Employing Ex-Offenders on Community Based Programmes: What Affects Their Decision to Stay or Leave?

Singapore After-Care Association

Abstract

Employment plays a pivotal role in the successful re-entry of ex-offenders, but the quality of employment is often overlooked. There is limited knowledge on how the quality of employment affects employment decisions. This study examines the relationship between quality of employment (job satisfaction, perceived organisational support, organisational commitment), turnover intention, and actual turnover among soon to be ex-offenders on community-based programmes (CBP). Using correlation methods, we found that quality of employment is associated with turnover intention, but not actual turnover. However, through follow-up interviews, participants also shared how CBP requirements and economic conditions affected their employment decisions. The findings from this study can be used as a consideration as to how to improve the quality of employment to increase job stability and commitment among offenders transiting into the community in Singapore.

Introduction

Ex-offenders are faced with a drastic change in circumstances and uncertainty which pose as recidivism risks upon release, especially in the first months (Wartna et al., 2011). One study found that, while the basic needs, such as shelter, food, and clothing were essential to successful re-entry, having access to employment and job training were amongst the most requested re-entry needs (Visher & Lattimore, 2007). Similarly, having access to employment was found to be an important factor in the re-entry process in Singapore (Chan & Boer, 2016).

It should not come as a surprise that employment plays a pivotal role in the re-entry of returning offenders. Social bonds, such as employment, had long been posited as turning points for offenders in the literature on desistance (Laub & Sampson, 1993). These social ties play an important role as they create interdependent systems of obligations and restraint that can result in significant costs for turning criminal inclinations into action. In the system involving attachment to the labour force, relations defined by a set of obligations and expectations would be better able to facilitate social control (Laub & Sampson, 1993). Economic theories also described how employment can be linked to crime. For example, criminal behaviour would be expected to decline when the potential costs for this behaviour, such as job loss and punishments, were higher than its potential returns (Becker, 1974). Criminological research had also indicated an inverse relationship between employment and crime, suggesting that ex-offenders who found and maintained employment after release were at a lower risk of re-offending (Laub & Sampson, 1993; Sampson & Laub, 2003). Indeed, a study by Benda et al. (2005) found that full-time employment lowered the hazard rate of recidivism by .37 among correctional boot-camp graduates during a five-year follow-up period. In addition, Uggen (2000) found that offenders aged 27 or older who participated in work release programmes upon release were less likely to reoffend compared to those who were not provided such

opportunities. These theories and findings re-emphasise the importance of employment and having access to employment opportunities after release.

To ease the transition from prison into the community and improve post-release employment outcomes, transitional programmes have been made available. However, the impact of these employment-focused programmes has been mixed. For example, the Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO) in the United States offered ex-offenders temporary, paid jobs and other services to improve their job prospects and reduce their likelihood of returning to prison. In an evaluation study, participants were randomly assigned to a treatment group or control group (Redcross et al., 2012). Participants in the treatment group were given access to temporary paid jobs, while those assigned to the control group were offered basic job search assistance. The three-year evaluation found that the programme greatly increased employment in the first year for the treatment group as jobs were provided in the initial stages. It also significantly reduced recidivism, especially for those who were more disadvantaged or at a higher risk of recidivism when they first enrolled. However, these effects faded over time and there were few discernible differences between the two groups over the three-year period. On the other hand, evaluation studies of other employment-focused re-entry programmes have found little or no effect on post-release employment or recidivism rates (Farabee et al., 2014; Turner & Petersilia, 1996; Visher et al., 2005). In particular, after the systemic review of eight randomised experimental evaluations of employment programmes, Visher et al. (2005) concluded that there was no significant reduction in subsequent criminal behaviour. Instead, the authors concluded that community employment programmes which took a holistic approach, including life skills, job readiness, social support, and ongoing support even after gainful employment, may be more beneficial. Other possible explanations for the lack of consistency in treatment effects of employment programmes were differences in the

implementation of each programme, or in the participants' opportunities to interact with other recently released offenders (Raphael, 2014).

As Visher et al. (2005) highlighted, community employment programmes that take a holistic approach may be beneficial. In Singapore, the rehabilitation framework has undergone a tremendous transformation over the past ten years, in which a "throughcare" approach has been adopted to prepare offenders for their return to the community (Soh, n.d.). To support the reintegration of an offender in a graduated manner, the Community Based Programmes (CBP) initiative was introduced. The purpose of CBP is to allow suitable offenders to serve the tail-end of their sentence in the community under supervision. In this study, participants from several work release, day release and home detention schemes will be considered. As part of the programme, clients in these schemes are required to be employed. Prior to their emplacement, a job coach will be attached to assist them in their job search.

Several explanations had been given for the lack of effectiveness of employment programmes. Yet, one plausible explanation that has received little attention but could potentially affect the re-entry outcomes is that the type of jobs offered may not be best suited to aid reintegration and reduce recidivism. As highlighted by Uggen (1999), while finding and maintaining employment played a part in reducing the risk of re-offending, literature had also shown that quality of employment was more strongly associated with criminal behaviour rather than the mere presence or absence of employment. In fact, this notion was shared in an earlier work by Laub and Sampson (1993), in which the authors emphasised that:

> Employment by itself also does not necessarily increase social control. It is employment coupled with job stability, commitment to work, and mutual ties binding workers and employers that should increase social control and, all else equal, lead to a reduction in criminal behaviour. (p. 304)

A number of studies also showed that the mere presence or absence of employment was not enough to deter ex-offenders from re-committing criminal acts (Ramakers et al., 2017; Tripodi et al., 2010). Nonetheless, for offenders who were re-incarcerated, those who obtained employment were in the community for a significantly longer period compared to those who did not obtain employment (Tripodi et al., 2010). Regardless, literature has implied that the protective factor of employment may be conditional on working in certain types of employment, in particular high-quality employment.

In the study by Uggen (1999), it was found that high-quality jobs reduced the likelihood of re-offending among a sample of released high-risk offenders. Yet, released offenders were often assigned to low-wage transitional jobs (Raphael, 2014; Uggen, 1999). This also raised the issue of whether the assignment of ex-offenders to temporary low-wage menial jobs would help to reduce recidivism, suggesting the need for more legitimate opportunities (Cook et al., 2015). A recent study further found that transitioning from not working to working in a low-quality job could actually be criminogenic (Jaynes, 2020). As such, caution should be exercised to avoid the assumption that employment is inversely related to offending and that work is always a protective factor.

Recognising that ex-offenders who maintain employment may potentially have a lower risk of re-offending (Laub & Sampson, 1993), it may be beneficial to understand what are the reasons that make an ex-offender stay in a job. Despite its importance, there is little published information about what contributes to employment decisions of ex-offenders in Singapore. As job stability is also an important component to reduce criminal behaviour, this study will be using turnover intention and actual turnover as a measure. In addition, literature has shown that it is the quality of employment that may reduce the risk of re-offending (Laub & Sampson, 1993; Ramakers et al., 2017; Uggen, 1999). Therefore, job-related variables which may affect

the quality of employment will also be measured. Hence, the relationship between these job-related variables and turnover intention and actual turnover will be explored in this study.

