

Research on the impact of commuting stress and life satisfaction on employee turnover intention

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Abstract

Long term commuting often brings psychological loneliness, anxiety, and a lack of security to residents, which may lead to a decrease in commuting satisfaction, life satisfaction, and employee loyalty. This study aims to explore the impact of commuting stress and life satisfaction on turnover intention among enterprise employees. The questionnaire was distributed in Beijing GLD Company, and 234 valid questionnaires were collected. Research was conducted using methods such as literature review, questionnaire survey, and empirical analysis. Through research, it has been found that (1) Commuting stress has a positive impact on turnover intention, with greater commuting stress leading to higher turnover intention; (2) Life satisfaction has a negative impact on turnover intention, with higher life satisfaction leading to lower turnover intention; (3) Commuting stress has a negative impact on life satisfaction, with higher commuting stress leading to lower life satisfaction; (4) Life satisfaction plays a moderating role in the impact of commuting stress on turnover intention. Based on the research findings, propose countermeasures and suggestions: (1) Implement the company's happiness plan to cultivate employees' long-term sense of happiness. (2) Implement precise recruitment during the recruitment phase. (3) In terms of employee training mechanisms, the focus is on strengthening life satisfaction education. (4) Establish a competitive performance-based compensation system. (5) Establish a flexible welfare system. (6) Create a harmonious corporate atmosphere and employee relationships to improve employee satisfaction with their lives. (7) Dedicated to the career development of employees.

Keywords: commuting stress, life satisfaction, turnover intention, happiness plan, flexible welfare system

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1. Introduction

Since the reform and opening up, with the rapid advancement of industrialization and urbanization in China, a large number of surplus rural labor have flooded into cities, making significant contributions to the rapid growth of the Chinese economy. At the same time, due to the relatively lagging urban development planning, various "urban diseases" have emerged to varying degrees in major cities in China. Traffic congestion is undoubtedly one of them. Urban commuting conditions are often characterized by haste, tension, and congestion. In fact, prolonged commuting often brings psychological loneliness, anxiety, and a lack of security to residents, which may lead to a decrease in commuting satisfaction, life satisfaction, and employee loyalty. There is a high correlation between turnover intention, work outcomes, and corporate performance. A large number of employees leaving the company means lower employee loyalty. The higher the loyalty of enterprise employees, the stronger their sense of satisfaction in their work, which will further improve the performance of the enterprise and promote innovation output to a certain extent. The aim of this study is to explore the impact of commuting pressure and life satisfaction on turnover intention among enterprise employees.

This study mainly focuses on enterprise employees. To ensure the authenticity and representativeness of the data, multiple employees from a private enterprise in Beijing are employed. Due to differences in urban size, their performance in commuting varies greatly. In order to ensure the accuracy of the research as much as possible, this article will choose a city as the research object. As an international metropolis, Beijing's transportation and commuting conditions are very important. According to the "2020 National Major City Commuting Monitoring Report", a study on the commuting situation in 36 major cities across the country shows that the commuting characteristics of Beijing are reflected in the following aspects: ① Currently, the commuting space radius in Beijing has reached the maximum scale of urban commuting, which is 40 kilometers; ② In terms of spatial matching, Beijing has the highest proportion of occupational and residential separation, reaching 6.6 kilometers, which also indicates that the occupational and residential balance in Beijing is poor. In terms of commuting distance, the longest commuting distance in Beijing reaches 11.1 kilometers, reflecting the high operating costs of the city. Measuring the happiness brought by commuting experience based on a 5-kilometer city commute, the lowest level in Beijing is only 38%, indicating that the commuting happiness index of Beijing residents is not high. Using 45 minute bus accessibility as a measure of public transportation service capacity, the lowest accessibility in Beijing is only 32%, indicating a gap in public transportation service capacity. When reading and collecting literature, it was found that most of the research on commuting in China is focused on the typical city of Beijing. Based on the above considerations, the author chooses in-service employees of private enterprises living and working in Beijing as the research subjects to explore the impact mechanism between three variables: commuting pressure, turnover intention, and life satisfaction.

