

# Employee Turnover among Academic Staff in a Newly Established College in Thailand

■ Mahmoud Moussa

**Abstract.** This study was an inclusive assessment of the aspects of employee turnover among academic staff in an educational setting. This text encompasses general background and converses the enormity of the employee turnover quandary, such as an individual's job dissatisfaction in a workplace. Thus, the screening of reasons that push many employees to quit their job would be a guide to a healthier diagnosis of the turnover problem in numerous organizations, in order to assist with this dilemma. The purposes of this study were to name and to draw attention to the reasons or motives related to employee turnover of the selected college and to gain indications of causes regarding employee turnover. Interviews were conducted with fifteen instructors, aged between 25-40 years old, seven of whom had already quit their jobs in the past six months, and eight of whom have attempted to seek jobs in other organizations. Data were accumulated from in-depth, semi-structured interviews of the respondents. The findings were constructed by providing a pervasive portrayal of the setting. After the investigation, the researcher discusses achievable and indispensable factors that might lead to job dissatisfaction and employee turnover. It consists of four issues and their mechanisms: (1) An ineffective system which was comprised of an improper evaluation system, inaccurate organizational structure, lack of training and coaching, reprioritization, lack of problem solving skills and dialogue, inadequate reward system, severe rules and regulations, deficiencies in system development, vagueness of finance issues, inadequate facilities, barren recruitment and selection, and lack of managing conflicts; (2) Behavioral issues which consisted of dominance, irresponsibility, and lack of integrity; (3) Communication skills consisting of one-way communication, and poor interaction; and (4) Feelings of bias and mistrust involved with negative perceptions and unequal opportunities. Finally, the researcher develops recommendations for further research.

**Keywords:** Employee Turnover, Work, College

## Introduction

Working today, for some people, does more damage than good, which is why some feel apprehensive and nonchalant when they take a decision to disregard any commitment to their workplace.

Meanwhile, there are a plethora of theorists in the organizational behavior literature, attempting to theorize the links among work-related perceptions, job manners, intentions to quit, and actual turnover (Lee & Mitchell, 1994). Therefore, it is crucial to investigate and scrutinize aspects of employee turnover and job dissatisfaction. In other words, the dissemination of reasons that push many in the workforce to quit their jobs could offer a healthier diagnosis of the turnover problem in many organizations in order to prevail over this dilemma. Following this line of thought, it is necessary to search for ways that might help organizations and executives in making individuals feel valued and wanted.

The selected college is a part of a large public university in Thailand, with a total of 271 students, and 27 employees, **17 of whom are instructors, 6 administrative employees, and 4 laborers.** It was established in 2006 to provide certificates to pre-business administration students, pre-engineering students, and bachelors' degrees in food engineering sciences. All these programs support the development of both local people, and industries in Thailand. The college and all parties in the university undertook the challenge to decrease any negative impacts on the environment, and promote HRD issues, with the aim of developing various aspects in the gamut of the education delivery.

The author studied papers on employee turnover, and job dissatisfaction among academic staff in an educational setting. Literature about employee turnover is concerned with the assertion of its significance, due to the relationship between the performance and effectiveness of a workplace (Ingersoll, 2001). Ingersoll found that most investigators concluded that a low level of employee turnover typically exists in a healthy organization. Moreover, dissatisfaction with life and with the way democracy is practiced stimulate self-employment (Noorderhaven, et al., 2004). As a frame of reference, the author refers to Maslach and Schaufeli (1993), who wrote on employee burnout and job dissatisfaction, which might be caused by another variable, such as poor working conditions. Ultimately, if there is a space between an individual's needs and wants, and the individual's recognized levels of job satisfaction, dissatisfaction would be a consequence (Choi & Sneed, 2010).

## Purposes

The two main purposes of this study were: (1) to name and to draw attention to reasons, or motives associated with employee turnover at the selected college; and (2) to gain an insight into the causes regarding employee turnover at this college.

## Research Question

What motives drive academic staff to quit their work in a newly established college in Thailand?

## Review of Literature

Spector (1997, p. 2) identified job satisfaction as "*how people feel about their jobs and different aspects of their jobs*". He also considered it as a related assemblage of manners about diverse features or facets of the job. Spector believed that employees feel differently about the different aspects of their jobs; therefore, he was a supporter of research concerning job satisfaction. Konpoothorn (2010) investigated and described the causes of burnout factors regarding private vocational teachers in Pattaya, Thailand, and the findings from in-depth interviews in five vocational schools showed seven categories as follows: inspiration to be a teacher; feelings about work; social environment; student issues; perceptions of the workplace; student family issues; and activities to reduce burnout. Moreover, Barcenas et al. (2011) illustrated a number of factors that contribute to employee turnover:

- The economy: in a developed economy the availability of alternative jobs plays a role in turnover.
- The organizational performance: it may raise the level of impending layoffs.
- The culture of the organization: reward systems, leadership competencies, and the organization's abilities to develop a sense of shared goals will influence such indices of job satisfaction as turnover intentions and turnover rate.
- The job's characteristics: a job's attractiveness will be affected by several characteristics, including its challenges, danger, and perceived importance.
- Unrealistic expectations: general lack of knowledge that many job applicants have about the job offered.
- The person: personal factors, such as a desire to acquire new skills, changes in families' situations, or unsolicited job offers.