While the term "job quality" is used, the instrument used essentially measures ex-offenders' overall job satisfaction (Jaynes, 2020; Uggen, 1999). Jaynes (2020) also discussed the advantages of using subjective measures to measure job quality. Some advantages include being able to account for the case whereby two individuals may appraise the same job differently, to recognise possible differences in the rewards people seek to obtain from their work, and allow for changes in relative importance of various job characteristics across time. Research has shown a link between job satisfaction and desistance from crime. For example, job satisfaction was significantly related to increased time to re-arrest and recidivism (Benda et al., 2005; Niebuhr & Orrick, 2018). It had been found that job satisfaction was one of the deciding factors regarding a person's intention to leave (Mobley, 1977). For example, in using job satisfaction to examine employee deviance, it was shown that job satisfaction was a significant predictor or that it reduced employee deviance (Huiras et al., 2000). Similarly, Aydogdu and Asikgil (2011) found a significant negative relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention, indicating a higher job satisfaction score would correlate to lower turnover intention. In a meta-analysis by Griffeth et al. (2000), the authors also found job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and quit intentions to predict actual turnover. These findings suggest a consensus about the negative relationship between job satisfaction and turnover. Therefore, this study predicts a negative relationship between job satisfaction and turnover among ex-offenders under CBP.

Hypothesis 1a: There is an inverse relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention.

Hypothesis 1b: There is an inverse relationship between job satisfaction and actual turnover.

Job satisfaction is one of the variables that define the quality of employment for an individual. Other than job satisfaction, industrial and organizational studies have studied other job-related variables that could affect an individual's intention to stay in the same job or organization. One factor commonly used was perceived organisational support (POS). According to organisational support theory, employees who perceive more support from the organisation are inclined to have more positive attitudes towards the organisation (Eiesnberger et al, 1986). High levels of POS are believed to signal the availability of aid when needed and strong feelings of classification with the organisation (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Indeed, POS was found to be negatively correlated with turnover intention and actual turnover (Allen et al., 2003; Perryer et al, 2010). In fact, Pettryer et al. (2010) also found that employees with low organisational commitment, but high levels of POS, were less likely to leave the organisation. As such, it is expected that high POS will encourage a desire to stay with the organisation (i.e. low turnover).

Hypothesis 2a: There is an inverse relationship between POS and turnover intention.

Hypothesis 2b: There is an inverse relationship between POS and actual turnover.

Another factor widely studied is organisational commitment. As defined by Mowday et al. (1979), organisational commitment refers to the strength of an employee's identification with and involvement in an organisation. It can be represented by three factors: (1) a strong belief to fully accept the organisation's goals and values, (2) willingness to put in considerable effort on behalf of the organisation, and (3) determination to remain a member of the organisation. As such, committed employees would have a desire to stay with their organisation and show less motivation to change jobs (Ghosh et al., 2013). In turn, low organisational commitment has been found to increase turnover intention and actual turnover (Griffeth et al., 2000; Perryer et al., 2010). Therefore, a negative relationship is expected between organisational commitment and turnover in this study.

Hypothesis 3a: There is an inverse relationship between organisational commitment and turnover intention.

Hypothesis 3b: There is an inverse relationship between organisational commitment and actual turnover.

In addition, personality characteristics have also been associated with an individual's turnover intention and actual turnover (Timmerman, 2006; Zimmerman, 2008). Personality variables may influence turnover in different ways. For example, the perception of the work environment may be influenced by trait affectivity, leading people to believe that a job has positive or negative qualities that cannot be found in other jobs (Timmerman, 2006). In the study, Timmerman (2006) found that only Extraversion and Openness to Experience were significantly correlated to turnover. However, these results were inconsistent with an earlier meta-analysis by Salgado (2002; as cited in Timmerman, 2006). On the other hand, Zimmerman (2008) found that Emotional Stability and Conscientiousness had moderate effects on intentions to quit, while Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Emotional Stability had moderate effects on actual turnover. While these studies had yielded some insights on how personality traits may influence turnover intentions and actual turnover, the literature on this topic is inconsistent and may not be extensive enough to predict the relationship between personality and turnover in this study. Although this study is not aimed at modifying personality, we hope that it can shed light on whether it is associated with job-related conditions and turnover. Subsequently, it may be of help when considering if a job is suitable for a client on CBP.

Finally, the relationship between turnover intention and actual turnover will be explored. Turnover intention is defined as an individual's attitude to withdraw from the job or organisation, while actual turnover refers to the actual separation from the organisation (Aydogdu & Asikgil, 2011). Attitude theory posits that intent is the best predictor of behaviour

(Cohen et al., 2016). For instance, Tett and Meyer (1993) found that turnover intentions mediated attitudinal linkages with actual turnover. Similarly, Harrison et al. (2006) also concluded that job attitudes, such as turnover intentions, reliably predict job behaviours, such as quitting (as cited in Cohen et al., 2016). As such, turnover intention is expected to have a positive relationship with actual turnover behaviour.

Hypothesis 4: There is a positive relationship between turnover intention and actual turnover.

In the midst of this research, however, the Covid-19 pandemic broke out. The economic and social shock presented during this pandemic is likely to reshape the perceptions of individuals about work, thus resulting in shifts in decisions and behaviours (Kramer & Kramer, 2020). In fact, it was found that financial and economic crisis have an impact on turnover intention (Wynen & Op de Beeck, 2014). In the study, the authors found that the effect of pay, gender, age and training on turnover intention differed between the period before and after a crisis. In particular, pay became more important, while gender, age, and training effects disappeared. While it was not possible to re-assess all the job-related variables and its effects on turnover intentions and actual turnover due to time constraints, this research has tried to account for the possible impact of the pandemic on current and future employment decisions of participants during the follow-up interview.

With increased emphasis on extending rehabilitation efforts to aftercare support for ex-offenders in Singapore, more offenders have also been placed on CBP to complete the tail-end of their sentence while employed in the community. Nonetheless, literature has underlined the importance of job quality rather than the mere presence or absence of a job. Hence, it would be beneficial to know what are the qualities that may help ex-offenders sustain in their job, even after the end of their programme. This study therefore serves the following purposes. First, the findings will allow us to better understand which aspects of job quality may potentially

contribute to turnover intention and actual turnover among ex-offenders. Second, it may serve as a feedback channel on whether being placed on the CBP has helped them in their employment. Through this, we hope that more can be understood on what may increase job quality, and help ex-offenders stay in long-term employment.

Methods

1. Participants

The participants for this study are soon to be ex-offenders who were employed at the time of their participation. They were recruited via their job coach or caseworker. The selection criterion were males who were in community-based programmes. To allow a better reflection of their work experiences, participants needed to be employed at the time of recruitment. The final sample consists of 48 participants, ranging in age from 19 to 66 years old.

At the time of involvement, the mean duration for participants in their job was 66.96 days. On average, they spent 5.6 days working in a week. In this sample, 39.6% were assigned to the job (n = 19), while 60.4% took up the job voluntarily (n = 29); 64.6% worked up to 8 hours a day (n = 31), and 35.4% worked more than 8 hours (n = 17); 25% had prior experience in their current employment (n = 12), while 75% had no prior experience (n = 36); 45.8% indicated their intention to stay in the current job after the end of their CBP (n = 22), and 54.2% did not have the intention to stay in the current job (n = 26). When asked to rate their competency at their job, a mean rating of 3.90 (out of 5) was given. On how long they expect to be in their current job, 29.2% indicated less than six months (n = 14), 29.2% indicated between 6-12 months (n = 14), 16.7% indicated between 1-2 years (n = 8), 12.5% indicated between 2-3 years (n = 6), 8.3% indicated more than 3 years (n = 4), and 4.2% indicated until the end of their CBP (n = 2). Table 1 summarises the characteristics of the final sample.

