who follow idealism, have a belief that moral actions always lead to desirable outcomes. Highly idealistic individuals always consider the inherent goodness of universal moral values and give due importance to not harming others (Tansey, Brown, Hyman, & Dawson, 1994). Less idealistic individuals maintain actions that harming others is not necessarily wrong (Redfern, 2005) and it is contingent upon the situation. Therefore, relativists may find it easier to acclimatize their ethical values to fit with the organization's objectives than it is for idealists to violate moral rules. Thus, it might be rational to expect that individuals who believe in universal moral rules would have more difficulty to break the rules of ethical conduct and thus experience more stress in coping with pressure to engage in unethical behavior at work, as compared to individuals who adhere to relativistic moral beliefs. In other words, individuals who believe in universal moral rules would seem likely to have more difficulty in rationalizing unethical work behavior since these individuals do not believe that ethics are relative. They are likely to expect the same ethical standards to apply to both personal and professional situations. As a result, individuals with a strong belief in universal moral rules (idealists) may experience more stress or cognitive dissonance when confronted with pressure to engage in unethical work behavior and consequently have a stronger need to alleviate the stress by withdrawing from the organization. In addition, there is a paucity of research examining the relationship between ethical ideology and individual behavioral intentions such as job stress, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions. Therefore, we can hypothesize the following hypothesis to investigate the relationship between ethical ideologies (Idealism and Relativism) and turnover intentions.

H1 (a). There is a no relationship between ethical ideology (idealism and relativism) and turnover intention in Indian retail Industry.

H2 (b). Ethical ideology does not predict turnover intention in Indian retail Industry.

2.2. Socio-demographic variable and turnover intention

The issue of employee's turnover (quitting behavior) has often received attention of researchers (Agarwal, Ferratt, & De, 2007; Kotzé & Roodt, 2005; Ogungbamila, 2010; Richer, Blanchard, & Vallerand, 2002). A major determinant of turnover behavior as reported by literature is the turnover intention (Brigham, Castro, & Shepherd, 2007; Price, 2001). Turnover intention is an individual's desire or willingness to quit or leave organization (Elangovan, 2001). Hence, no better yardstick would have been more appropriate to measure quitting behavior than turnover intention. Demographic factors appear to strongly influence employee decisions to exit an organization. Previous studies found that the demographic factors which have found significant relationship with retention and turnover intentions are age, gender, tenure, education and income levels. Over a time, organization's demographic factors have influenced the turnover intentions. Previous studies in which demographic factors have been used to investigate job stress, job satisfaction, and job attitudes which showed that they are strong predictors of turnover intentions (Furnham, Eracleous, & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2009; Kavanaugh, Duffy, & Lilly, 2006; Ng & Sorensen, 2008; Schroder, 2008; Shukla & Srivastava, 2016). This study includes the demographic variable (gender, age, income, experience, education, and marital status) to find the effect of individual difference on turnover intentions. Religion, as a demographic variable has not been included in the study although suggested by the literature (Village & Piedmont, 2011). However, some studies found that religion does not affect the perception of individual related to ethics in Indian organizations (Garde, 2011). Studies provided strong evidence that the importance of religion in a person's life is much more than mere religious affiliation that has a significant effect on ethical attitudes (Emerson & Mckinney, 2010). According to Kohlberg's (1981) stage development theory as a basis in attempting to explain why religion may affect moral attitudes, although theory argues strongly that religion and moral judgments are

separate, Kohlberg (1981, p. 336) admits they are parallel. According to the Indian census 2011, 79.8% of the population of India practices Hinduism and 14.2% stick to Islam, while the remaining 6% adheres to other religions (e.g. Christianity, Buddhism, Sikhism, Jainism and various indigenous ethnically bound faiths). The fact that majority of the population follows a specific religion, persuaded the researchers to think over the lack of variation among the sample with respect to religion in Indian retail setups. Therefore, the religion as a demographic factor has not been included in this study, rather it can be explored in future studies.

Most of the literature on gender and turnover do come from the private sector. Recently, women participation in the job has been increased. The work participation rate by sex in India has changed, percentage of women in the work participation rate increased from 12.1% in 1979 to 25.5% in 2011 (Singh, 2014, p. 18, Labour Bureau, Ministry of Labour & Employment, Government of India). Most turnover studies have given not enough contemplation to “gender” which is a generic source of individual difference in turnover. Meta-analysis study has established the indirect involvement of gender in turnover process (Carsten & Spector, 1987). This has probably led to gender’s absence in the theoretical models of turnover and due to which turnover has not been used as dependent, independent, or control variable (Wild & Dawson, 1972). It has now become a common practice in the retail industry, not to allow husband and wife to work in the same located store. Göransson, Näswall, and Sverke (2009) stated that there were small effects of the demographic variables, indicating that men had stronger intentions to leave the organization. Studies have found that women are less likely to exit from the organization (Stier & Lewin-Epstein, 2001, p. 1731). This pattern holds true across cross-national studies in large part due to policies supportive of working mothers (Stier & Lewin-Epstein, 2001), especially family leave policies (Waldfoegel, Higuchi, & Abe, 1999). Previously two studies found greater turnover intentions for female managers or professionals than their male counterparts, but these differences in turnover intentions were no longer significant after the researchers controlled for human capital variables (Miller & Wheeler, 1992; Rosin & Korabik, 1995), and another study found no differences in reported turnover intentions of senior-level male and female managers who were matched on variables such as hierarchical level, age, line or staff job, and performance ratings (Lyness & Thompson, 1997). However, Stroh, Brett, and Reilly (1996) found that even after they controlled for age, education, company tenure, number of prior companies, and perceived availability of employment at another company, reported turnover intentions of female managers were higher as compared to male managers. The findings so far have been inconsistent. Hence, it will be interesting to know how much this factor contributes for turnover intention in Indian retail industry. For the above reasons, we propose that there is no gender difference in expressing an intention to quit from their jobs.