Siripak (2006) demonstrated that some of the lower levels of job satisfaction in Mahidol University in Thailand were a consequence of the ambiguity of academic goals, the need to enhance academic service evaluation systems, and communication issues across all levels of the organization. Siripak also argued for the amendment of the financial aid system, as it is considered one of the main elements that had a negative effect on job satisfaction in Mahidol University. Siripak's study proposed the call for a qualitative study to augment the level of job satisfaction. Another study in Satit School in Thailand illustrated prevalent reasons why teachers departed (Weiwei, 2010). These were dissatisfaction with management, communication problems and personal reasons. Although many

organizations classify turnover as voluntary *versus* involuntary, or employee *versus* organization-initiated, some reasons are not evidently voluntary or involuntary, such as health problems, retirement, or pregnancy

(Campion, 1991). For instance, decreased job satisfaction and increased turnover may ensue from a desire for higher earnings, a lack of promotion, or dissatisfaction with working stipulations.

Yiu and Saner (2008) found that the major roots for employee turnover in India were: salary, career advancement, relationship with supervisors, job content, and training and development opportunities. Additionally, Blau and Boal (1989, p. 124) stated that:

*Employees with lower levels of job involvement and organizational commitment are in the highest risk category for subsequent turnover, with employees having high job involvement and low organizational commitment being next in terms of turnover risk. Employees with at least higher levels of organizational commitment are less likely to voluntarily leave.*

Interestingly, Brum (2007) investigated what impact training has on employee commitment and employee turnover and proposed that committed employees remain with the organization for longer periods of time than those who are less committed. However, Brum argued that commitment is made up of investments, reciprocity, social identity and lack of alternatives. In a similar vein, Sumintorn and Thitiworada (2010) scrutinized the relationship of job satisfaction and organizational commitment of employees in a Rajabhat University in Thailand. The study revealed that job satisfaction is a considerable predictor of organizational commitment. Another study conjectured that the better the compatibility, or comfort with an organization, the higher the likelihood that an employee will feel competent and personally attached to the organization (WeiBo, Kaur & Zhi, 2010). Nonetheless, the analysis of Ingersoll (2001) drawn from the sociology of organizations and occupations elucidated that employee turnover and, in turn, school staffing problems, cannot be fully understood without strictly probing the characteristics of the organization's recruitment systems and also examining turnover at the organizational level.

In a large university hospital in Sweden, it was found that the main issues which have a probable impact on staff turnover were intrinsic values of motivation, workload, unit size, and leadership (Stina, et Al., 2009). Rout (2000) reported three main stress factors that were related to high levels of job dissatisfaction; these were job requirements, inappropriate communication systems, working environment and career development. Additionally, Rout mentioned that time pressure is considered to be another essential cause of stress. Judge, Heller and Mount (2002) illustrated neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness as important features that were related to job satisfaction. Besides, Lacy and Sheehan (1997) demonstrated that issues connected with the environment in which academics work, including university atmosphere, morale, sense of community, and relationships with colleagues, are the absolute forecasters of job satisfaction.

Another study contributed to the knowledge on employee turnover by: (1) illustrating an organizational intervention, designed to deal with the organizational effects of turnover; (2) evaluating quantitative changes in actual turnover rates, and organizational aspects; and (3) examining additional qualitative data, to enhance a better understanding of the organizational transformation, which arose through the intervention's course (Strolin-Goltzman & Lawrence, 2010). Importantly, Igbaria and Greenhans (1992) noticed that young employees, who are inexperienced and highly educated, are likely to have low levels of commitment to their businesses; this unenthusiastic manner is connected with intentions to quit their current place of service. Their findings indicated that work-related factors, such as contentment with the job and assurance with the organization, measured the most vital dimensions on the staff turnover intentions.

On the contrary, Evans and Huxley (2009) who examined factors associated with the recruitment and retention of social workers in Wales, concluded that few higher-ranking practitioners and staff members with long period of service, quit or planned to leave, even supposing they were not pleased with their job or employer. Evans and Huxley advocated that a dissatisfied workforce might stay in service for longer, if their proposals or plans were taken into consideration. Stark (2004)

acknowledged that the most crucial lesson for business leaders is not to focus on turnover as a superior thing or as a terrible thing. He recommended letting turnover be a consequence of the quality of your agency. Stark noticed that turnover is a warning sign, not a hurdle. Additionally, he interpreted that employees give the impression to feel more involved in their organizations, when they feel close to their small work groups.

## Methodology

The researcher tracked this study by defining a problem, scripting wide-ranging ideas about the research problem, and adding an assortment of knowledge of the related literature. The focal point on specific methods of data collection was the data gathered from the in-depth, semi-structured interviews of the respondents. For the analysis task, transcribed taped interviews were conducted with some translations developed from Thai to English; data was arranged according to the subjects raised; respondents' responses were displayed in line numbers building up some codes from the respondents' answers; inclusive illustrations and descriptions were developed; categories defined; reviews were undertaken of each category or each interview session; miscellaneous data was measured with the aim of producing texts into an inclusive description of the whole process; and drafting and redrafting. Moreover, trustworthiness and ethical considerations were deemed vital in this study.