2. Literature Review

Ge You (2019) believes that the factors affecting turnover intention include incomplete corporate management, lack of corporate culture, low integration of salary and performance, and benefits. There is a negative correlation between the matching degree of individual and organizational values of employees and their turnover intention. Liang Qingqing (2019) found that if employees are not fully motivated, it can lead to a relaxed work state, lack of work motivation, and exacerbate the degree of turnover intention. Therefore, the better the effectiveness of non material incentives provided by enterprises, the lower the turnover intention of employees. Yang Weibo, et al. (2019) found that Chinese people's life satisfaction did not increase synchronously with the improvement of their material lives, and many people were instead burdened by the many social

problems accompanying rapid economic development. Zhang Yutong, Yang Jing, et al. (2023) also pointed out that there are significant differences in employees' life satisfaction levels under the influence of factors such as gender, age, education level, regional development level, unit type, and employment industry. J Ignacio Gimenez Nadal, et al. (2022) used Gallup Health Survey data to examine the impact of commuting time on subjective well-being. The results showed that commuting time was significantly negatively correlated with subjective well-being measured in multiple ways, and commuting time was an important influencing factor determining residents' subjective well-being.

Research hypothesis - Based on previous literature research, this article proposes the following research hypotheses:

- H1: There is no significant relationship between turnover intention and commuting stress.
- H2: There is no significant relationship between commuting stress and life satisfaction.
- H3: There is no significant relationship between life satisfaction and turnover intention.
- H4: Life satisfaction doesn't play a moderating role between commuting stress and employee turnover intention.

Questionnaire distribution and research methods - Based on the purpose and research ideas of this article, a survey questionnaire was designed based on previous research results on various variables. The questionnaire is divided into four parts: personal information, commuting pressure, turnover intention, and life satisfaction, with variables measured separately. The questionnaire was distributed at GLD Company in Beijing, with a total population of 596 people. 310 questionnaires were distributed and 251 were collected, of which 234 were valid. This study used SPSS 24.0 statistical analysis software to conduct correlation analysis and regression analysis on the data, in order to demonstrate the research hypothesis and ultimately complete the empirical part of the study.

Empirical analysis - Firstly, clarify the research variables: CS represents commuting pressure, LS represents job satisfaction of respondents, and TI represents respondents' intention to resign. TI is the dependent variable, CS and LS are independent variables.

3. Results

Relationship between commuting stress and turnover intention

Is there a significant relationship between the commuting stress and turnover intention of the respondents?

Table 1 shows the relationship between commuting stress and turnover intention.

Table 1

Relationship between Commuting Stress and Turnover Intention statistical treatment

	Pearson's r	p-value	Decision on Ho	Interpretation
Commuting Stress VS Turnover Intention	0.229	<0.001	Reject	Weak Positive Correlation

Pearson's r test of correlation, 95% confidence interval, If p- value ≤ 0.05 , then reject Ho, If p- value > 0.05 , then accept Ho

As presented in Table 1, there is significant relationship between commuting stress and turnover intention as indicated by p-value of < 0.001 , which is less than .05 level of significance. Further, the Pearson's r of 0.229 shows that the relationship is positive, which means that commuting stress and turnover intention change in the same direction. N Nadilla, Y Diana, EK Ai, L Lusiana (2023) states that the greater the commuting stress, the greater the turnover intention, the smaller the commuting stress, the smaller the turnover intention.

Life satisfaction mediate the relationship between the commuting stress and turnover intention of the respondents

Does life satisfaction mediate the relationship between the commuting stress and turnover intention of the respondents? Table 2-3 shows the relationship between commuting stress and life satisfaction and turnover intention.

Table 2

Relationship between Commuting Stress and Life Satisfaction

	Pearson's r	p-value	Decision on Ho	Interpretation
Commuting Stress VS Life Satisfaction	-0.271	<0.001	Reject	Weak Negative Correlation

As presented in Table 3, there is significant relationship between commuting stress and life satisfaction as indicated by p-value of <0.001, which is less than .05 level of significance. Further, the Pearson's r of -0.271 shows that the relationship is negative, which means that commuting stress and life satisfaction change in the opposite direction. The greater the commuting stress, the smaller life satisfaction. The smaller the commuting stress, the greater the life satisfaction. Uysal (2021) states that there is not relationship between commuting stress and life satisfaction.

