

Employees Changing Attitude Toward Work

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ABSTRACT: This study aims to research the changes in the employees' work attitude and the factors that cause these changes in recent years. Factors in employees' attitudes toward holding a job and their related factors are examined. This paper is limited to the review of the recent literature for a better understanding of the problem, developing models, and suggesting solutions related to the increasing number of American workers quitting their jobs. This study is significant since several researchers investigated the causes of unemployment issues caused by job outsourcing, shrunken manufacturing industry, trade deficit, and short-term performance mentality. However, only a few research considered the change of attitude of workers as a reason for the employee leaving a job. The findings of this study showed changes in the work attitude of employees in recent years and uncover factors affecting these changes. With respect to the impacts of the pandemic, notable differences were observed in quitting a job based on education and ethnicity. The most impacts were detected among younger employees, lower-wage employees, with lower social status and family income. No significant differences were detected with respect to gender. Other factors that have caused the changes in the workers' attitudes appear to be the company's culture, the possibility for advancement at work, lack of trust in management, and emphasis on the quality of life.

KEYWORDS: work attitudes, motivation, pandemic, income inequality, socioeconomic problems

Introduction

The labor shortage has become a major issue for the complicated situation of the Pandemic era. People have left the workforce in the past two years of the pandemic because of layoffs, health insecurity, childcare needs, and other personal issues. Among the people who quit their jobs are young people who are leaving for other jobs or better pay and older Americans who accelerated their retirement. In assessing the jobs recovery, economists have pointed out that while the unemployment rate has decreased, the labor force participation rate hasn't increased at the same pace.

Human resources are the major factor in organizational success. An increasing number of employees leaving a job and companies having difficulties in attracting new employees that may lead to further issues in the organization. Several researchers investigated the causes of today's unemployment problems in the USA and detected the following factors as the reasons for labor unemployment: job outsourcing, shrunken manufacturing industry, trade deficit, robotic technology to replace workers, immigration, and short-term performance mentality. However, limited research considered the change of attitude of workers as a reason for the change in the employee's interest in their job.

Purpose: Employees' attitude is among several factors that contribute to organizational productivity. This study investigates the factors affecting employees' attitudes toward their work, and the reasons for leaving a job, suggesting ways to improve the workplace environment and attract and maintain workers.

Study Limitations: The study is divided into two parts. The first part is the introduction and the review of the literature. It investigates related literature and current topic for a better understanding of the topic and develops a model for the study. The second part is the research design, methodology, data collection, instruments, and statistical analysis of data.

This paper is limited to the first part which is a review of the recent literature for a better understanding of the problem, developing models, and suggesting solutions related to the increasing number of American workers quitting their jobs. The second part of this study will be available in the next paper.

Review of the Literature

the concept of attitude is mostly used within the field of social psychology. Attitude toward work is a mental and emotional process toward one's work. Aries and Rizqi (2013) explain attitude toward work as the workers' feelings toward the work environment including feelings, beliefs, emotions, judgment, and opinions toward the work with its environment.

A study by Abun et al. (2021) found there is a correlation between the attitude toward work and work performance. In addition, other studies found that also work attitude affects job performance and job satisfaction (Abdalkrim and Elhalim 2016; Akcay et al. 2016). Thus, improving employees' work attitude results in job satisfaction and lower turnover intention (Borst et al. 2019). So, a positive work attitude further improves employees' performance. (Menon et al. 2018; Almeida et al. 2012).

Reasons for the Employees' Turnover

A study by Pew Research Center found the following factors are the top major reasons that American quitted their job in 2021 (Parker and Horowitz 2022)

- Low pay (63%).
- A lack of opportunities for advancement (63%).
- Feeling disrespected at work (57%).
- About half say childcare issues (48%).
- A lack of flexibility to choose when they put in their hours (45%).
- Not good benefits such as health insurance and paid time off (43%).
- Working too many hours (39%).
- Wanting to relocate to a different area (35%).
- Requiring a COVID-19 vaccine (18%).
- Mostly, men and women offer the same reasons for quitting a job in 2021. But there are significant differences in educational levels.