According to Merriam (1988), anthropologists originated the non-probability sampling methods, the most usual form of which is called purposive sampling, based on how to discover, understand and gain new vision. Also, purposive sampling is the same as 'criterion-based sampling' which urges researchers to create the criteria necessary for their study. Sampling in qualitative studies is typically purposive rather than random, and the purpose is to decorate the research questions with information richness and not representativeness (Crabtree & Miller, 1992). Moreover, Merriam (1988) pointed out that, "*the most appropriate sampling strategy for a qualitative case study is non-probability sampling, of which there are several forms*" (p. 52). Similarly, Merriam (1998) noticed that the sampling in qualitative research is often 'nonrandom', 'purposeful' and small. Therefore, David (2006) concluded that the common criticism of the case study is that the sample is small, which will not allow both multiple hypotheses to emerge and 'generalizability'.

Most significantly, Creswell (2007, p. 125) reported that, "*the concept of purposeful sampling is used in qualitative research. This means that the inquirer selects individuals and sites for study because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study*". Therefore, the researcher in this study used the non-probability sampling, and performed his interviews in this newly established college in Thailand with fifteen instructors, whose ages ranged between 25 and 40, seven of whom had already quit their jobs in the past six months, and eight of them had attempted to seek jobs in other organizations. Finally, what was obtained from the respondents assisted the researcher in offering an analysis of the situation.

The researcher did not use any kind of computer programs in the data analysis, because the software used to accomplish the aim would probably be expensive, and definitely it requires an amount of training time which is hard for the researcher to achieve at the present time. Most importantly, Crabtree and Miller (1992) noted that the computer programs facilitate the analysis process, because it helps in data management, data manipulation, saving time, as well as many other advantages. Also, May (1997) showed that some computer programs would help researchers in the analysis task to discover the frequency of some words used by the respondents in their contexts, and help to link codes to each other. In contrast, Glesne and Peshkin (1992) analyzed disadvantages in developing a partnership with computers. One such disadvantage is that work is often prematurely concluded when researchers feel comfortable with the completion of data analysis. Another disadvantage is that the data or work can be lost.

## Trustworthiness

Foremost, was the need for probity and unambiguousness throughout the study, with the endeavor of receiving forthright, honest information in a temperament of empathy with the participants. Above and beyond, the researcher struggled to steer clear of common sense or personal ideas, which facilitated the formation of trustworthy elucidations.

## Findings

The researcher proposed four issues and their mechanisms, in interpreting the data obtained from the 15 interviews. The researcher strove to bring together achievable and indispensable factors that might lead to some understanding of job dissatisfaction, and employee turnover. Thus, the researcher's accrued perspective and necessary factors related to employee dissatisfaction and turnover, are presented in the figure below:

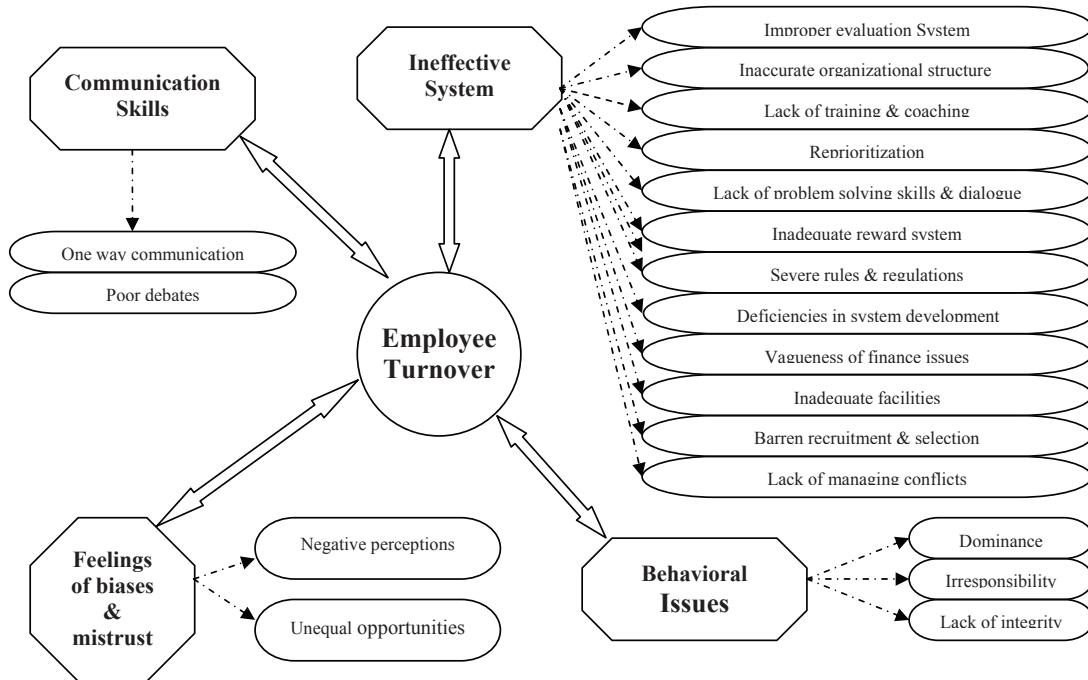


Figure: Employee turnover motives

## Ineffective System

The researcher found the most pertinent causes or motives, which precipitate job dissatisfaction and employee turnover among academic staff in a newly established college were: improper evaluation systems, inaccurate organizational structures, lack of training and coaching, reprioritization, lack of problem solving skills and dialogue, inadequate reward systems, severe rules and regulations, deficiencies in system development, vagueness of finance issues, inadequate facilities, barren recruitment and selection, and the inability to manage conflicts. Moreover, one of the respondents noted that *"I have been working here for two years, and things have become worse. The system in the college is ineffective, and the director only cares about the output, but he does not care about the process"*. Another respondent noticed that, *"the staff are not working cohesively, job descriptions are not clear, and there aren't good relationships among people in the college"*. Besides, one of the respondents confirmed that:

We have to have a system, because we have our own plan and our own budget, and everyone must be clear about his/her roles. The most dangerous points in this college are, first, the ineffective system; second, there are no morals. We do not have steps for working; we do not have a system.