Table 1

Demographic information

	No. of participants
Race	
Chinese	25
Malay	18
Indian	3
Others	2
Age	
20 years old and below	2
21 – 30 years old	9
31 – 40 years old	9
41 – 50 years old	17
51 – 60 years old	9
Above 60 years old	2
Education level	
Primary	7
Secondary	22
ITE	4
Polytechnic	7
University	8
Marital status	
Single	21
Married	13
Divorced	13
Separated	1
Salary	
Below $500	3
$501-$1000	2
$1001-$1500	21
$1501-$2000	12
$2001-$2500	10
Programme type	
WRS – P	6
DRS	2
LT2 – WRS	7
RS	21
HD	12

The quantitative data of eight participants were excluded from the final analysis due to straightlining. Straightlining refers to giving identical (or nearly identical) responses to a series of questions that had the same answer choices arranged in a grid format, and it may reduce the

response quality (Schonlau & Toepoel, 2015). Demographic details of the remaining 40 participants will be presented in the results section below.

For the follow-up interview, three participants were uncontactable, and one participant did not want to take part in the interview. Thus, the final sample for the follow-up interview consisted of 44 participants.

2. Data collection and Procedures

Data was collected over two time periods. At the first time point (Time 1), information regarding the research was distributed to all individuals who matched the selection criterion through the job coaches and caseworkers. Interested participants were given a link to complete the questionnaire online. Participants were able to complete the questionnaire in person if they were more comfortable with that arrangement. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before they proceeded with the questionnaire. They were informed of the research purpose, the intended use of information, safeguards to ensure participants' privacy and confidentiality, as well as available options to withdraw from the study.

A follow-up interview was completed after three months (Time 2) from Time 1. During the follow-up, participants were interviewed individually regarding their employment decisions. Prior to all interviews, they were informed that they could choose not to answer, or stop the interview at any time. Upon consent, the interviews were audio-recorded and were solely used for the purpose of analysis for this research. All interviews were conducted over the phone, lasting 25-40 minutes on average. All interview recordings and transcripts were stored securely in a computer with password protection.

3. Instruments

The key variables in this study were measured by a battery of self-reporting questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. The first part of the questionnaire included demographic characteristics, and the rest of the questionnaire assessed the key variables used

in this study. A copy of the questionnaire and interview questions can be found in Appendix A and B respectively.

3.1 Demographic questionnaire

The demographic questionnaire was used to obtain basic information from the respondents. There were two parts in this section. The first part asked for their personal information such as race, age, level of education, and marital status. The second part asked for information regarding their employment including their current employment, past work experiences, and their income level. It also asked for the details of their CBP, whether they had the intention to stay in their current employment after completion of CBP, and, if so, the duration they intended to stay in their current employment.

3.2 Personality

The 50-item International Personality Item Pool (IPIP) is a representation of Goldberg (1992) markers for the Big-Five factor structure. It consists of 10 items for each of the Big-Five personality factors: (1) Extraversion which focuses on where individuals drew their energy from and their interaction with others (e.g. "I am the life of the party"), (2) Agreeableness reflects the general concern for others and how well people get along with others (e.g. "I sympathize with others' feelings"), (3) Conscientiousness describes the tendency to control impulses and act in socially desirable ways (e.g. "I pay attention to details"), (4) Emotional Stability describes the tendency to experience negative emotions (e.g. "I get irritated easily"), and (5) Intellect/Imagination which reflects the depth and complexity of an individual's mental life and experiences (e.g. I am quick to understand things). The IPIP items were administered on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (very inaccurate) to 5 (very accurate), as in the original instrument. The total score for each personality factor was calculated by averaging the responses on the 10 items, with a higher score indicating greater tendency to exhibit the personality trait.

3.3 Perceived organisational support

The short version of the Survey of Perceived Organisational Support (SPOS; Eisenberger et al., 1986) was used to measure the amount of support respondents perceive they received from their respective organisations. Participants responded to 16 items on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree) to indicate their agreement with each item. 9 items were positively worded while 7 were worded negatively. Sample items included "My organisation strongly considers my goals and values" and "My organisation would ignore any complaint from me". A total score was calculated by averaging the responses on all items, with a higher score indicating more perceived support from their organisation. High internal consistency was reported for the sample ($\alpha = .94$).

3.4 Job Satisfaction

The Job Satisfaction Scale (JSS; Spector, 1985) was used to measure the level of job satisfaction of respondents. It is made up of 36 items, with nine facets to assess the attitudes towards and aspects of their job. The nine facets were pay (e.g. "I feel I am being paid a fair amount for the work I do"), promotion (e.g. "There is really too little chance for promotion on my job"), supervision (e.g. "My supervisor is quite competent in doing his/her job"), fringe benefits (e.g. "I am not satisfied with the benefits I receive"), contingent rewards (e.g. "When I do a good job, I receive the recognition for it that I should receive"), operating procedures (e.g. "Many of our rules and procedures make doing a good job difficult"), co-workers (e.g. "I like the people I work with"), nature of work (e.g. "I sometimes feel my job is meaningless"), and communication (e.g. "Communications seem good within this organisation"). Respondents were asked to rate each statement on a 6-point Likert scale (1 = disagree very much to 6 = agree very much). A total score for each facet was calculated by averaging the responses across the 4 items, while a total score was obtained by averaging the responses across all items.

3.5 Organisational commitment

The Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ; Mowday et al., 1979) was used to measure the level of organisational commitment. It consists of 15 items, with 9 positively worded statements and 6 negatively worded statements. Sample items from the scale included "I am proud to tell others that I am part of this organisation" and "I feel very little loyalty to this organisation". Each statement was rated on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree). The total score was computed by averaging the responses to all items.

3.6 Turnover

Turnover intention was measured from three items adapted from the Michigan Organizational Assessment Questionnaire (MOAQ; Cammann et al., 1979). Each statement was measured on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree). A sample item is "I will probably look for a new job in the next year". The score was computed by averaging the responses across the 3 items. An additional question, "Have you seriously considered quitting your current job?", was added to find out whether participants had serious thoughts on changing their job. It used a dichotomous answer format – with 1 = no or 2 = yes.

Actual turnover was measured during Time 2 by asking the participants whether they were still employed in the same job or organisation.

3.7 Interview

A semi-structured interview guide was used to understand the employment decisions of participants. This allowed participants to highlight issues that might not be addressed in the interview schedule. They could also be questioned further for more information and clarifications as needed. To account for the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on their employment decisions, the interview guide was modified to include questions which covered the pandemic as a possible factor for their decisions.

4. Data analysis

Data collected from the questionnaires were analysed using correlational methods. It was used to test the relationship between (a) the job-related factors and turnover intention, (b) the relationship between personality traits and job-related variables, and (c) the relationship between personality traits and turnover. Chi-square test was used to identify any differences between turnover intention and actual turnover.

Interview data collected was examined using thematic analysis to allow for themes to emerge and to filter for information with relevance to the research questions. Patterns that emerged were identified to form the main themes. Subsequently, the themes were grouped according to the specific areas that affected their decisions.