H2 (a): There is no relation between gender and turnover intentions.

Previous research suggests that older and longer serving employees are less likely to quit (Byrd, Cochran, Silverman, & Blount, 2000; Camp, 1994; Carbery, Garavan, O’Brien, & McDonnell, 2003; Cotton & Tuttle, 1986; Ghiselli, Lopa, & Bai, 2001; Iverson & Currivan, 2003; Karatepe, Uludag, Menevis, Hadzimehmedagic, & Baddar, 2006; Kellough & Osuna, 1995; Kim, Lee, & Carlson, 2010; Lazear, 1999; Lewis, 1991; Lewis & Park, 1989; Mitchell, Mackenzie, Styve, & Gover, 2000; Mor Barak, Nissly, & Levin, 2001; Muchinsky & Morrow, 1980; Pizam & Thornburg, 2000; Robinson, Porporino, & Simourd, 1997), while others are not (Ford, 1995; Jurik & Winn, 1987). Younger employees have higher quit rates due to shifting career paths, greater willingness to relocate, and fewer family responsibilities and financial obligations (Kellough & Osuna, 1995; Lewis, 1991; Meyer, Beville, Magedanz, & Hackert, 1979). Generational differences also encourage younger employees to change jobs and sector of employment frequently after earning their degrees (Starks, 2007). For example, recent public policy graduates are more likely than those from older generations to go between the public and private sectors (Chetkovich, 2003).

H2 (b): Age has negative relationship with turnover intention.

As far as education is concerned, previous studies reported that a person who has higher education may have access to more work opportunities and be more aware of the opportunities through social and academic networks, compared to those who do not have higher education and have less turnover intention (Medina, 2012). Research studies in the Netherlands suggest that management-level turnover is increasing rapidly. One of the studies reported that within 6 years after graduation, about 70% of all graduates leave the hospitality industry (Blomme, Tromp, & Rheede, 2008; Reijnders, 2003). Walsh and Taylor (2007) also suggest that retaining highly educated staff is becoming a primary challenge for the hospitality industry. Most research has failed to find a direct link between educational level and turnover (Camp, 1994; Ford, 1995; Jurik & Winn, 1987; Robinson et al., 1997), however one study of juvenile correctional officers found that those with higher educational levels were more likely to express a desire to quit as compared to those with lower educational levels (Mitchell et al., 2000). Therefore, educational level was hypothesized to have a positive effect on turnover intent, as those with more education generally have more available higher quality employment opportunities as compared to their counterparts with lower educational levels.

H2 (c): Education levels have positive relationship with turnover intention.

Marital status was also revealed to be a determinant for turnover intention (Carbery et al., 2003). Ryan, Ghazali and Mohsin (2011) however concluded that marital status had no impact on intent to leave an organization. Whereas, Almalki, FitzGerald, and Clark (2012) in their study revealed significant associations between turnover intention and demographic variables of gender, age, marital status, dependent children, education level, nursing tenure, organizational tenure, positional tenure, and payment per month. Some of the researchers found that single employees were observed to have a higher turnover intention compared to married employees (Carbery et al., 2003; Emiroglu et al., 2015).

H2 (d): Marital status of the retail employees are related with turnover intention.

Randhawa (2007) concluded that there are significant correlations between turnover intention and demographic variables such as age, qualification, designation and it was found that age, designation and experience are negatively and significantly correlated with turnover intentions. This shows that the intentions of an individual to leave the organization are greatly influenced by age, designation and experience of an individual. Studies found that high turnover rates frequently result in new employees who have very little experience (Lambert, 2001; Stohr, Self, & Lovrich, 1992). Although some previous studies sometimes conflates the effects of age and experience, one of the studies showed that each has a separate negative effect on turnover intention (Moynihan & Landuyt, 2008). Tenure was considered to be one of the major determinant factors of turnover intention and it was revealed that the employees with high tenure generally have lower turnover intention (Emiroğlu, Akova, & Tanriverdi, 2015; Karatepe et al., 2006; Nadiri & Tanova, 2010; Uludağ, Khan, & Güden, 2011).

H2 (e): Employee experience is negatively associated with turnover intention.