Further, the respondents of this study added some illuminating points, such as an improper evaluation system, an inaccurate organizational structure, lack of training and coaching, and reprioritization.

*My boss is unfair in his evaluation; he is using the evaluation as a tool to fire some people, or to fire those he does not like. Most importantly, the top management should improve the college's structure, as well as put the right one in the right place. At the same time, the college should provide training courses, to advance the lecturers' teaching skills. Lastly, the director wants to establish a new program which is called (Innovation Based Technology); however, he doesn't think of the current situation or the current problems.*

Furthermore, the respondents affirmed a perception of dissatisfaction that led them to leave the college. They perceived the following issues: lack of problem solving skills and dialogue, inadequate reward system, severe rules and regulations, deficiencies in system development. One respondent conceded that, "*if we have a dialogue among lecturers, and administrative employees, we can solve many problems in the college*". Another respondent concluded that, "*I'm happy with my colleagues, and my students, but I don't have sufficient time to develop myself, such as doing further studies*". Nevertheless, the majority confirmed that:

The first priority in this college, should be problem solving, and have the employees loyal to our college. Second, One of the employee's suggestions is, to make a dialogue with all employees every week, and let them behave appropriately towards each other. As such, they could accept each other, and then they will be more comfortable when working together.

Additionally, the respondents explored other critical subjects, linked with their job dissatisfaction. Some of which were, "*some lecturers, who stay in the dormitory every night to look after the students, are seeking extra remuneration, because they have more responsibilities after their working hours*". Another point of discontent was that "*In the dormitory, the instructor goes to check the students' rooms too early everyday, which makes the students, unable to prepare themselves very well, and we do not have enough time to sleep*". In short, "*We have lots of rules, which make us feel under pressure*". On the other hand, one of the respondents perceived that:

*Lecturers and administrative employees, do not understand the students' needs, and, at the same time, the college's policies are related to how to develop the students' ways of thinking. Therefore, the college should develop people's ways of thinking, by a regular external consultation.*

### **Other respondents articulated that:**

*To develop this college, we should first change the management. Policies, and goals must be clear to everyone in the college. We should let the lecturers and the administrative employees, understand the college's objectives, before working on anything. At least, we have to have someone in the college, both lecturers and administrative employees can trust and believe in, to be able to work effectively.*

Moreover, the respondents interpreted the continuation of huge barriers in the college. They scrupulously formulated the following perceptions: vagueness of financial issues, inadequate facilities, barren recruitment and selection, and lack of managing conflicts. Thus, there were several respondents who argued that, "*the students have not paid for the activities, at the beginning of the semester, and no-one knows how we can get a budget, to organize some activities*". Another comment was that, "*special lecturers in the college, get their cash too late, and sometimes only one time per semester, and it should be every month*". Following this line of thought, one respondent stated that:

The lecturers do not know the college's priorities, so that they can effectively use the budget provided. For instance, some lecturers might need to establish something in the college, but they receive a rejection of their proposals without knowing the reason. Whilst other lecturers, get approval to do other things, from the budget provided to the college.

Succinctly, there were various disputes around the obscurity of the college's financial plan, or statement. Further, numerous respondents acknowledged that, "*facilities and the environment in the college, are not suitable for a learning process or for studying*". Similarly, "*the students do not have*

*enough facilities to study effectively, such as the scarcity of some tools in the workshops. Classrooms are scanty, and the environment is not good for studying*". Furthermore, some noted that, "We should recruit the right one in the right place. Some lecturers are not active, they do not know their duties, and they do not make any effort at work". Likewise, one respondent expressed his opinion that, "In the PreBusiness Administration program, we do not have experienced lecturers, and we need to support our students, to continue their studies in the university". Additionally, another respondent intimated that, "there are several conflicts among the lecturers in the college. Also, one of the biggest problems is that the leader of each curriculum area has some conflict with the director, because they have different ways of thinking". Accordingly, one respondent alleged that:

Conflicts among people exist in this college because of the following: the management, and the distance between the college and the headquarters is too far, which makes it difficult for the staff to coordinate with others. Hence, if we are going to solve the problems in this college, we should first manage conflict; people in management should be well mannered with the employees; and discuss our problems sincerely and constructively.