Results

1. Demographic information

The sample size used in this section consisted of 40 participants as data from eight participants were excluded due to straightlining. The ages of the participants ranged from 26 to 66 years old. The mean duration in their current job was 72.25 days. The self-rating on the competency at work had a mean of 3.88 (out of 5). On average, they spent 5.6 days working in a week. In this sample, 32.5% were assigned to the job (n = 13), while 67.5% took up the job voluntarily (n = 27); 62.5% worked up to 8 hours a day (n = 25), and 37.5% worked more than 8 hours (n = 15); 25% had prior experience in their current employment (n = 10), while 75% had no prior experience (n = 30); 45% indicated their intention to stay in the current job after the end of their CBP (n = 18), and 55% did not have the intention to stay in the current job (n = 22). On how long they expect themselves to be in their current job, 27.5% indicated less than six months (n = 11), 30% indicated between 6-12 months (n = 12), 17.5% indicated between 1-2 years (n = 7), 12.5% indicated between 2-3 years (n = 5), 10% indicated more than 3 years (n = 4), and 2.5% indicated until the end of their CBP (n = 1). The characteristics of this sample is summarised in Table 2.

Table 2

Demographic information

	No. of participants
Race	
Chinese	23
Malay	12
Indian	3
Others	2
Age	
21 – 30 years old	7
31 – 40 years old	8
41 – 50 years old	16
51 – 60 years old	7
61 – 66 years old	2

Table 2 (continued)

	No. of participants
Education level	
Primary	6
Secondary	18
ITE	3
Polytechnic	6
University	7
Marital status	
Single	16
Married	12
Divorced	12
Salary	
Below $500	2
$1001-$1500	18
$1501-$2000	12
$2001-$2500	8
Programme type	
WRS – P	6
DRS	1
LT2 – WRS	6
RS	16
HD	11

2. Relationship between job-related variables, personality and turnover

The means and standard deviation for all the instruments used are shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Mean Scores and Standard Deviation for Scales Used

	Mean	SD
Job Satisfaction	3.95	0.77
Pay	3.69	0.92
Promotion	3.30	1.05
Supervision	4.71	0.91
Benefits	3.42	0.99
Rewards	3.90	1.09
Operations	3.93	0.74
Colleagues	4.55	0.85
Nature of work	4.09	1.27

(continued)

Table 3 (continued)

	Mean	SD
Job Satisfaction		
Communication	3.99	1.10
Perceived organisational support	4.61	1.13
Organisational commitment	4.39	1.12
IPIP		
Extraversion	2.97	0.55
Agreeableness	3.79	0.52
Conscientiousness	3.88	0.51
Emotional Stability	3.58	0.66
Intellect/Imagination	3.49	0.61
Turnover intention	3.79	1.89

In terms of overall job satisfaction, participants leaned towards being satisfied. While the majority of subscales tended to be neutral, the subscales that stood out were supervision, colleagues, and nature of work which scored above 4. This could imply that satisfaction might be derived from these three aspects of employment. Overall, participants also leaned towards feeling supported by and being committed to their organisation.

In terms of personality traits, no participants scored above 4 for Extraversion. 40% of participants scored above 4 for Agreeableness and Conscientiousness, 25% for Emotional Stability, and 22.5% for Intellect/Imagination.

On the additional question, "Have you seriously considered quitting your current job?" as a measure of turnover intention, 47.5% indicated yes (n = 19), and 52.5% indicated no (n = 21). This is in line with the mean score on the scale of turnover intention, where participants generally indicated a neutral stance but leaned towards a lower tendency to leave the organisation. At the end of the three-month follow-up, 80% were still employed in the same job (n = 32), while 20% were no longer with their previous organisation (n = 8).

Table 4

Correlation Between Variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
1. JSS (Total)	-																	
2. JSS (Pay)	.82**	-																
3. JSS (Promotion)	.80**	.62**	-															
4. JSS (Supervision)	.78**	.49**	.53**	-														
5. JSS (Benefits)	.72**	.59**	.55**	.46**	-													
6. JSS (Rewards)	.92**	.78**	.69**	.75**	.69**	-												
7. JSS (Operations)	.56**	.43**	.50**	.37*	.26	.41**	-											
8. JSS (Colleagues)	.65**	.37*	.32*	.65**	.32*	.56**	.40**	-										
9. JSS (Nature of work)	.80**	.64**	.62**	.55**	.53**	.66**	.34*	.50**	-									
10. JSS (Communication)	.87**	.73**	.68**	.68**	.56**	.83**	.37*	.53**	.61**	-								
11. POS	.75**	.62**	.57**	.57**	.60**	.80**	.43**	.47**	.53**	.64**	-							
12. OC	.87**	.77**	.62**	.62**	.69**	.80**	.50**	.56**	.71**	.72**	.70**	-						
13. Extraversion	.06	-.12	.13	.25	-.18	.07	.06	.18	.03	.07	-.11	.01	-					
14. Agreeableness	.05	.10	-.18	.23	-.17	.13	.15	.16	-.02	.04	.23	.08	.17	-				
15. Conscientiousness	.14	.09	-.02	.29	.20	.06	.28	.08	-.04	.13	.10	.07	-.11	.31*	-			
16. Emotional Stability	.11	-.06	.03	.31*	-.01	.05	.08	.19	.06	.15	-.05	-.06	.26	.09	.52**	-		
17. Intellect/Imagination	.02	-.04	-.04	.07	.03	.00	.21	.11	-.12	.00	.11	.15	.14	.33*	.32*	.04	-	
18. TI	-.73**	-.63**	-.57**	-.55**	-.64**	-.68**	-.36*	-.52**	-.61**	-.52**	-.54**	-.81**	.06	.10	-.06	.07	-.04	-
19. TI (additional)	-.54**	-.46**	-.37*	-.44**	-.55**	-.54**	-.12	-.54**	-.40*	-.36*	-.49**	-.64**	-.10	-.14	-.12	-.08	-.03	.74**
20. AT	-.28	-.27	-.18	-.356	-.01	-.32*	-.02	-.44**	-.14	-.26	-.21	-.19	.02	-.05	.02	.08	.19	.34*

Note. TI refers to turnover intention, TI (additional) refers to the added question "Have you seriously considered quitting your current job?", AT refers to actual turnover.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$

To test the relationship between job-related variables affecting job quality, personality, and turnover, the Pearson correlation was conducted. Statistical values of the correlations are shown in Table 4.

A significant positive correlation was found between overall job satisfaction, subscales of job satisfaction, perceived organisational support, and organisational commitment (all ps < .01). This indicates that as job satisfaction increases, the level of perceived organisation support and organisational commitment also increases. In other words, if participants are more satisfied, they feel more supported and committed to the organisation; or if they feel more supported by the organisation, they are more satisfied and committed; or if they feel more committed to the organisation, they feel more satisfied and supported.

There is a significant inverse correlation between overall job satisfaction, and its subscales, with turnover intention (all ps < .05), except between the operations subscale and additional question on turnover intention ($r(38) = -.12$, $p = .476$). Despite that, the operations subscale still had a significant negative relationship with the MOAQ turnover intention scale ($r(38) = -.36$, $p = .023$). This indicates that as job satisfaction increases, turnover intention decreases. No significant correlation was found between overall job satisfaction and actual turnover ($r(38) = -.28$, $p = .0.80$). However, a closer look at the subscales reveals a significant, negative correlation between rewards ($r(38) = -.32$, $p = .047$) and colleagues ($r(38) = -.44$, $p = .004$) with actual turnover. This means, as participants are less satisfied with the rewards and colleagues in their job, they may have a higher tendency to quit.