Table 3

Relationship between Life Satisfaction and Turnover Intention

	Pearson's r	p-value	Decision on Ho	Interpretation
Life Satisfaction VS Turnover Intention	-0.656	<0.001	Reject	Moderate Negative Correlation

As presented in Table 3, there is significant relationship between life satisfaction and turnover intention as indicated by p-value of <0.001, which is less than .05 level of significance. Further, the Pearson's r of -0.656 shows that the relationship is negative, which means that life satisfaction and turnover intention change in the opposite direction. The greater the life satisfaction, the smaller the turnover intention. The smaller the life satisfaction, the greater the turnover intention. M Rafiq, F Shahzad, M Farrukh, I Khan (2022) states that there is a little corelation between life satisfaction and turnover intention. This indicates that, life satisfaction mediate the relationship between the commuting stress and turnover intention of the respondents.

4. Conclusion

1. Commuting stress has an impact on employees' turnover intention. From the previous analysis in this article, it was found that commuting stress have a significant impact on employee turnover intention. Specifically, there is a significant positive impact between commuting stress and employee turnover intention, and the correlation is significant at the 0.01 level, with a Pearson's relationship of 0.229. Therefore, hypothesis H1 can be verified. From this, it can be seen that if the commuting stress of internal employees is low, so their willingness to resign will also be lower. This also indicates that for enterprise employees, they are able to accept the cost of commuting and will not have a significant impact on employees. On the other hand, the general salary level in Beijing is relatively high, while as the capital, its public transportation is developed, and the proportion of commuting expenses in its income is not significant, which is enough for individuals to bear.

2. Commuting stress can affect life satisfaction. From the previous analysis, it was found that commuting stress have a significant negative impact on life satisfaction. Through empirical analysis, it was found that commuting stress is significantly negatively correlated with life satisfaction at the 0.01 level, and the Pearson's relationship between commuting stress and life satisfaction is -0.271. Therefore, the hypothesis H2 can be

verified. It can be seen that employees with lower commuting stress within the enterprise have higher life satisfaction.

3. Life satisfaction significantly negatively affects turnover intention. According to the correlation analysis between the two variables mentioned earlier, it was found that life satisfaction has a significant negative impact on turnover intention. Firstly, the correlation between the two is significant at the 0.01 level, and secondly, the Pearson's relationship between the life satisfaction and turnover intention is -0.656. This indicates that there is a negative impact between the two variables. Therefore, hypothesis H3 is verified, it indicates that life satisfaction is higher, The more they are able to actively engage in their work as masters and feel happy here, the lower their tendency to resign.

4. Life satisfaction plays a moderating role between commuting stress and employee turnover intention. According to the previous analysis and study, indicates that, life satisfaction mediate the relationship between the commuting stress and turnover intention of the respondents. Therefore, the hypothesis H4 is verified .It can be seen that company employees have low life satisfaction due to high commuting stress, and low life satisfaction leads to a high tendency to leave the company. Alternatively, company employees have high life satisfaction because of low commuting stress, and high life satisfaction leads to a low propensity to leave the company.

5. Recommendations

It is suggested that based on the above research conclusions, life satisfaction plays a significant moderating role between commuting stress and employee turnover intention. Therefore, according to the driving factor theory of life satisfaction, the author believes that various modules of human resource management can be started, and the first is to reduce the occurrence of commuting problems through various policies and institutional measures, while comprehensively improving employee life satisfaction and exerting its moderating effect, In order to reduce the tendency to resign, the author provides the following suggestions for the practice of human resource management in enterprises:

1. Start implementing the company's happiness plan and engage in activities to cultivate a sense of happiness for employees in the long term. Improving the happiness of company employees is a comprehensive task that involves multiple aspects such as work environment, welfare benefits, and career development. Here are some effective measures aimed at improving employee happiness:

- (1) Make every effort to solve the housing problem of company employees. The reason why employees of Beijing GLD Company are under extreme commuting pressure is due to the high housing prices in Beijing. According to data from authoritative departments in China, the housing price to income ratio in Beijing is 26.71, ranking fourth in the country. Equivalent to employees needing to spend an average salary of 26.71 months to buy a square meter of housing. In this situation of high housing prices, employees either choose to buy a house in the suburbs with lower housing prices or choose to rent a house near the company. If you buy a house in the suburbs, you inevitably have to endure extreme commuting every day. One way commuting often takes 1.5 hours or even longer, with a daily round trip lasting over 3 hours. This extreme commuting is a huge pressure on both the body, mind, and commuting costs. If you choose to rent a house near the company, because the company is located in Haidian District, Beijing, and the rent is also very high, employees have paid a higher rent, and in the end, the house is not your own. So many employees choose to buy a house in remote suburbs. Although they pay off their mortgage every month, the house ultimately belongs to them, but extreme commuting is a big challenge. In this dilemma, if the company can to some extent solve the housing problem, it will undoubtedly greatly improve employee life satisfaction and happiness.
- (2) Optimize work environment. Provide a comfortable, safe, and hygienic office environment to ensure that employees feel comfortable while working. Provide flexible working hours and remote

work options to adapt to the life and work needs of different employees. Encourage teamwork and communication, and establish a positive and upward working atmosphere.

- (3) Improve welfare benefits. Provide a competitive salary and bonus system to motivate employees to work hard. Provide comprehensive social security, housing provident fund and other benefits to ensure that the basic living needs of employees are met. Provide rich employee benefits, such as annual physical examinations, holiday gifts, employee travel, etc., to enhance employees' sense of belonging and happiness.
- (4) Pay attention to employee health. Provide fitness facilities or subsidies to encourage employees to pay attention to their physical health. Regularly organize health lectures and activities to enhance employees' health awareness and self-care abilities. Establish a mental health support system, provide psychological counseling and counseling services, and help employees alleviate work pressure and anxiety.
- (5) Promoting career development. Provide comprehensive training and development opportunities to help employees improve their professional skills and overall quality. Establish clear promotion channels and career development paths, allowing employees to see future development space and opportunities. Encourage employees to participate in project management and decision-making processes, and enhance their sense of responsibility and achievement.
- (6) Strengthening corporate culture construction. Establish a positive, healthy, and upward corporate culture, allowing employees to feel the warmth and care of the company. Organize a variety of cultural activities, such as employee gatherings, sports events, annual meetings, etc., to enhance employee cohesion and sense of belonging. Encourage employees to participate in social welfare activities, cultivate their sense of social responsibility and civic consciousness.
- (7) Establish an effective communication mechanism. Establish regular employee forums or suggestion boxes to encourage employees to provide their own opinions and suggestions. Establish a dedicated employee relations department or person in charge to handle employee complaints and disputes. Timely reply to employee emails and phone calls to ensure smooth communication of information.
- (8) Pay attention to the personal lives of employees. Understand the family situation and personal needs of employees, and provide personalized care and support. Send blessings and gifts to employees on important occasions such as birthdays, weddings, and having children. Establish an employee children's education fund or scholarship to support their children in receiving good education.

The implementation of the above measures can effectively improve the happiness of employees, thereby enhancing their work enthusiasm and creativity, and injecting a continuous stream of power into the development of the enterprise.

2. Implement precise recruitment during the recruitment phase based on the conclusion characteristics of employee turnover intention. For the recruitment of grassroots employees, in addition to the basic job requirements, the focus is on setting recruitment conditions based on the conclusion of the study on the impact of commuting stress on turnover intention in this article. In the process of resume screening and interview, there is a preference for selecting employees with short commuting distance, reasonable commuting time, and low commuting costs. When setting recruitment conditions and job descriptions, it is important to emphasize and limit the living area of employees. When recruiting core employees or management personnel, it is difficult for enterprises to recruit these two groups of people. Therefore, the recruitment area can be appropriately relaxed to avoid losing outstanding talents outside the designated area. In addition, the choice of commuting method will directly affect commuting time, and according to the conclusion in the article, commuting time has a significant

impact on employees' turnover intention. In the actual commuting process, the choice of transportation and commuting methods directly affects the length of commuting time. Therefore, in the case of a sufficient number of candidates, companies can tend to choose job seekers who commute daily by walking/cycling/electric vehicles, as well as taking public transportation. Job seekers who mainly use taxis and self driving methods have a greater impact on their commuting time by the environment, so they are not among the top choices.