### **Behavioral Issues**

The respondents of this study outlined the following: dominance, irresponsibility, and lack of integrity. One of the respondents identified that, "the director of this college does not want junior employees, to have any relationship with senior employees, to avoid having any bad impression about their character". In conjunction, "no-one in this college, knows about his/her duties, and many employees are irresponsible, and try to escape from any work". But with these matters, the researcher was also taken aback to hear from one of the respondents who said that:

*My boss is always irresponsible in his decisions. Whenever, he makes decisions, if something wrong happens, or unexpected; he will say that, it is not his mistake or his responsibility. In other words, he throws his mistakes on others, which makes some employees feel demoralized.*

Importantly, the respondents of this study mentioned that the dearth of integrity in the college led several employees to quit or to feel dejected. Accordingly, one of the respondents best represented the opinions of others by saying

*The management and the lecturers, do not want to admit that there are quite a lot of problems in the college. They do not want to accept the truth. In addition, the lecturers say to the students, that they should love each other and listen to each other, but they themselves never do this.*

### **Communication Skills**

The data analysis indicated that, one-way communication and inadequate debates are reasons that influenced a number of employees to quit. As such, one respondent underscored that, "The employees are not working cohesively, and always have problems in communicating with each other". In a similar way, "The lecturers in this college do not understand each other, and they do not communicate effectively with the students". Nonetheless, one respondent strongly accentuated that:

*The director should not talk in a bad way to the employees; he should motivate and disseminate power to everyone. He has lots of problems in communicating with others, whether in the college or the university; therefore, no-one wants to co-operate with him.*

Following these notions, another respondent drew attention to:

*The director's way of talking, makes people confused, because he cannot elucidate what he is trying to say. He makes us give up, because he does not know how to communicate effectively; although, sometimes he has good intentions. Instead of showing appreciation with our work, he makes us feel unappreciated, and, therefore we give up on working hard for the college.*

### **Feelings of Biases & Mistrust**

Based on the respondents' replies, the major components influencing perceptions were, negative perceptions and unequal opportunities. These were the underlying causes and motives that led to job dissatisfaction and employee turnover. Most of the respondents believed that, "*the college is not my future. One of the reasons which makes this college ineffective is that no-one understands the director, and the director does not understand us*". Conversely, "*The good thing about this college, is that we have some lecturers, who are most conscientious, and have some exceptional abilities, but one day we will lose them because of the current management*". One of the respondents stated forcefully that, "*When the college needs some facilities, the director is thinking of how much it will benefit him, what he will be able to subvert from the budget*". Another point perceived by the respondents' perspectives was that, "*The director has negative feedback about the lecturers who have different points of view with him*". Moreover, there was a lot of prominence given to the existence of unequal opportunities in the college. As one of the respondents highlighted, "*Some lecturers do a big effort in researching more than teaching, because they get more satisfaction from their research*". Another respondent concluded that:

*The are some unfair opportunities in this college, such as, the self assessment report (SAR) the college received a bonus last year of 1,500 baht per person, and the director gave this bonus to only the ones who made the report. However, many employees worked on this report.*

Additionally, "*There are unfair opportunities for the employees, such as scholarships, and evaluation. The director always protects the employees; he loves, in the meetings*". Also, "*Some employees could have a laptop from the college, while others had to buy one at their own expense*". Nevertheless, several times, the respondents repeatedly declared that:

*The university provided a budget to develop the employee's skills in the college (7,000 Baht each). Though, the director gives the budget to those who work in the Engineering program, nothing is allocated for the Business Administration program.*

Evidence in this study indicated that, "*Some lecturers started working very well, but when it became hopeless, they gave up, and they have subsequently done nothing*". Another comment was that, "*When the previous management went, I gave up, and lost my loyalty to this college*". *Some of the respondents' thoughts were that, "Whatever we do, we get nothing in return, or nothing is appreciated in this college, even if we work hard. Therefore, we just let it go, without caring about anything*". Another respondent explicitly expressed his opinion, and asserted that:

*What makes this college go from bad to worse, is that the employees do not feel loyal to the college, or faithful to the director. I'm not against the director, but I'm not happy when working in this college, because there is no-one who can support our work. We are learning by doing, so no-one should blame us if our work is not good.*

In conclusion, the researcher described and displayed the major findings, and the specific research aspects were discussed comprehensively. However, percentages of annual turnover are not included because this information was not available.

### **Discussion and Recommendations**

A recent study by Konpoothorn (2010) found that feelings about work, student issues, and social environment were causes of burnout for private vocational teachers in five vocational schools in Thailand. Likewise, job dissatisfaction and employee turnover in the college selected for this study were due to the belief that regardless of what the employees strove to accomplish, no recognition or incentives would be received. In the meantime, the respondents of this study

admitted that students do not have enough resources to study effectively, classrooms are insufficient, and the environment is not good for studying. Another contemporary study has made significant contributions to the literature concerning employee turnover (Sumintorn & Thitiworada, 2010). It offered a new perspective on the relationship of job satisfaction and organizational commitment of employees in a Rajabhat University, and found that job satisfaction is a substantial predictor of organizational commitment. Conversely, this study's results may serve as an indicator that job dissatisfaction is likely to be a predictor of low level of organizational commitment and, thus, it is essential to maximize the employee's level of job satisfaction, in order to have positive feelings and actions toward the organization.

Another strong indicator of risk for job turnover is a low level of job involvement and commitment (WeiBo, Kaur & Zhi, 2010; Blau & Boal, 1989). The imprecision of academic goals, coupled with the ambiguity of employee evaluation and financial system, negatively impacted job satisfaction at Mahidol University (Siripak, 2006). It is generally accepted by the respondents of the current study that there is a need for regular consultations about the college's policies and goals before assigning work on a particular task. The respondents of this study repeatedly mentioned that the budget was not effectively used, because the employees did not recognize the college's priorities. Others complained about the improper evaluation system. In other words, the researcher and the respondents of this study emphasized the importance of educating the employees about their options and resources, with the aim of making proper decisions.