The relationships between economic factors (e.g. remuneration) and turnover were, however, rather inconsistent. Some studies found that income was not associated with turnover (e.g. Borda & Norman, 1997; Michaels & Spector, 1982), some found that improved pay had a strong impact on intentions to quit (e.g. Shields & Ward, 2001), while others found that income had an indirect effect on turnover intentions (e.g. Lum, Kervin, Clark, Reid, & Sirola, 1998; Strachota, Normandin, O'Brien, Clary, & Krukow, 2003; Tzeng, 2002; Yin & Yang, 2002). For example, Lum et al. (1998) found that job satisfaction mediated the income-turnover intentions relationship. Empirical studies indicated that income and tenure are identified as negatively related to turnover intentions (Cotton & Tuttle, 1986; Gregersen & Black, 1982; Hayes, 2015; Morrow, 1983). Wage was found to be associated with turnover intention and it was concluded that low wage strengthens turnover intention (Albattat & Som, 2013; Carbery et al., 2003; Emiroğlu et al., 2015; Ghiselli et al., 2001; Pizam & Thornburg, 2000). Several researchers found associations between an employee's age, education, gender, income, or

length of tenure with turnover intentions, as well as antecedents to turnover (Chang & Lyons, 2012; Heavey, Holwerda, & Hausknecht, 2013; Shuck, Reio, & Rocco, 2011). Organizational leaders benefit from research that was indicative of the effects that income had on employee mobility among organizations (Carnahan, Agarwal, & Campbell, 2012).

H2 (f): Income is negatively associated to turnover intention.

3. Method

3.1. Participants

A study was administered on 564 retail employees from various retail stores in National capital region (India). All participants selected for the study had sumptuous experience of working in retail stores having prime responsibility to interact with customers. The profile of the respondents is represented in Table 1. A total of 52.66% of the employees were male with a mean age of 26 years (SD = .73). About 57.45% of the participants were single (57.45%), married (42.55%). About 59.57% of the employees are graduates, whereas 27.66% are 12th pass and 12.77% are postgraduates. Current study was duly approved by the ethical committee of the retail stores and all participants signed the consent form.

Table 1. Profile of respondents

Demographic characteristics	N (564)	N (%)	Overall ethical ideology	Turnover intention
<i>Gender</i>				
Males	297	52.66	61.42	9.03
Females	267	47.34	61.52	7.3
<i>Age</i>				
18–20	63	11.17	57.09	5.76
21–30	309	54.78	60.78	7.86
31–40	162	28.72	64.41	9.72
41–50	30	5.32	61.66	8.88
<i>Work experience</i>				
5 years and below	315	55.85	59.84	7.41
5–10 years	219	38.83	63.76	9.27
10–15 years	30	5.32	61.66	8.88
16 years and above	0	0	0	0
<i>Education</i>				
12 th	156	27.66	60.42	6.21
Graduation	336	59.57	62.44	8.55
Post graduation	72	12.77	59.12	10.95
Doctoral	0	0	0	0
<i>Income</i>				
Under 2 lakhs	315	55.85	59.84	7.41
2–4 lakhs	141	25	63.36	9.4
4–6 lakhs	78	13.83	64.23	9.03
Above 6 lakhs	30	5.32	61.66	8.88
<i>Marital status</i>				
Single	324	57.45	59.89	7.43
Married	240	42.55	63.57	9.26
Divorced	0	0	0	0
Widow	0	0	0	0

3.2. Procedure

Researcher explained the purpose of study to the human resource manager of the retail stores. Only after obtaining the consent (voluntary participation), the questionnaires were distributed to the potential participants with a cover letter, explaining the purpose of the study and assuring them about the anonymity and confidentiality of the data. The data is further used for data analysis using different tools.

3.3. Measures

Turnover intention was measured with three items adapted from Camman, Fichman, Jenkins and Klesh (as cited in Chen, Hui, & Segó, 1998). The reported internal consistency coefficient for this scale was .78. The items are: (1) If I may choose again, I will choose to work for the current organization (reversed coded), (2) It is very possible that I will look for a new job within the next year, and (3) I often think of leaving the current organization. Respondents rated their level of agreement with each item on a five-point scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The three items were averaged to form a single scale for the subjective measure of turnover intention. Although each respondent has an ability to communicate in English language, but still, the entire instrument was translated into Hindi using back translation method, and respondents were given both English and Hindi versions to facilitate comprehension of the items.