There are notable differences between workers quitting jobs, based on their education and ethnicity.

- College graduates are more likely than those with less education now can earn more with more opportunities for advancement.
- More workers without a four-year college degree (34%) believed the pandemic made a role in their decision to quit their jobs.
- Fewer workers with a bachelor's degree or more education (21%) believed the pandemic made a role in their decision to quit their jobs.
- There are differences between Non-White adults vs White counterparts in the reasons for quitting their job (The non-White category includes those who identify as Black, Asian, Hispanic, some other race, or multiple races).
 - Not having enough flexibility (52% vs. 38%).
 - Wanting to relocate to a different area (41% vs. 30%).
 - Working too few hours (37% vs. 24%).
 - Their employer requiring that they have a COVID-19 vaccine (27% vs. 10%).

There are notable job improvement among those who quite job and found a different job or switched jobs and not retired:

- Full-time (55%) or part-time (23%).
- Somewhat easy for them to find their current job (61%).
- Very easy for them to find their current job (33%). saying it was **very** easy.
- Somewhat difficult to find job (20%).
- Neither easy nor difficult (19%).

Workers who quit a job in 2021 and are now employed somewhere else believe this has been an improvement over their most recent job.

- At least 50% of these workers, they are earn more money (56%), have more opportunities for advancement (53%), easier time balancing work and family responsibilities (53%), and have more flexibility to choose their work hours (50%).
- Better benefits, such as health insurance and paid time off (42%).
- The same benefits, such as health insurance and paid time off (36%).
- Their current benefits are worse than at their last job (22%).
- Younger adults and those with lower incomes were more likely to quit a job in 2021.

Inequality, Labor productivity, and growth in the wage rate

Inequality is measured by income before taxes and income after taxes and benefits. Starting in the late 1970s, inequality in the U.S start rising fast until the early 2000s and did not significantly reverse. The rise in income inequality resulted from two policies. First, the policy made for weaken the bargaining power of workers that resulted in low incomes for workers. Second, the U.S. system of federal taxes and benefits caused a slow recovery of inequality.

The reduced workers' bargaining power is the evident that shows workers continued to increase productivity while their relative wage rate decreases. Between 1979 and 2019, productivity rose by about 60%, while hourly pay for nonsupervisory workers increased by less than 14% (Biven and Banerjee 2022). Also, according to the US Census Bureau, the median household income was \$67,521 in 2020, a decrease of 2.9 percent from the 2019 with median of \$69,560. This shows a continuous decline in median household income (Shrider et al. 2021)

Figure 1 shows the trends in productivity that have increased for decades. Figure 2 shows the trends in the wage rate that continue to decrease while workers show increases in productivity. Also, the middle class, once they were the strong segment of the economy of many Americans, has gradually decreased in the last decades. The share of adults who live in middle-class households fell from 61% in 1971 to 50% in 2021, according to a new Pew Research Center analysis of government data (Kochhar and Sechopoulos 2022).

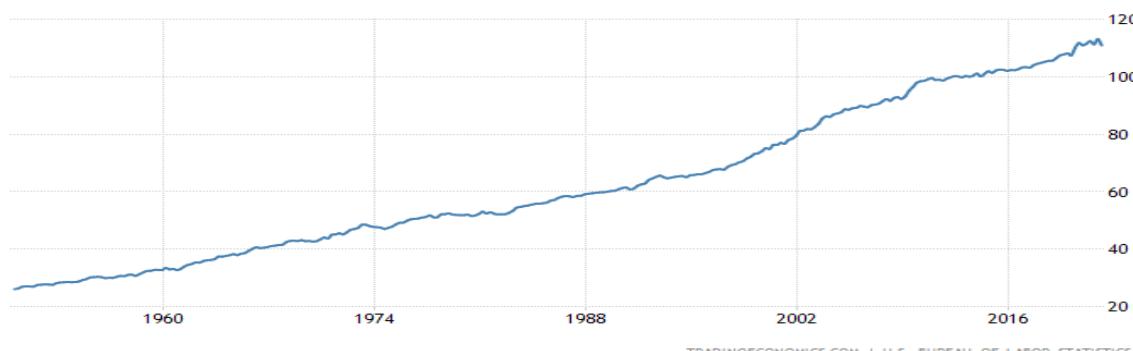


Figure 1. United States Nonfarm Labor Productivity
Source: *Trading Economics. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2022a)*