One of the studies which took place in a private school in Thailand confirmed that the main reasons for teachers' turnover are dissatisfaction with management, and communication problems (Weiwei, 2010). It is apparent that the researcher throughout this study divulged the discontentment of the employees from the organization's management philosophy, and the set of principles or rules that helped them make all types of decisions. Additionally, the current study demonstrated repeatedly that the lack of communication skills significantly increased the employees' potential to quit. Therefore, emphasis should be placed on providing effective communications that offer the employees the care and the supervision they are looking for, while reinforcing the value of the benefits they receive.

Moreover, the findings of the current study portrayed a large number of motives that led many employees in the chosen setting to leave their jobs. Some of these were the ineffectiveness of the system, the inexistence of team building strategies, the incomprehensible job descriptions, the unhealthy relationships among people in the college, the inadequacy of the reward system, the vagueness of financial issues, and the few opportunities provided to develop the employees' skills. Empirical research supporting these ideas includes evidence that the performance of the organization and the organizational culture, such as reward systems, the organization's capability to develop good relationships among people, the job's characteristics, including its challenges, and the personal factors, such as the desire to gain new skills, contribute to employee turnover (Barcenas et al., 2011). Interestingly, Campion's (1991) findings clarified that, although a significant number of organizations classify turnover as voluntary versus involuntary, some factors are not easily defined as voluntary or involuntary, such as health problems, retirement, or pregnancy; however, these factors never surfaced in the current study as reasons for employee turnover in the college.

Furthermore, this study showed what pressures affect a workforce in an educational setting to quit their work. It found four broad concepts that led to job dissatisfaction, and employee turnover: an ineffective system, communication skills, behavioral issues, and feelings of bias and mistrust. Each of these four factors has attracted and inspired a large number of scholars and practitioners to examine constructive and depressing matters that shape and direct our personal and work lives. Besides a discussion of what has been found related, or was unrelated to previous studies, the researcher sheds light on some derogatory things mentioned by the respondents of this study. Previous studies, such as Rout (2000), construed that improper communication systems, is one of the prime reasons of job dissatisfaction. Similarly, the current study found that one-way communication and insufficient discourse led several employees to experience deep dissatisfaction. However, the researcher views that debates require a great understanding of the topic, usually involving government policies, rules and regulations, and such arguments should be supported by evidence from experts.

Thus, a large number of employees in the selected college, who were juniors, were likely to be unable to converse, or debate effectively, due to their limited backgrounds, or experiences. Besides, several respondents in the college stated that one-way communication was another contentious issue. They added to previous studies, that communication is a lot more than information transfer. Rather, feelings need to be considered.

According to Ivancevich, Konopaske and Matteson (2008, p. 350), “*serious problems arise when directives are misunderstood, when casual kidding in a work group leads to anger*”. Therefore, they noticed that the question is not whether managers engage in communication. Rather, the pertinent question is whether managers will communicate well or poorly. Additionally, the researcher found that communication that is assertive, direct and powerful might send a wrong signal to Thai people, due to cultural dimensions. The respondents of the current study stated that their superiors made them feel unappreciated and, therefore, they gave up on working hard. Thus, the researcher interpreted these findings by concluding that sensitivity and responsiveness in communicating are fundamental for decision makers, to increase their employees’ productivity. Another critical argument found in Rout’s (2000) study was that an effective working atmosphere and employees’ career path must be taken into account, in order to retain the workforce. Speaking of the working environment, the respondents of this study explicitly illustrated a plethora of factors that weaken an effective working environment, such as poor evaluation systems, inaccurate organizational structures, the absence of training courses and coaching, deficit problem solving skills, rigorous rules, and an inability to deal with conflicts. Nevertheless, the researcher should acknowledge that a perfect working environment means different things to different people. Hence, only sub-theories, rather than theories, would be appropriate to compile possible factors that contribute to an amiable environment in the workplace.

Moreover, the current study demonstrated, as did previous ones, that the disregard of the employee’s career paths would result in worker alienation, lack of commitment and loyalty, and eventually resignation from the job. Although it is commonly believed that a leader’s primary role is to develop the employees, numerous elements may not enhance and support this significant duty in some organizations. For instance, a leader may not be capable of playing this significant role, if the organization’s culture involves minimum autonomy and maximum restrictions on either the employee, or the employer; a limited budget, or facilities, are further reasons which may reduce a leader’s capability to contribute to the career development of others. Additionally, Hunsaker and Hunsaker (2009) pointed to the significance of instilling into others the necessity of having a sense of responsibility in managing their own careers, before receiving any support to add to their competencies.