Ethical decision-making was measured using the ethics position questionnaire (EPQ) developed by Forsyth (1980). The EPQ consists of 2 scales, each containing 10 items; 1 scale was designed to measure idealism and the other to measure relativism. Different versions of these two scales have been widely used in business ethics research (e.g. Marta, Singhapakdi, & Kraft, 2008; Singhapakdi, Vitell, & Franke, 1999; Zhao, 2008). Forsyth states that “the two scales that make up the EPQ were found to have adequate internal consistency, were reliable over time, were not correlated with social desirability” (1980, p. 175). Others have subjected these scales to considerable empirical verification and were found to be both valid and reliable (Lee & Sirgy, 1999; Rawwas, 1996; Vitell, Singhapakdi, & Thomas, 2001). Participants were requested to indicate on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree, 5 = Strongly agree) the extent to which they disagreed or agreed with the job stress and EPQ items. Examples of typical idealism items are “the dignity and welfare of people should be the most important concern in any society” and “One should never psychologically or physically harm another person.” The EPQ depicts that participant who scores high indicates that the participant adheres to high idealism and vice versa. Descriptive statistics (i.e. frequency distributions, means and standard deviations) has been used to develop a profile of the respondents and to summarize the variables. In addition, alpha coefficient (Cronbach, 1951) was computed to assess the reliability of these measures. For better understanding of the relationships among the variables, correlation analysis was performed to investigate the relationships between different variables. Finally, to test the research hypotheses, multiple regression analysis has been used.

3.4. Analysis

In testing the hypotheses, both Pearson’s correlation and multiple regression analyses were carried out. While correlation provides only an estimate of the association between variables, regression analysis reveals the dependence of a variable on other explanatory variables. In other words, regression analysis provides more valid and reliable results. Regression analysis is a statistical tool widely used in prediction and forecasting analysis. Several descriptive variables collected during the study are included in the analysis. The analysis involved two steps that included different regression models. In step one (model 1), ethical ideology, as well as each of its dimensions, and turnover intention, were each regressed on the socio-demographic variables using the “enter” procedure. Step two (model 2) involved doing a similar set of regressions, but adding ethical ideology as an independent variable.

Model 1:

$$\text{Turnover intention} = \text{Constant} + \beta_1 \text{ gender} + \beta_2 \text{ age} + \beta_3 \text{ marital status} + \beta_4 \text{ education} + \beta_5 \text{ annual income} + \beta_6 \text{ work experience}$$

Model 2:

$$\text{Turnover intention} = \text{Constant} + \beta_1 \text{ gender} + \beta_2 \text{ age} + \beta_3 \text{ marital status} + \beta_4 \text{ education} + \beta_5 \text{ annual income} + \beta_6 \text{ work experience} + \beta_7 \text{ ethical ideology}$$

4. Results and findings

4.1. Descriptive statistics, alpha coefficients and correlation coefficients

The descriptive statistics and alpha coefficients of turnover intention, ethical ideology, and association between ethical ideology and turnover intention are summarized in Table 2. As shown, the alpha coefficients range from .77 to .92. In particular, the alpha coefficient of idealism, relativism, overall ethical ideology, and turnover intention were .92, .87, .77, and .86, respectively.

4.2. Factor-based validity of questionnaire

Following Reidenbach and Robin (1988) and Cohen, Pant, and Sharp (1993), responses were tested with principal components factor analysis using promax rotation. We retained factors with an eigen value greater than 1.0, and only items loading greater than .50 are considered to be included in a factor. The results of a natural factor solution are presented in Table 3. Three factors accounted for 64.8% of the total variance in the data. The first factor accounted for 31.7% of the total variation. The second factor accounted for 21.9% of the variance and third factor accounted for 11.2% variation. Principal components factor analysis with promax rotation revealed both the EPQ and turnover intention possess reasonable construct validity.

4.3. Correlations among items

To further investigate these measures, the item inter-correlations were examined. The correlation matrix of the variables is given in Table 4. It was found that the measures of ethical ideology and turnover intention (Table 4) are significantly correlated with each other. Turnover intention was found to be negatively correlated with idealism, relativism, and overall ethical ideology. In other words, as the employees follow the ethical ideology, whether idealism or relativism, it will decrease the turnover intention. Therefore, hypothesis H1 (a) will be rejected. This is due to the fact that, individual ethical ideology is helpful in creating ethical climate of an organization (Putranta, 2008), as a critical determinant of employees job satisfaction and organizational commitment, which can change the turnover intentions of an employee (Babin, Boles, & Robin, 2000; Valentine & Barnett, 2003).

Table 2. Means, standard deviation, and reliability coefficient of ethical ideology dimensions and turnover intention

Measure	Mean	SD	α
<i>Ethical ideology dimensions</i>			
Idealism	34.55	6.76	.923
Relativism	26.85	6.14	.877
Overall ethical ideology	12.58	2.66	.770
<i>Turnover intention</i>			
Turnover intention	8.21	2.17	.864