A significant inverse correlation was found between perceived organisational support and turnover intention scale ($r(38) = -.54$, $p < .001$) and the additional question ($r(38) = -.49$, $p = .001$), indicating that as participants feel less supported by their organisation, their turnover intention increases. However, there was no significant relationship between perceived organisational support and actual turnover ($r(38) = -.21$, $p = .199$).

A significant inverse correlation was also found between organisational commitment and turnover intention scale ($r(38) = -.81$, $p < .001$) and the additional question ($r(38) = -.64$, $p < .001$). This indicates that those who feel less committed to the organisation may have a higher turnover intention. Similarly, there was no significant relationship between organisational commitment and actual turnover ($r(38) = -.19$, $p = .249$).

No significant correlation was found between personality and other job-related variables (i.e. job satisfaction, perceived organisational support, and organisational commitment; all $ps > .05$), except for a positive correlation between the supervision subscale of job satisfaction and emotional stability ($r(38) = .07$, $p = .313$). This implies that, as participants have a lower tendency to experience negative emotions, they are more likely to be satisfied with their supervisor. There is also no significant correlation between personality factors and turnover intention or actual turnover (all $ps > .05$). The general lack of relationship indicates that the five personality factors did not predict how participants assessed their job or organisation, and whether they had turnover intention or actually left their jobs.

A positive correlation was found between the MOAQ turnover intention scale and the additional question on turnover intention ($r(38) = -.74$, $p < .001$), thereby indicating that those who scored higher on the scale also indicated they had seriously thought of quitting their job. A chi-square test of independence was performed to examine the relation between the additional dichotomous question on turnover intention and actual turnover. The relation between these two variables was not significant, $X^2 (1, N = 40) = 3.03$, $p = .082$. This means, whether they had serious thoughts about leaving their job or not, they were equally likely to end up leaving. However, a positive correlation was also found between the MOAQ turnover intention scale and actual turnover ($r(38) = -.34$, $p = .034$). Thus, those with more thoughts of leaving may have a higher tendency to end up leaving the company. Such results may seem contradictory and require further interpretation and investigation in future.

Findings & Analysis

The analysis in this section was based on the responses of 44 participants. The interview data during Time 2 was used to better understand the reasons that make participants stay or leave their job. It may help to re-emphasise some factors affecting job quality which were analysed earlier or add on other factors that may be overlooked by quantitative methods.

1. The job

One major factor that influenced participants' decision to stay or leave their job was the job itself. Specifically, 11 participants mentioned enjoying the responsibilities that their job entailed. While there were two participants who stated that they enjoyed what they were doing as *the job is not tough* (R30) or that *the requirements and expectations are not very high* (R30), other participants also highlighted they enjoyed what they were doing as their job was either meaningful or challenging.

> *this is a job that I find quite meaningful. The reason why I choose to work here rather than outside is because I think this is more rewarding, not in monetary terms… I think that I'm giving back to the society in some way.*
>
> *- R38 -*

> *[The job] is fast, but it's challenging at the same time, and I like it.*
>
> *- R22 -*

Participants also enjoyed being able to experience new things due to their job.

> *The freedom, I can move around, don't need to restrict in one place. Normal people won't have chance to experience. So, I get to see the different kinds of law firms, different lawyers, all the different officers. Quite interesting.*
>
> *- R27 -*

Six participants also shared how their interest in the area of work spurred them to continue working in the same job. They either had interest in the work before or while they were incarcerated, or eventually developed an interest after they tried it out. As such, they expressed their satisfaction with the job and would look forward to going to work every day.

On the contrary, 8 participants highlighted the lack of interest in the industry that they were employed in, and would prefer to go back to doing something they enjoyed or were good at. This resulted in their intention to leave their job.

> *this is not a job I want to work in. This is like an interim because my qualifications and my background is not in this line, so I don't want to stay on in this line anymore.*
>
> - R01 -

> *[This job] is just not my thing, I don't feel the passion towards it.*
>
> - R15 -

Finally, being overqualified for a job, in terms of academic qualifications, is another reason mentioned by 2 participants as to why they want to leave their job.

2. The environment

Another factor which affected the participants' decisions to stay or leave their current job was the work environment. Specifically, 11 participants cited having supportive and helpful colleagues as a reason. They felt encouraged and positive about being able to depend on their colleagues should they need any help.

> *The team I'm leaning on is quite nice. Like they're willing to teach a new person, some more I'm not young, I'm already 40, a lot of things I don't know.*
>
> - R27 -

> *I think everything goes well here, in the sense the human relationship between me people around here is okay, everything is fine. Also, we have some bonding among us.*
>
> - R38 -

> *Because we are all helping each other. Like sometimes some colleagues cannot finish then we will go and help them.*
>
> - R46 -

On top of supportive colleagues, 10 participants also voiced the importance of having a good supervisor or management. Other than being able to freely discuss any issues with their

supervisor, it also helped when they were understanding about the requirements participants had to fulfil while on CBP. As a result, this kept morale high and further encouraged the participants to stay in their job.

> *the supervisors there look after us quite well… if there's anything he will fight for us.*

> - R41 -

> *I'm working for a very nice manager. He is part of the reason why I'm staying also. He is quite supportive in the sense that he understands I'm on this programme. There are times when I have to go for urine test, he will just give me extra hours…so that I can go fulfil the urine requirement.*

> - R06 -

On the contrary, poor management may lead to their departure from the job.

> *the company I left was a family-run business, so they are not very systematic and procedural. Sometimes they make errors, they will push the blame on others.*

> - R33 -

Ultimately, having a positive work environment or culture which is suitable for their rehabilitation is important. The absence of negative influences, particularly individuals with a drug or criminal history, can encourage participants to stay in their job.

> *It's because of the environment. The people around are all positive people…As I progress in my programme, and as I went to various jobs before, there are always negative influences there. But in this particular job, there are no negative people there. Negative as in taking drugs or crime or whatever it is. If there are negative people coming in, that's one [reason to leave]*

> - R03 -

On the other hand, when negative influences were present in their work environment, they were worried that it might jeopardise their rehabilitation. As a result, this led to their intention to leave.

> *One thing about this job is there are a lot of people under programme also. I scared that I might relapse also because sometimes they talk about drugs, it triggers me also.*

> - R25 -

Actually it's very stressful. It's not because of the work that is stressful; it's the environment that makes it stressful. I think my ex-colleagues have some attitude problem…they are very loud people, use a lot of bad words. Actually I have no problem with the job, but the environment makes it so stressful, I don't want to jeopardise my rehab.

- R39 -

3. Pay and job prospects

Another issue raised by the participants regarding their employment was the pay. Specifically, 5 participants mentioned having a pay that was *good enough* (R48) or *not bad* (R03). However, there was one participant who had a major pay cut compared to his previous employment prior to incarceration, but did not mind staying as *there is at least an income* (R04).

Drawing an insufficient salary was a leading factor that caused participants to have the intention to leave their job, with 14 participants citing it as a reason.

The pay, that is the only reason. Because I can't live on this kind of pay. After CPF deduction, how much is left, cannot even save. If something was to crop up, I do not know where to get the money.

- R34 -

The salary is really not that high. One of the reasons I want to change work is also because of the salary. The work is all manageable.