Lacy and Sheehan (1997) added more aspects of work satisfaction, such as sense of community and strong relationships among people, whereas the current study showed that one of the motives that pushed many employees to quit, was that building relationships between junior and senior employees was prohibited, or almost banned to avoid receiving negative feedback, or poor impressions of seniors. Collaboration and building relationships among people are the basis of working, and are strongly connected with the success and the development of a workplace. Nonetheless, an authoritative feature is required, in order to manage conflict, favoritism, and those who are unproductive, due to curiosity and engagement inherent in human nature. Meanwhile, being too authoritative, or too friendly, may be dangerous depending on the people’s personalities, the degree of relationships among them, and the type of work involved. In short, people in a relationship are likely have a tendency to influence each other, share some views and emotions, and engage in activities together. Therefore, building relationships among employees at work could be either for the benefit, or the detriment of the workplace.

Employees have a sense of loyalty toward their organizations, as they become an important part of their small work groups (Stark, 2004). The respondents of the current study expressed almost the same opinion as Stark, when they noticed that, “*what makes the college go from bad to worse, is that the employees do not feel loyal to the college*”. The issue of loyalty in organizations has been debated for several decades, to increase productivity, save resources, enhance reputation, etc. However,

the question is 'What can build this great feeling for people at work?' The answer, first and foremost, is culture. Many believe that organizations' cultures impact on the degree of employee loyalty, which in turn leads to a positive working performance, and long-term working commitment. Moving to another significant problem area, it is found in the current study, that many employees are irresponsible at work, and that they are lacking adequate information, or knowledge about their duties. As such, the researcher concluded that employees who have information would automatically become responsible and those who have information and do not take the responsibility are considered exceptions. Accordingly, the organization's training and career development programs can build employees' knowledge, skills, and capabilities which, by extension, contribute to a high level of performance.

Further, unconstructive perceptions and imbalanced opportunities in the current study were powerful reasons that led to job dissatisfaction. Interestingly, and on the contrary, Nelson and Quick (2006) succinctly exemplified that job dissatisfaction, is correlated to organizational citizenship behavior, which goes beyond the call of duty. In addition to that, Nelson and Quick referred to some factors that have an effect on job satisfaction, such as an exigent work, cherished compensations, opportunities for development, skilled management and supportive co-workers. Similarly, Lacy and Sheehan (1997) showed that themes connected with an effective pedagogic setting, engaged in the university environment, morale, sense of community, and affiliations with colleagues, benefitted the whole. Ultimately, the researcher recommends the following questions to be investigated in further studies:

- What are the strategies needed to reduce the power vacuum between superiors and subordinates with regard to the Thai culture and beliefs?
- How can we change the perception that administrative employees are less important than academics in an educational setting in Thailand?
- What are the strategies that could make employees behave as business partners in their workplace?

The researcher selected the qualitative approach for this study, in order to establish insight, believability and trustworthiness. On the other hand, there has been an extraordinary amount of work on this topic, using the quantitative approach, and little has been done qualitatively. Thus, the researcher recommends the substantial use of the qualitative approach in further studies related to employee turnover, as it is concerned with people's assumptions, feelings, and practices. Yiu and Saner (2008) alleged that the future young leaders with their limited skills of emotional intelligence in managing an increasingly demanding workforce could lead to more turnover, since their leadership style might be ineffective and unproductive causing their staff to leave the organization. Therefore, it would be helpful in further studies to use a grounded theory strategy, which might facilitate the creation of a new theory, to recognize all feasible factors concerned with employee turnover in organizations. According to Sakulkoo (2009, p. 87), grounded theory interviewing is quite different from in-depth interviewing:

*An interviewer assumes more direct control over the construction of data than most other methods, such as ethnography or textual analysis.*

*Grounded theory methods require that researchers take control of their data collection and analysis, and in turn these methods give researchers more analytical control over their material.*

Concisely, in responding to the research question of this study, the motives that drove the academic staff to quit their work, from the respondents' view, were divided into four categories that have emerged as follows: (1) Ineffective system; (2) Behavioral issues; (3) Communication skills; and (4) Feelings of bias and mistrust.

## References

Barcenas, K.R.R., Cagula, J.C.M.T. Nantes, D.A., Gelacio, K.L., Tsai, K.M.A., Sasuman, C.V.D., Rosit, J.A.R., & Gongon, A. (2011). *The factors that affect employee turnover of call center agents in IT Park, Cebu City*. Retrieved October 9, 2011, from <http://www.scribd.com/doc/49434494/THE-FACTORS-THAT-AFFECT-EMPLOYEE-TURNOVER-OF-CALL-CENTER-AGENTS-IN-IT-PARK-CEBU-CITY>.

Blau, G., & Boal, K. (1989). Using job involvement and organizational commitment interactively to predict turnover. *Journal of Management* 15(1), 115-127.

Brum, S. (2007). *What impact does training have on employee commitment and employee turnover?*. Retrieved October 11, 2011, from <http://www.uri.edu/research/lrc/research/papers/Brum-Commitment.pdf>.

Campion, M.A. (1991). Meaning and Measurement of Turnover: Comparison of Alternative Measures and Recommendations for Research. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 76(2), 199-212.

Choi, W.S., & Sneed, J. (2010). *Factors related to job satisfaction and intent to turnover for part-time student employees in university dining services*. Retrieved February 17, 2010, from [http://www.fsmec.org/pdf/06/RevisedJulyJFSRE\\_Manuscript\\_2006\\_Woo-SikChoi%20final.pdf](http://www.fsmec.org/pdf/06/RevisedJulyJFSRE_Manuscript_2006_Woo-SikChoi%20final.pdf).