Table 3. Exploratory factor analysis of the instrument

Items	Idealism	Relativism	Turnover intention
I1) A person should make certain that their actions never intentionally harm another even to a small degree	.906		
I2) Risks to another should never be tolerated, irrespective of how small the risks might be	.710		
I3) The existence of potential harm to others is always wrong, irrespective of the benefits to be gained	.727		
I4) One should never psychologically or physically harm another person	.674		
I5) One should not perform an action which might in any way threaten the dignity and welfare of another individual	.926		
I6) If an action could harm an innocent other, then it should not be done	.626		
I7) Deciding whether or not to perform an act by balancing the positive consequences of the act against the negative consequences of the act is immoral	.845		
I8) The dignity and welfare of people should be the most important concern in any society	.664		
I9) It is never necessary to sacrifice the welfare of others	.814		
I10) Moral actions are those which closely match ideals of the most “perfect” action	.819		
R1) There are no ethical principles that are so important that they should be a part of any code of ethics		.707	
R2) What is ethical varies from one situation and society to another		.773	
R3) Moral standards should be seen as being individualistic; what one person considers to be moral may be judged to be immoral by another person		.798	
R4) Different types of moralities cannot be compared as to “rightness”		.794	
R5) Questions of what is ethical for everyone can never be resolved since what is moral or immoral is up to the individual		.790	
R6) Moral standards are simply personal rules, which indicate how a person should behave, and are not to be applied in making judgments of others		.747	
R7) Ethical considerations in interpersonal relations are so complex that individuals should be allowed to formulate their own individual codes		.655	
R8) Rigidly codifying an ethical position that prevents certain types of actions could stand in the way of better human relation and adjustment		.720	
R9) No rule concerning lying can be formulated; whether a lie is permissible or not permissible totally depends upon the situation		.850	
R10) Whether a lie is judged to be moral or immoral depends upon the circumstances surrounding the action		.740	
TI1) I often think of leaving my organization			.899
TI2) It is very possible that I will look for a new job next year			.908
TI3) If I may choose again, I will choose to work for the current organization			.855

Notes: (I) denotes Idealism dimension; (R) denotes Relativism dimension; (TI) denotes Turnover Intentions.

Table 4. Correlations matrix among all variables

Measures	1	2	3	4
Turnover intention	1			
Idealism	-.092*	1		
Relativism	-.097*	-.255**	1	
Overall ethical ideology	-.155*	.607**	.613**	1

Notes: 1-turnover intention; 2-4, ethical ideology and its dimensions; Analyses based on $n = 564$.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

Table 5. Correlation between demographic variable, turnover intention, and ethical ideology

Measure	Gender	Age	Education	Income	Experience	Marital status
Statistical tool used	<i>r</i> (Point biserial correlation coefficient)	<i>r</i> (Person correlation coefficient)	<i>r</i> (Point biserial correlation coefficient)			
Turnover intention	-.397**	.486**	.673**	.317**	.366**	.416**
Idealism	.135**	-.021	-.203**	-.056	-.090*	.022
Relativism	.080	.294**	.199**	.270**	.316**	.246**
Overall ethical ideology	.176**	.225**	-.002	.176**	.185**	.220**

Notes: Coding of gender: male = 0; female = 1, Coding of marital status: Single = 2; Married = 3.

N = 564.

**p* < .05.

***p* < .01.

In the present study, it has been found that there is an association between socio-demographic variable, turnover intention, and ethical ideologies. Table 5 shows the relationship of the socio-demographic variables such as gender, age, education, work experience, marital status, and ethical ideology dimensions with turnover intention.

Point biserial correlation was conducted to investigate whether gender is associated with both ethical ideology and turnover intention depicted in Table 5. Point biserial is the correlation procedure that is used with nominal data (Cramer, 1946). It is found that there is a significant difference between male and female in terms of their overall ethical ideology (OEI = .176, *p* < .01). In the present study, gender is correlated with overall ethical ideology and idealism, whereas gender is not significantly associated with relativism (OEI = .176; *p* < .01, Idealism = .135; *p* < .01; Relativism = .080, *p* > .01). In other words, females are better in following the ethical ideology as compared to men in retail organizations. As far as turnover intention is concerned, turnover intention is significantly related with gender. It is found that there is a negative relationship between gender and turnover intention (TI = -.397; *p* < .01). In other words, females have low turnover intention as compared to men in Indian retail. Hence, this result does not support H2 (a). This result is consistent with previous studies that found females have a lower turnover intention than males (Göransson et al., 2009; Stier & Lewin-Epstein, 2001) and contradicts the previous findings (Carbery et al., 2003; Cotton & Tuttle, 1986; Emiroglu et al., 2015; Lambert, 2006). Previous studies found that this situation was due to primary roles and responsibilities of female employees was within their families and consequently limit their career opportunities. Griffeth, Hom, and Gaertner (2000) indicated that this situation is a consequence of the primary responsibilities of women as traditional household chores and child-care, and that childbearing requires women to leave their paid employment. Even other researchers who have studied this issue reported that the primary responsibility of women lie in their families, which makes them more stable (Keith & McWilliams, 1995; Sicherman, 1996), the availability of limited opportunities to women for improvement (Stroh et al., 1996) and the individual commitment level makes them to stick with their jobs (Chaudhury & Ng, 1992). The traditional hypothesis was that both females were more likely to quit. However, this traditional hypothesis came under challenge, particularly with regard to gender.

