

**JOB SATISFACTION, JOB-RELATED  
STRESS AND INTENTION TO LEAVE  
AMONG AUDIT STAFF IN LARGE AND  
SMALL ACCOUNTING FIRMS  
(EAST COAST REGION)**

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## ABSTRACT

This study was taken to investigate the relationship between job satisfaction and its determinants. For that purpose 238 questionnaires were sent to 25 accounting firms located in the East Coast region of West Malaysia. From the total, 95 audit staff participated in this study.

The approach in this study involved first to identify the job satisfaction factors. These factors were then regressed against two important other variables: job-related stress and intention to leave. The findings isolated main determinants of job satisfaction, which was found to be mainly “hygiene issues” as proposed by Herzberg, which can minimise dissatisfaction. Monetary compensation was isolated to be the main contributor towards job-related stress amongst accountants.

When regressed with the variable “intention to leave”, accountants in general always had the intention to leave their profession, particularly after their third year on articleship. These accountants mainly used their experience and qualification as stepping-stones to get “better” jobs in the commercial or private sector.

These findings, to a certain extent have implications for the accounting firms and their Partners, individual audit staff and the profession as a whole. In dealing with the issue of job satisfaction, the firm’s Partner should provide avenues for the staff to develop good rapport among them; and the MIA should monitor the accounting firms’ practices to ensure the problems of job dissatisfaction are minimised. In handling job-related stress, management should regularly review the company’s compensation policies to benefit all staff. MIA should also have in place sets of guidelines on the compensation schemes to be followed by accounting firms.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>	
Abstract	i	
Acknowledgements	ii	
Editor's Profile	iii	
Editor's Profile	iv	
List of Abbreviations	iv	
List of Tables and Figure	v	
Table of Contents	vi	
Chapters:		
1	INTRODUCTION	
1.0	Introduction	1
1.1	Background Information and Research Problem	2
1.2	Objectives of the Study	2
2	LITERATURE REVIEW	
2.0	Introduction	4
2.1	Job Satisfaction	4
2.2	Job-related Stress	8
2.3	Intention to Leave	9
2.4	Conceptual Framework	12

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### *1.0 Introduction*

Job satisfaction has been an important part of human resources management since the Hawthorne Studies (Bassett, 1994; French, 1994). Examples include several observations performed by Brayfield and Crockett (1955), Vroom (1964) and Locke (1976) (all cited in Bassett, 1994:37), on the limited influence of satisfaction on work output. It continues to be a topic of considerable interest among researchers until today. Many researchers tried to examine the determinants of job satisfaction. Some relates the job satisfaction determinants to other issues namely motivation, commitment, performance and job-related stress.

Understanding the causal effect of job satisfaction on selected variables help management to strategise its activities and efforts when managing its staff and subordinates. The current study examines the relationship between job satisfaction with two important organisational variables, namely job-related stress and employee's intention to leave the organisation (i.e. brain drain amongst professional). Specifically, this research investigates the job satisfaction and intention to leave accounting firms by auditors and seeks the reason as to why many of them leave their profession.

It is proposed in this study that job dissatisfaction may result in job-related stress, hence cause one to leave one's profession for "greener pasture" in the commercial or private sector. This resulted in costs to be borne by firms. It is generally believed that low job satisfaction, indicated by disciplinary problems and absenteeism, will deteriorate the working conditions in an organisation.