- R09 -

These participants felt that their current pay was too low and would not be sustainable in the long run. In addition, they would not be able to manage if there was an emergency. As such, this was the most cited reason when asked about what would change their decision to either continue staying (for those who intended to leave) or to leave the job (for those who intended to stay).

If they ask me to stay, I will ask for higher pay. If cannot give, then I will have to look for another company

- R17 -

The only reason that will make me leave here to pursue other job outside is when my savings run out and I really need to find a job that can sustain me.

Because while working here, it's eating into my savings actually. For the time being, I still have my savings to support, so I will still continue to work here. In time to come, if my savings run out and asking me to depend on the salary which I'm drawing now, it's definitely insufficient.

<div align="right">- R38 -</div>

Better job opportunities or prospects in their current company or elsewhere were often cited in terms of getting a higher salary.

Of course, the pay, it's the most important. If you want a person to stay, it's also because of the pay. If there is a higher pay elsewhere, of course you will leave.

<div align="right">- R26 -</div>

I feel there's no progression in the sense that there's no pay increment and you can't upgrade yourself.

<div align="right">- R02 -</div>

If, let's say, I can find a better prospect outside, I probably will change the job, like a higher paying job, job with better career progression.

<div align="right">- R42 -</div>

If they didn't offer me the career path…the thought of quitting will be there because the finances is really very far off from what I earned before

<div align="right">- R29 -</div>

4. The Community-Based Programme

While the factors stated above were in relation to the job, environmental factors were also highlighted by the participants. In particular, 12 participants specifically mentioned that being on the programme affected their job decisions. They felt stuck in the job due to the programme, and did not have a choice as they were still on tagging. As summarised by R02, these participants were waiting for their programme to be over before they started looking for better opportunities.

Because I'm stuck with my programme, so I just take whatever it is for the time-being. Once I finish my programme, I will definitely get a better job.

<div align="right">- R02 -</div>

To delve deeper into the role of the programme, all participants were further probed on the ways it had affected their employment decisions. 23 participants stated that being in the programme had influenced their decision about taking up the job or the types of job which they chose in the initial stages. Of these, 17 participants mentioned they just took any job that was offered as being employed was a key programme requirement.

> *Frankly speaking, if you're on this programme, you need to work…So whatever job that they give, or whatever job that you can get or you managed to get, you have to do it. If you can't get the job that you want, whatever job that is given or whatever job that you can get, you still have to work. There's no saying no. It's either that or you go back to prison. So, if you ask me whether my programme plays a part in my job, of course it does.*

<div align="right">- R03 -</div>

One issue highlighted by 6 participants was their level of qualification and the type of jobs which were available to them. These participants held a diploma or higher and were considered Professionals, Managers, Executives and Technicians (PMETs). However, the jobs suggested by the job matching agency were often general worker positions with little job prospects, as there were generally no vacancies for PMETs. As such, the salary on offer for the available jobs were low and participants would rather look for their own job. Yet, it was not easy looking for a job themselves as they were still on tagging, and any prospective employer would have to complete paperwork to register themselves with SCORE (now YRSG). As a result, participants would resort to seeking help from friends whose company would be willing to complete the process.

The issue of low pay and lack of job prospects or progression was also mentioned by three participants. For example, R26 said that *the jobs recommended are lousy jobs, and the pay is too low, these people won't work there for long*. Therefore, instead of taking up the job that was recommended, he decided to ask his friend to hire him as the salary offered was higher. Other than that, 5 participants mentioned other restrictions such as curfew timings and security

clearance due to the programme and how it affected the type of employment they were able to take up.

On the subject of whether the programme had affected their decision to stay or leave the job, 22 participants said it had affected them. Similarly, one reason cited by 12 participants was the restrictions or requirements they had to fulfil as they were still on the programme.

> *Honestly, it's because of tagging, so it's not very easy to look for job. I would find it a hassle to look for a job when on tagging, and a lot of companies do not want to liaise with the agency and do the paperwork, so it's very difficult to find a job, that's why I'm still with this company.*

> *- R36 -*

> *at this particular moment, with tagging, I was not allowed to find my own job without declaring that I'm on tagging.*

> *- R04 -*

> *I guess you don't ask for too much when you're on programme. The thought of you going to an interview and telling them you're wearing a tag is very discouraging. I guess the main reason is still because I'm under programme.*

> *- R15 -*

4 participants mentioned the fear of going back to prison, and 4 participants said they were simply fulfilling programme requirements.

> *No matter how, just have to endure because programme come first. Just endure, better than going back (to prison).*

> *- R41 -*

> *Because I'm still under tagging, so I need a job to complete my tagging*

> *- R35 -*

Despite that, 6 participants mentioned how the programme had impacted them in positive ways. They stated how it provided them with new opportunities, and how programme requirements had prevented them from job hopping and kept them motivated at work.

5. Covid-19 pandemic

Another factor raised by 10 participants for staying in their current job was the Covid-19 pandemic. While these participants still had the intention to leave their job, they decided to delay the job switching process. The weak economy and its knock-on effect on the job market were two reasons for this decision.

> *For me, if still pandemic, for what I want to go interview at other companies, they cannot accept me to go work because of the pandemic, I have to stay at my working place. It's better that I stay, until the pandemic is over then can change. Better than no work.*
>
> - R17 -

> *I also know that companies are not hiring or some even lay off people, so I think now if anybody want to find a job, I think it's not going to be easy. That was also a reason why I stayed.*
>
> - R29 -

> *this age (economy) is very bad, I thought that I want to start finding my job because I need to try it out already, I can't wait until one month before I can start to see how market is like, and start doing my interviews already.*
>
> - R04 -

Generally, participants were worried about the availability of jobs and mentioned how companies may not be hiring, and might even be laying people off at this time. As a result, they decided to stay in their present employment. That said, in an isolated instance, instead of delaying the job change process, R04 decided to initiate the job search process earlier. This would allow him ample time until his programme is over to find a job and prepare for interview which would also take time.

4 participants also noted the fear of losing their job due to the current job market situation. They were thankful that they were still employed, and therefore decided to stay in the job for the time being.

A similar consensus was found when participants were asked about changes in their mindset on future employment due to the Covid-19 pandemic. They noted how it may be more

difficult to get jobs and options may be limited during this time. However, there were 3 participants who mentioned that the pandemic is temporary and things would be "back to normal" in time to come. Indeed, R42 shared that the pandemic may have a temporary effect on their employment. However, it is their criminal record which has a lasting effect.

> *I think short-term yes, because you can't really foresee what impact it has, but I guess it will affect us somehow. But if we are talking about long lasting effect, I think it's more of the ex-convict status, which I think will be harder to find a job. If you are to say "I'm a prisoner before", then more employers will be more wary of you.*
>
> - R42 -

The pandemic has also affected their mindset in positive ways. 7 participants mentioned that this pandemic was an eye-opening experience for them and allowed them to look for new opportunities. Instead of focusing on the negative aspects, they felt that there will always be an opportunity, but they just had to look harder for it.

As a result of the pandemic, 9 participants brought up the need for upskilling for future employability. Specifically, they mentioned how job trends and businesses are changing due to the pandemic, and stressed the need to be more self-reliant in future.