3. In terms of employee training mechanism, the focus is on strengthening education on life satisfaction. According to the conclusion of this article, life satisfaction plays a moderating role between commuting pressure and employee turnover intention, and it is necessary for enterprises to focus on creating life satisfaction. Research has shown that the matching of values between individuals and organizations has a moderating effect on life satisfaction. If corporate values cannot keep up and the values between employees and organizations do not match, it will lead to a decrease in corporate identity and lower life satisfaction. Therefore, enterprises need to attract and protect talents through the construction of core value systems and corporate culture, in which training plays a crucial role. Especially for the current generation of new employees in enterprises, whose life satisfaction is often low, it is recommended that enterprises provide better training and career development space for such employees, enhance their trust, strengthen team culture training, and enhance their sense of belonging, in order to achieve the goal of improving life satisfaction. When encountering commuting pressure problems, employees will avoid turnover tendencies due to their identification with the organization and dedication to work.

4. Establish a competitive performance-based compensation system. According to previous research, challenging stress can positively affect work engagement. Enterprises can improve employees' life satisfaction by establishing a comprehensive performance evaluation system, allowing them to grow and develop in the enterprise. Department leaders should focus on the performance of employees with high commuting pressure, promptly follow up on underperforming employees, understand the reasons, and assist in solving them. For those who cannot improve, they can be dismissed to avoid greater losses. At the same time, providing attractive salary rewards, including a clear salary and welfare system, reasonable salary design, allows employees to receive fair and reasonable returns for their efforts, and can also enhance employee engagement.

5. Establish a flexible welfare system. Improve employees' perception of commuting stress through material and spiritual incentives. One is to improve the overall life satisfaction of employees by setting a good welfare system, and the other is to set efficient commuting related benefits around commuting pressure, such as flexible working hours, staggered commuting, and reducing negative emotions generated by employees during long-distance and long-term commuting. So companies can comprehensively consider commuting distance, commuting time, and commuting methods to set up commuting subsidy plans. In addition, employee dormitories, shuttle buses, etc. are also effective measures to reduce commuting pressure, and enterprises can flexibly allocate according to actual situations.

6. Create a harmonious corporate atmosphere and employee relationships, thereby improving employees' life satisfaction. Life satisfaction plays a moderating role between commuting pressure and employee turnover intention. Enterprises can comprehensively improve their life satisfaction based on employee relationships and corporate atmosphere. Firstly, improve the system and process system, create a good work atmosphere, eliminate the sense of hierarchy between leaders and employees, and create a harmonious and relaxed work atmosphere. Secondly, create opportunities for communication and exchange between employees, as well as between leaders and employees, to bring them closer together. Thirdly, create a positive and positive competitive environment while encouraging mutual tolerance and encouragement among employees. Finally, enterprises should truly care about the growth of their employees, solve their confusion and problems, and enable them to work with positive and full enthusiasm without any worries. All of the above cannot be separated from the support of systems, so enterprises should establish standard employee behavior norms and work systems to ensure the improvement of overall life satisfaction. Reduce the willingness to resign due to commuting pressure by improving employee life satisfaction.

7. Devote oneself to the career development of employees. A clear career development path is very attractive to employees, providing direction for their efforts. Improve the promotion and demotion system and norms, help employees understand the gap between expected goals and current status, and help them develop reasonable development plans, so that they truly have a sense of belonging to the company, and overall improve employees' life satisfaction.

This article focuses on studying the three dimensions of commuting pressure, the principle of mutual influence between turnover intention and engagement, and also draws some preliminary conclusions, which have certain reference significance for human resource management theory and practice. However, due to limitations in the author's theoretical knowledge, resources, and research abilities, there are still many shortcomings and limitations in the research process.

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