This study postulates that, the females working in Indian retail believes in financial as well as social independence. Females in India work to support their families financially at same time they have their own social independence. Women are less likely to exit the organization due to familial commitments (Stier & Lewin-Epstein, 2001). This pattern was found true across different countries wherein the studies were conducted, because of organizational policies supportive of working

mothers (Stier and Lewin- Epstein), especially maternity leave policies (Waldfogel et al., 1999). We find some support for the suggestion that the traditional hypothesis is simply outdated by the fact that more recent research rarely finds an impact of gender on turnover even when failing to include many of the gender-relevant controls whose absence was used to critique older studies (Huang, Chuang, & Lin, 2003; Iverson & Currivan, 2003; Kim, 2005). Changing patterns of employee's participation have made it less likely that women will quit.

In order to ascertain relationship between age, turnover intention, and ethical ideology, Pearson correlation coefficient were calculated (Table 5). Age is significantly positive correlated with turnover intention ($TI = .486, p < .01$). In other words, as age increases the feeling of quitting the job also increases. Therefore, H2 (b) will be rejected. This is due to work experience, as the employees grow older; eventually they earn experience, and on the basis of work experience employees look for the growth prospects in different organizations, which increases the attrition rate of the organization. The present findings are in contradiction with the previous results (Carbery et al., 2003; Chen, Kuo, Cheng, Hsai, & Chien, 2010; Cotton & Tuttle, 1986; Ghiselli et al., 2001; Iverson & Deery, 1997; Karatepe et al., 2006; Kim et al., 2010; Lambert, 2001, 2006; Martin & Roodt, 2008; Pizam & Thornburg, 2000). The turnover intention was also found to differ based on age. Similar to the earlier research in general (Carbery et al., 2003; Ghiselli et al., 2001; Karatepe et al., 2006; Kim et al., 2010; Pizam & Thornburg, 2000), it was found that the older people had a lower turnover intention. The reason that the older people had a lower turnover intention can attribute to the fact that they do not have similar thoughts and expectations compared to younger people. In terms of ethical ideology, low positive correlation has been found between age and overall ethical ideology ($OEI = .255, p < .01$), age and relativism ($relativism = .341, p < .01$). The result is in favor of past research that has supported that the older individuals are more ethical than younger ones (Fullerton, Kerch, & Dodge, 1996; Rawwas & Singhapakdi, 1998; Swaidan, Vitell, & Rawwas, 2003; Vitell, 2003; Vitell, Lumpkin, & Rawwas, 1991; Vitell & Paolillo, 2003). This is because, as age increases, ability of moral and ethical judgment also increases, which are used to handle different situation in organization.

Pearson correlation coefficient estimated that education was found to have strong positive correlation with turnover intention ($TI = .673, p < .01$). In other words, as the qualification of the employee increases, turnover intention also increases as compared to less qualified employees. Hence, H2 (c) will be accepted. The present finding is in contradiction with the previous results (Karatepe et al., 2006) and supports the previous few findings (Carbery et al., 2003). Higher education should be supported by the higher earnings. The employees are with higher education which are not be complemented with handsome annual income, increases the turnover intention. In the present study, it has been revealed that positive correlation between education and turnover intention suggests that employees with higher education are not satisfied with their current job and want to change the job, leading to turnover intention. In terms of ethical ideology, negative correlation has been found between education and idealism ($Idealism = -.203, p < .01$), and weak positive relation has been found between education and relativism, whereas, overall ethical ideology is not significantly related with education ($OEI = -.002, p > .05$). The strong positive relationship between education and turnover intention implies that education does play an important role in the growth of the Indian retail employees, which increases the chance to get higher pay job in the same industry leading to increase attrition rate of the organization.

Additionally, point biserial correlation was conducted, in order to investigate whether marital status (Single & married) associated with turnover intention and ethical ideologies. With respect to turnover intention, it was found that marital status has been positively related with turnover intention ($TI = .416, p < .01$). More specifically, married employees scored significantly higher on turnover intention than single status employees. Therefore, this finding does not support H2 (d). This study contradicts the previous research findings (Carbery et al., 2003). In terms of ethical ideologies, it was found that marital status have positive relationship with overall ethical ideology ($OEI = .220, p < .01$). Idealism is not significantly correlated with marital status whereas, relativism is significantly positive related with marital status ($Idealism = .022, p > .01$; $relativism = .246, p < .01$). This is due to

married employees favoring relativism ideology as compared to idealism. In other words, married employees follow their relativism ethical ideology as compared to single status employees. This study contradicts the previous research findings (Saulsbury, Brown, Simone, & Beale, 2011).

The results revealed that work experience have positive relationship with turnover intention ($TI = .366, p < .01$). In other words, as the work experience of an employee increases, turnover intention also increases. Hence, H2 (e) will be rejected. This study contradicts the previous research findings (Emiroğlu et al., 2015; Karatepe et al., 2006; Nadiri & Tanova, 2010; Uludağ et al., 2011). This is due to the fact that retail sector is flourishing in the country, which thereby creates many opportunity for the employees. Even human resource managers always look for experienced candidates due to the shortage of skilled manpower in Indian retail. Therefore, attrition increases in the retail sector once the employees are skilled in their particular domain. In terms of ethical ideology, positive correlation has been found between work experience and overall ethical ideology ($OEI = .185, p < .01$). These results are consistent with the findings for the level of work experience by Karande et al. (2002) and Singhapakdi et al. (1999) and support the view that people tend to become more ethical as they enhance their work experience.