> *I always think about how the economy is changing a fair bit, and it's going to require very different skills, very different experiences. Being in the workforce myself, I have very limited experience with it, but nothing that's particularly extensive, so I do think about having to upgrade myself. I do worry about that.*
>
> - R20 -

> *It's always better to be self-reliant, don't depend on the job too much. To not rely on someone else for a source of income, pave your own way in terms of having a more stable and secure job. Stable or not depends on the individual, whether they want to work hard or not.*
>
> - R27 -

6. Other factors

There were also other minor factors which were mentioned by the participants. 2 participants stated that they were introduced to the job by their friend. Hence, it would not be

appropriate if they left the job after a few months. The issue of employment benefits was mentioned by 4 participants. Having good employment benefits, such as food or transport allowances, was another reason for staying in the job. Other benefits like having more annual leave or bonus could also change their intention to leave the job.

Discussion

In this study, we found that increases in the levels of job-related factors (i.e. job satisfaction, perceived organisational support, and organisational commitment), which make up job quality, were significantly related to a decrease in turnover intention. Hypothesis 1a, 2a, and 3a predicted that there will be an inverse relationship between job-related factors and turnover intention. Thus, these three hypotheses were supported.

With regards to actual turnover, analyses showed no significant relationship between all three job-related factors and actual turnover. However, on the job satisfaction subscales, significant, negative relationship was found between rewards and colleagues with actual turnover. Hypothesis 1b, 2b, and 3b predicted that there will be an inverse relationship between job-related factors and actual turnover. No significant relationship was observed except for the job satisfaction subscale of rewards and colleagues. Thus, Hypothesis 1b was partially supported, while Hypotheses 2b and 3b were not.

While personality factors were tested with other job-related factors, turnover intention, and actual turnover, no significant relationship was found in any of the analyses except between supervision of job satisfaction subscale and Emotional Stability. This may indicate that personality factors did not predict how individuals perceived the quality of their job, and whether they would stay or leave their job.

Lastly, Hypothesis 4 predicted that there will be a positive relationship between turnover intention and actual turnover. A significant positive correlation was found between turnover intention scale and actual turnover, but not with the additional question on turnover intention. As such, Hypothesis 4 was partially supported.

Through the follow-up interview, five major themes were identified regarding the reasons for choosing to stay or leave a job. First, the job in which participants were employed in played a part. The job scope and responsibilities, as well as having an interest in the area of

work played a part in wanting to stay on the job. This is congruent with the scores on the job satisfaction subscale, whereby nature of work was one of the aspects that participants derived satisfaction from. Conversely, the lack of interest in the industry or their work itself resulted in their intention to leave. The work environment, in terms of having supportive colleagues, good management or supervision, and a positive work culture was important in deciding whether they intend to stay in the job. Having a positive work environment was highlighted as key to their rehabilitation as well. Similarly, this is consistent with the job satisfaction scale whereby supervision and colleagues were the subscales with the highest scores. Next, the pay and job prospects were important in affecting intention to leave. Having a low salary was a leading factor linked to the intention to leave, and better opportunities were often sought after in terms of higher salary in the next job. Unlike other industrial and organisation studies on employee turnover, this study interviewed soon to be ex-offenders who were on a community-based programme. Indeed, being on a programme played a role in whether they continued in their job. Often, participants felt stuck in a job as they were still part of the programme, and were therefore trying to fulfil the requirements and only contemplated switching jobs upon programme completion. In fact, the programme also had an impact on the types of job they were employed in. The jobs that were available and offered to them were sometimes viewed as low-paying and of low quality. The fear of returning to prison, along with other restrictions and processes they had to go through also prevented them from changing jobs while on programme. Lastly, the Covid-19 pandemic also affected the employment decisions due to negative changes in the economy and job market. They were worried about the availability of jobs and the need for upskilling to prepare for future employment.

Job quality and turnover intention has been widely regarded as an antecedent to actual turnover behaviours. For instance, higher average job satisfaction and lower average turnover intention had been associated with a reduced likelihood of actual turnover (Garner & Hunter,

2014). However, a number of empirical studies have reached a different conclusion (e.g. Dollar & Broach, 2006; Jung, 2010). Contrary to what was predicted, job-related variables (i.e. job satisfaction, perceived organisational support, and organisational commitment) did not have a significant relationship with actual turnover. Similarly, while individuals had seriously considered quitting their job, it did not translate to actual behaviour.

One possible explanation for the lack of relationship between intended and actual turnover in this study is the nature of participants interviewed – (ex)offenders. The participants in past studies typically involved employees from public or private organisations (e.g. Cho & Lewis, 2012), and may not necessarily involve those who had been incarcerated or who were released on an employment-focused programme. Even for studies that focused on the employment of ex-offenders, it had focused on recidivism (Niebuhr & Orrick, 2018; Ramakers et al., 2017). This makes this particular group of participants a unique population as they would be serving the tail-end of their sentence in the community while having to fulfil the requirements of CBP. This is important as being on CBP was highlighted as a factor that prevented several participants from changing jobs. While they may have serious considerations about changing jobs, and may not necessarily be in high-quality employment, they continued to stay in the job due to restrictions imposed by the programme. One reason could be that they are required to declare to their prospective employer that they are on tagging, which may reduce their chances of getting the job. Another reason holding them back is the paperwork that the new employer has to process. For individuals who are employed and on CBP, employers have to send the work schedule to their job coach. They felt that prospective employers may not be willing to go through the hassle, and therefore they would prefer to wait until their programme is over before switching jobs. Even though they had the intention to leave, these reasons might have stopped them from leaving the job, hence mediating the relationship between job-related factors and actual turnover. As such, it may not be necessarily true that there is no correlation

between intended and actual turnover, but the fact that they are on programme that is hindering this intention from being translated into actual behaviour.

Another possible explanation for this lack of correlation could be the period when this study was conducted. In the midst of this study (before the follow-up interview), the Covid-19 pandemic broke and presented a unique challenge. In Singapore, the number of retrenched workers had been on the rise ever since the pandemic broke (Phua, 2020). Likewise, the participants' employment decisions were also affected by the pandemic, and it was raised as a factor as to why they decided to stay in their current job. With the shrinking economy and job market, they felt that this was not the right time to change jobs as it would be harder to find another one. Especially for those who indicated their intention to leave, they had decided to delay their job change process. This is in line with past research which found that an individual's behaviour can be affected by macroeconomic conditions (Cohen et al., 2016) and the availability of employment alternatives (Mahdi et al., 2012; Michaels & Spector, 1982). Thus, the extent of correlation between job-related factors and turnover behaviour might be weakened as there is less flexibility for an individual to move elsewhere due to the unfavourable economy (Mahdi et al., 2012).

In fact, the effects of being on CBP and the Covid-19 pandemic may have interacted to influence the participants decision whether to stay or leave the job. For these participants, they felt that jobs will be harder to come by during the pandemic even though they had a strong desire to change jobs. Hence, they might be out of a job if they were to leave at this time. At the same time, they were also wary that a key requirement of being on CBP was the need to remain employed. They were fearful of being sent back to prison if they were unable to find a new job. As a result, several participants decided to stay in their current job. Hence, during this period, even for those with the intention to leave, it may not translate into actual behaviour, thus explaining the lack of relationship between job-related factors and actual turnover.

