

The Impact of Family Factor on Women's Labour Turnover Intention in the Sri Lankan Apparel Industry

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A higher percentage of labour turnover is a key reason for the nonexistence of well-experienced highly skilled women workers in the Sri Lankan apparel industry. Low-experienced workers result in low labour productivity in the industry. In this scenario, the problem of this research is why women workers used to leave the apparel industry within a short period. Consequently, the objectives of the study are to identify the factors that influence labour turnover intention and to measure those factors in quantitative dimensions. An empirical study was conducted as the methodology to achieve the objectives. In this case, the views of sewing machine operators were explored. Accordingly, responses from 1004 women workers in the apparel industry, were collected. In the survey questionnaire, twenty pre-identified reasons through preliminary study and literature review were given to participants for prioritizing as first choice, second choice and third, as per their preference. The percentage values were calculated by dividing the total of the products of frequency and weight factor of each first, second and third choices of each reason by the entire number of responses. According to the results, the main reason for industrial women workers to leave the industry within a short period was marriage. Some 21% of the responses of industrial women workers pointed out marriage as the institutional reason for them to leave the industry. Child care had been identified as the second major institutional reason with 17% of responses. Work-family conflict and poor social recognition were the next important reasons for women's labour turnover intention. According to the empirical study, around 64% of the responses for women labourers to leave the apparel industry within a short period are incorporated with the family. In a patriarchal social context, Sri Lankan women are highly dedicated to family commitments. According to current practices in the apparel industry, it is questionable whether the industrial management has been able to realize the impact of family factors on labour turnover.

Keywords: Labour Turnover, Labour Productivity, Sri Lankan Apparel Industry, Work-family conflict