In order to ascertain relationship between income status, turnover intention and ethical ideology, Person correlation coefficient were calculated (Table 5). In terms of turnover intention, significant positive correlation was found between income and turnover intention ($TI = .317, p < .01$). Therefore, this finding does not support the H2 (f). This study contradicts the previous research findings (Green & Salkind, 2011; Hayes, 2015). This is due to the fact that as the employee's income increases, their work experience as well as their skills also increases, which gives them opportunity to find a new high paid job, which indirectly increases the attrition in the organization. In terms of ethical ideology, positive correlation has been found between income and overall ethical ideology ($OEI = -.176, p < .01$), income and relativism (relativism = $.270, p < .01$). Whereas, the relation between income and idealism are not significantly correlated (idealism = $-.056, p > .05$). This study supports the previous research findings (Vitell, Singh, & Paolillo, 2007; Zhi-long & Bao-chun, 2007). This is due to the fact that individuals who are getting handsome salary exhibits higher levels of turnover intention.

4.4. Predictors of turnover intention

Separate hierarchical regression analyses were performed to identify the relative contribution of socio-demographic characteristics (gender, age, education, work experience, annual income and marital status), and ethical ideologies (including idealism and relativism) to turnover intention. Table 6 demonstrates the regression model. All the variables combined accounted for 73.7% of the variance in predicting turnover intention (adjusted $R^2 = .737$). Among socio-demographic characteristics, gender, age, education, income and marital status were significant predictors and accounted for 72.5% of the variance in turnover intention. Ethical ideology was significant predictor of turnover intention and accounted for 1.2% of the variance. In other words, as the employees stick to their ethical ideologies, it will be difficult to leave the organization. Hence H1 (b) will be rejected. Among all predictors, Annual income ($\beta = -1.00$) and age ($\beta = .78$) were the most important variables to predict turnover intention. An interesting result of the present study revealed that only experience is not significant in predicting turnover intention. It has been found that income of the employees is negatively influencing the turnover intention ($\beta = -1.00, p < .001$). It was revealed from the current study that gender is also good predictor of turnover intention, but in opposite direction. In other words, females are intent to stay in organization for much longer time as compared to men. Therefore, current study can be a milestone for organizations, which suggest that it is the combination of the demographic characteristics and ethical ideologies, which can change the pattern of turnover intention in the organization.

Table 6. Results of hierarchical regression analysis predicting turnover intention

Variable	Turnover intention			
	β	ΔR^2	F	p value for F
Model 1 (Step 1-demographic variable only)		.725	244.15	.000
Gender	-.508***			
Age	.788***			
Marital status	.113***			
Education	.639***			
Annual income	-1.00***			
Work experience	-.049			
Model 2 (Step 2-add ethical ideology)		.012	223.22	.000
Gender	-.486***			
Age	.796***			
Marital status	.134***			
Education	.598***			
Annual income	-1.00***			
Work experience	-.12			
Overall ethical ideology	-.123***			

**p < .01.

***p < .001.

5. Discussions

The main objective of this paper was to describe the relationship between socio-demographic characteristics, ethical ideology, and turnover intention. Results indicate that socio-demographic characteristics and ethical ideology are important predictors of turnover intention. This study draws attention to the important role played by the individual's ethical ideology through which the individual can bring clarity about ethical expectations, thus reducing turnover intention. It also discusses the urgent need to manage these ideologies to alleviate the negative impact on sales employee's performance and turnover intention. This is the pioneering study offering empirical evidence that both socio-demographic characteristics and ethical ideology are the means through which the organization can manage turnover intention. A clear understanding of these causal links is critical for successful managerial intervention.

Ethical issues are proliferating in business especially among retail salespeople in comparison to other kinds of personnel, as retail sales people are likely to encounter situations that could be ethically troublesome. Due to the nature of their boundary-spanning role, salespeople must deal with multiple expectations from customers and management (Johnston & Marshall, 2005). Driven by the need to meet their performance targets, sales employees often face an ethical dilemma in making the choice to use coercive selling tactics or lose sales (McFarland, 2003). The resulting inner conflict faced by the sales employees is likely to result in emotional distress and, ultimately, higher turnover intention and lower performance (Laczniak & Murphy, 1993; McFarland, 2003; Schwepker, 2003). Individual ethical ideology provides certain direction to take decision according to different situation, and it can help retail employees to resolve their inner conflict about inconsistent expectations from organizational stakeholders, diminish the perplexity about job responsibilities, and improve job satisfaction (Schwepker & Hartline, 2005).