Crabtree, B.F., & Miller, W.L. (1992). *Doing qualitative research: Multiple strategies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Creswell, J.W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousands Oaks, CA: Sage.

David. M. (2006). *Case study research Volume I*. Thousands Oaks, CA: Sage.

Evans, S., & Huxley, P. (2009). Factors associated with the recruitment and retention of social workers in Wales: Employer and employee perspectives. *Health Social Care Community*, 17(3), 254-266.

Glesne, C., & Peshkin, A. (1992). *Becoming qualitative researchers: An introduction*. White Plains, New York: Longman.

Hunsaker, P.L., & Hunsaker, J.S. (2009). *Essential managers: Managing people*. London: Dorling kindersley Limited.

Igbaria, M., & Greenhans, J.H. (1992). Determinants of MIS employees' turnover intentions: A structural equation model. *Communications of the ACM*, 35 (2), 34- 49.

Ingersoll, R.M. (2001). *Teacher turnover, teacher shortages, and the organization of schools*. Retrieved February 18, 2010 from, <http://depts.washington.edu/ctpmail/PDFs/Turnover-Ing-01-2001.pdf>.

\_\_\_\_\_. (2001). Teacher turnover and teacher shortages: An organizational analysis. *American Educational Research Journal*, 38(3), 499-534. Retrieved October 12, 2011 from <http://aer.sagepub.com/content/38/3/499.short?rss=1&ssource=mfc>.

Ivancevich, J.M., Konopaske, R., & Matteson, M.T. (2008). *Organizational behavior and management* (8th ed). McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc.

Judge, T.A., Heller, D., & Mount, M.K. (2002). Five- factor model of personality and job satisfaction: A Meta-Analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 87(3), 530-541.

Konpoothorn, P. (2010). Burnout: A study of private vocational teachers in Pattaya, Thailand. *HRD Journal*, 1(2), 49-65.

Lacy, F.J., & Sheehan, B.A. (1997). Job satisfaction among academic staff: Aninternational perspective. *Higher Education*, 34, 305-322.

Lee, T.W., & Mitchell, T.R. (1994). An alternative approach: The unfolding model of voluntary employee turnover. *The Academy of Management Review*, 19 (1), 51-89.

Maslach, C., & Schaufeli, W.B. (1993). *Historical and conceptual development of burnout*. Retrieved February 17, 2010 from <http://www.fss.uu.nl/sop/Schaufeli/043.pdf>.

May, T. (1997). *Social research: Issues, methods and process* (2nd ed.).Buckingham: Open University Press.

Merriam, S.B. (1988). *Case study research in education: A qualitative approach*.San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

\_\_\_\_\_. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Nelson, D.L., & Quick, J.C. (2006). *Organizational behavior: Foundations, realities and challenges* (5th ed). South-Western: Thomson.

Noorderhaven, N., Thurik, R., Wennekers, S., & Stel, A.V. (2004). The role of dissatisfaction and per capita income in explaining self-employment across 15 European countries. *Entrepreneurship: Theory and Practice*, 28(5), 447- 466.

Rout, U. R. (2000). Stress amongst district nurses: A preliminary investigation. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 9(2), 303- 309.

Sakulkoo, S. (2009). *Volunteering as active aging: A study of elderly Thais who are members of the Brain Bank*. Doctoral Dissertation, Burapha University.

Siripak, S. (2006). *Job satisfaction of academic staff in Mahidol University*. Retrieved October 11, 2011 from <http://www.li.mahidol.ac.th/thesis/2549/cd395/4737489.pdf>.

Spector, P.E. (1997). *Job satisfaction: Application, assessment, causes, and consequences*. Thousands Oaks, CA: Sage.

Stark, M. (2004). *High turnover: Should you care?*. Retrieved January 31, 2010, from <http://hbswk.hbs.edu/archive/4277.html>.

Stina, F.S., Kerstin, N.K., Goran, E., & Goran, T. (2009). Nursing staff turnover at a Swedish university hospital: An exploratory study. *Journal of Clinical Nursing* 18 (22), 3181-3189.

Strolin-Goltzman, J.S., & Lawrence, C.K. (2010). Design teams: A promising organizational intervention for improving turnover rates in the child welfare workforce. *Child Welfare*, 88 (5), 149-168.

Sumintorn, B., & Thitiworada, S. (2010). The effects of job satisfaction on organizational commitment of Thai employees in five Rajabhat Universities in the Northern Group. *European Journal of Management* 10(3).

WeiBo, Z., Kaur, S., & Zhi, T. (2010). A critical review of employee turnover model (1938-2009) and development in perspective of performance. *African Journal of Business Management*, 4(19), 4146-4158.

Weiwei, Z. (2010). Employee retention: Perspectives of foreign teachers at a Demonstration (Satit) School in Thailand. *HRD Journal* 1(1), 61-68..

Yiu, L., & Saner, R. (2008). *India employee turnover study: Research report*. Retrieved October 11, 2011 from [http://174.132.114.221/~diploma/adequate.org/site/images/files/20080127-SanerYiu%20Research%20Paper\\_Turnover%20in%20India%2027\\_01\\_08%20\(Final\).pdf](http://174.132.114.221/~diploma/adequate.org/site/images/files/20080127-SanerYiu%20Research%20Paper_Turnover%20in%20India%2027_01_08%20(Final).pdf).