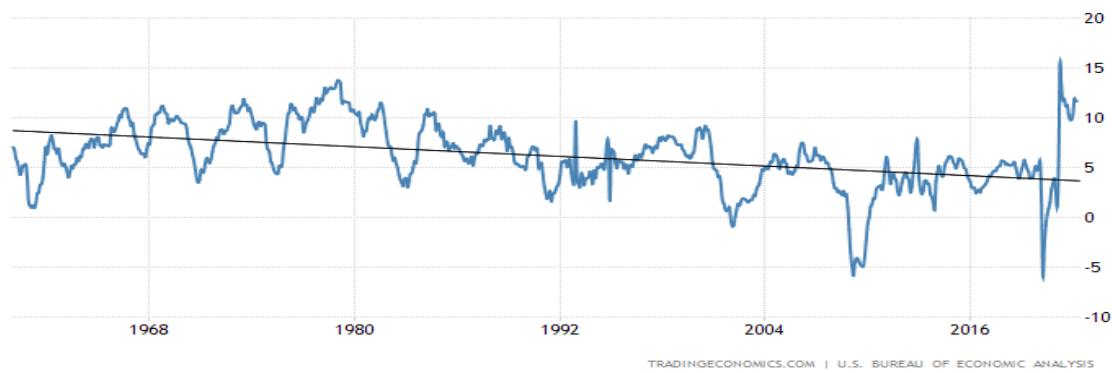


Figure 2. United States Wages and Salaries Growth
Source: *Trading Economics. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2022b)*

Positive Work Attitudes

Below are the major factors for the employee's positive work attitude:

Job Characteristics and match with personality: Employees feel more satisfied and committed in jobs when they use a wide range of skills, have autonomy at work, perform significant tasks, and receive feedback on the job. But, the personality of the employee is an important factor too since some people have a high need for growth. These types of employees appear more satisfied when their jobs if they can improve or build new skills.

Organizational Justice: The root of organizational justice is trust. Employees feel satisfied at work if they experience fairness in company policies, procedures, supervisor treatments, fairness of pay, and other company rewards.

Psychological Contract: The psychological contract is the cognitive process of an employee's perception toward his contribution to the organization (such as work skills, loyalty, and a willing attitude) and will receive certain things in return (such as competitive pay and benefits). Under the psychological contract, an employee may perceive that if he works hard and gets favorable evaluations, he will receive an annual bonus, raises, and promotions, and will not be laid off.

Relationships at Work: A strong predictor of the employees' happiness at work and commitment to the company is employees' relationships with coworkers and managers. Research also shows that employees' relationships with the managers and building a trust-based relationship are important to job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Stress: The amount of stress present in a job affects employees' satisfaction and commitment. Stressors may range from the work environment such as noise, and heat to interpersonal issues such as organizational politics to organizational matters such as worrying about job security.

Conclusions

The study examined the effect of attitude toward work and the reasons for the increase in the number of employees quitting their job. In recent years, people have left the workforce for several reasons such as layoffs, health insecurity, childcare needs, and any other issues caused by the pandemic. This study examined the factors that most likely caused employees to quit their jobs such as pay rate, benefits, and flexibility to work during their preferred hours and locations. Workers who quitted a job in 2021 and now employed somewhere else, have gained an improvement over their most recent job. College graduates are more likely than those with less education now to earn more with more opportunities for advancement.

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