As shown in the correlation matrix (Table 4), the correlations between ethical ideology and turnover intention corroborates the proposed model. Socio-demographic characteristics also maintain the theoretical relations, showing positive correlations with turnover intention. It has been found

from the result that males are more prone to leave the organization as compared to females. As far as ethical ideologies are concerned, females favored the idealism ideology as compared to relativism, which makes them to stay for longer duration in the organization as compared to men. In other words, idealism with respect to gender demonstrated the importance of idealism in organization to control turnover intention. Age, education, income, work experience, and marital status are positively related to turnover intention. In other words, as the employees grow older, earn experience and are paid higher, their probability of quitting the job is also higher. However, when the employees follow the ethical ideologies their chance of turnover intention decreases. This can be one of the implications for the organization to decrease the attrition rate. Therefore, organization should promote employees to strictly follow their individual ethical ideologies which could lead to decrease in their job stress and increase in job satisfaction which further results in decreasing their turnover intention.

In prediction of the turnover intention by hierarchical regression, socio-demographic variables were entered in the first step, gender, age; marital status, education and annual income were significantly related to turnover intention. Annual income, age, education and gender were significant and important predictors of turnover intention. Female employees were found to be more loyal to the organization as compared to male employees. Younger employees reported low levels of turnover intention than employees over 30 or 40 years old. Age just like educational qualification was found to have significant independent influence on turnover intention. This is consistent with findings in the literature as Walsh and Taylor (2007) and Blomme et al. (2008) confirmed that retaining highly educated employees is quite challenging. It is also found that annual income is negatively influencing the turnover intention (Table 6), whereas in correlation annual income of employees are positively correlated with turnover intention (Table 5). This might be due to the fact that other demographic characteristics such as age, education, work experience, gender and marital status, could be mediating the relationship between annual income and turnover intention. Therefore, it is implied for the organization to hire employees possessing right combination of demographic characteristics includes annual income, age, education, work experience, gender and marital status, as it will definitely decrease the attrition rate.

In the second step, overall ethical ideology was entered, and found that overall ethical ideology was significant predictor of turnover intention. Therefore, organization can promote individual ethical ideologies of the employees, which directly benefit the organization in terms of attrition rate and make employees more loyal toward the organization. One of the significant findings of this study was that individual ethical ideology had a direct relationship with turnover. This result has important significance for retail organizations in which organizations has to create an ethical climate in the organization by encouraging individual ethical ideologies leads to lower the attrition rate.

This research found that annual income is negatively related to turnover intention (Table 4), and even though less sample respondents in this study had a handsome annual income, the implication is that sensitivity training should not be limited to sales employees who are earning handsome annual salaries. Promotion of individual ethical ideology enhances the ethical culture of the organization. Indeed, formal/informal norms, socialization, professional standards of ethics, and ethical action are positively interrelated (McClaren, Adam, & Vocino, 2010; Vitell, Rallapalli, & Singhapakdi, 1993).

This study has several limitations. For instance, the research design was co-relational in nature. In addition, the information was collected with a self-report survey, which potentially leads to same-source and social desirability biases. This study utilized a homogenous sample of employees who, for the most part, had limited work experience, which unfortunately reduces the generalizability of the findings. However, the predictor variables accounted for 72.5% of the variance in demographic characteristics, and only 1.2% variance accounted from ethical ideology, but it could be argued that these relationships are relatively robust and should be consistently identified in other organizational and professional contexts. Since only one ethical scenario i.e. individual ethical ideology was included in this study, future research should use multiple vignettes to collect information from

professional sales employees. Future research should also seek to identify other relevant individual, situational, and environmental factors such as religion, caste, culture, language, demographic locations etc that simultaneously influence the steps of ethical reasoning. Most of the organizations create their own ethical ideology, which may conflict with individual ethical norms; therefore, this conflict can be included in further investigation.

6. Conclusion

Human resource professionals may utilize the EPQ in selection and placement decisions to identify applicants who are more prone to a relativistic ideology and subsequently more likely to recognize ethical issues and establish ethical intentions, thus promoting an ethical ideology among employees (e.g. adherence to codes of ethical conduct and policies). Present study revealed that Indian retail employees have given preference to personal ethical ideologies thereby decreasing the turnover intention and henceforth organizations, could be able to promote ethical ideologies mindset. Human resource professionals may also implement training and mentoring programs that provide formal and informal opportunities for sales employees to become sensitized to various ideological proclivities, better aware of the elements comprising the ethical perspective of a situation, and well-versed in positive social, professional, and organizational norms. Organizations should make systematic strategies to enhance ethical sensitivities, which may contribute to expand the default mindset used by sales employees related to purely financial or non-ethical concerns. In foreign countries, strategies related to training, rewards, punishments, reporting requirements, transparency policies, compensation systems, are formulated keeping in view of ethical conduct in the organization. In turn, this study may impetuous which decline in the frequency of unethical behaviors, decreases unnecessary costs related to turnover, and increases job satisfaction and positive organizational culture.

In summary, this study provides useful insights into the combined effects of ethical ideology, and socio-demographic characteristics in an organization to determine the importance of these constructs for handling turnover intention. Collectively, they are mechanisms by which an organization can encourage individual ethical reasoning. As a result, the findings have theoretical and practical implications for researchers examining the ethical ideologies and socio-demographic characteristics in an organization to manage human resource.

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