Another argument put forth to explain the absence of association between job-related factors and actual turnover, but not with turnover intention, is the model sequencing job-related factors, turnover intention, and actual turnover. In a study by Dougherty et al. (1985), the authors examined two models in an attempt to explain the relationship between job-related factors leading to employee turnover. Instead of a satisfaction-to-commitment-to-turnover intention sequence, a model which positioned both job satisfaction and organisational commitment as factors leading directly to turnover intention seemed to be better supported by the findings. However, in the longitudinal analysis with actual turnover, the results provided weak evidence for causality over time, indicating that lagged paths of job-related factors provided weak support for causality with actual turnover (Dougherty et al., 1985). These findings were further supported by Tett and Meyer (1993) who found that job satisfaction and organisational commitment had contributed uniquely to the turnover process. However, these contributions were largely limited to turnover intentions only, with intentions mediating the relationship between job-related factors and actual turnover. In addition, the organisational factors that were found to best explain variance of actual turnover rate were not necessarily the ones that best explained turnover intentions (Cohen et al., 2016). As such, the indirect linkage between job-related factors and actual turnover may explain the lack of association between job-related factors (and most if its subscales) with actual turnover in the present study.

The lack of relationship to actual turnover in the present study could also be due to the short follow-up period. Many turnover studies typically use a one-year follow-up period to measure how different variables may be related to actual turnover (e.g. Cohen et al., 2016; Garner & Hunter, 2014; Sun & Wang, 2017). However, this study had a three-month follow-up period. According to statistics from 2013 to 2017, the average job retention rate for ex-offenders over a three-month period is around 82%, while the average retention rate over six-month period is around 63% (Singapore Corporation of Rehabilitative Enterprises, 2019). The

job retention rate over a three-month period in this study was 80%, which is comparable to the trend exhibited by the larger ex-offender population. If it follows a similar trend, the actual turnover might be higher than what was found in the present study after a six-month or one-year period. Hence, measuring actual turnover at the 3-month mark may not be an accurate reflection as compared to other studies that used longer follow-up periods. While turnover intention may not translate into actual behaviour, the findings from this study are important as it has identified some potential factors that are associated with the employment decisions of the participants.

Recommendations

From the discussion above, several implications can be identified. First, in line with previous research, job-related factors – job satisfaction, perceived organisational support, and organisational commitment – affecting job quality are related to turnover intention. Therefore, it is important to ensure clients who are on CBP are satisfied and committed to their job. As shown in the findings, these job-related factors are strongly associated with each other. Hence, a change in one factor can potentially affect other factors, eventually affecting how participants perceive the quality of their jobs. If they are dissatisfied with the quality, it is necessary to better understand this dissatisfaction and ascertain whether these changes can be conveyed to the employer, or, if a change of employment would be the better course of action.

In addition, as highlighted by Jaynes (2020), the use of subjective measures to ascertain job quality allows for changes in opinion over time. For example, clients may start on a new job feeling satisfied with the overall job quality. However, as time progresses, they may begin to learn more about the work environment and discover aspects that they are unhappy with, thereby lowering the job quality. The reverse may also be true whereby clients feel apprehensive about a new job but find it to be of good quality as time progresses. Hence,

perceptions regarding job quality should be tracked across time to ensure clients are matched to a job of high quality. For clients under CBP, many parties are involved in their work-centric rehabilitation journey. In order to effectively track changes regarding how clients perceive the overall quality of their job, at least while on CBP, there is a need for close collaboration between all stakeholders to ensure proper communication of clients' feedback regarding their employment to the relevant parties.

Second, as difficult as this may be in practice, there is a need to work towards being able to offer clients jobs of higher occupational levels, or those with better career progression and prospects. This is in line with studies which point out that it is not just the mere presence of any employment in an offender's rehabilitation journey but specifically quality jobs that lead to job stability, and ultimately to reduced recidivism rates. The importance of higher occupational levels for increased job stability is borne out in terms of economic theory. Having a good job reduces criminal behaviour as the potential costs, such as job loss, may be higher than its potential returns. In addition, having a good job will make it relatively easier to reach the material and immaterial goals through legal means (Merton, 1938). This study found that many participants under CBP intended to stay in the current job as being employed was an integral part of the requirement to remain in the community on programme. This highlights a need to shift from a perspective of "working in this job because they were required to have a job" to that of "working in this job because they want to". In fact, having a "good job" is usually reflected in terms of having a job offering a good salary as well as career progression opportunities. As noted, the jobs that the participants were matched to were often general positions which they considered unfavourably.

In addition, being placed on tagging may be hindering participants who wish to change jobs. Therefore, while they would still need to serve the tail-end of their sentence in the community, support by job coaches can be extended beyond this period. This will allow them

an opportunity to find a job that they are genuinely interested in, perhaps upon exiting CBP. In fact, the period immediately after their tagging is over may be the most crucial period where help is needed. Literature has shown that ex-offenders face a myriad of challenges when looking for employment after their release. As they begin to explore jobs that they genuinely desire, they may face challenges to make this happen. Hence, having a source of support and someone who can guide them through the process would be beneficial.

Lastly, more upskilling opportunities should be made available to ex-offenders. During an unprecedented time like the Covid-19 pandemic, job availability and the fear of losing their job were amongst the major worries that participants expressed. When asked about their mindset on future employment, a common response was to focus on the short-term. Instead of focusing on short-term employment prospects, more resources should be made available to help them think about their long-term plans. One way of doing so is to help them upskill so as to increase their future employability for better quality positions. It will also be important to make releasing offenders aware of the upgrading opportunities that are available to them.

Limitations

One limitation of this study is the sample used. Only soon to be ex-offenders under CBP who were employed at the time of the administration of the questionnaire participated in this study. There are other individuals who may have been overlooked due to the inclusion criteria. For example, those who were under CBP but not employed at the time of the questionnaire administration. It would be beneficial to understand the reasons for their unemployment. In addition, due to the scope of this study, ex-offenders who were directly released into the community were not interviewed. Since the CBP was highlighted as a factor affecting employment decisions, it would be interesting to find out whether direct releasees were able to find higher quality jobs without the presence of programme restrictions, and

whether this would eventually lead to increased job stability and commitment. Future research should also compare employment patterns between the direct releasees and those on CBP. More research can also be done to understand whether CBP moderates the relationship between job-related variables and turnover intention and actual turnover. This would allow the different stakeholders to understand how CBP can be further improved to lower the turnover intention of ex-offenders, and potentially result in greater job stability among ex-offenders.

A second limitation is the relatively short follow-up period between the administration of the two questionnaires. As such, many participants were still under CBP during the follow-up phase. In addition, the Covid-19 pandemic broke out during the follow-up period. These two factors have affected the employment decisions of participants as highlighted in the findings. Therefore, having a longer follow-up period would allow a better representation of the factors which affect job quality and actual turnover.

Conclusion

Through the use of quantitative and qualitative methods, this study has allowed us to explore the factors of job quality, turnover intention, and actual turnover among ex-offenders. This study has shown that the quality of employment has an important role to play in job retention. The nature of the work as well as being employed in a job with good pay, good career prospects, and a positive work environment are key factors that affect the quality of employment. However, the requirements of CBP and the overwhelming desire to be out in the community as opposed to being locked up seems to compel several participants to take up any job rather than one that they are genuinely looking for. Therefore, it is important for programmes and services to review how its processes may be affecting the quality of employment and to see if anything can be done about it.

The present study has shed light on the factors affecting quality of employment among ex-offenders on community-based programmes in Singapore. Future research can also look into how quality of employment affects recidivism rates.

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Appendix A

SECTION [A]

<u>Part A</u>

1. What is your race?

☐ Chinese ☐ Malay ☐ Indian ☐ Others: _____

2. What is your birth year?

_____

3. What is your highest level of education completed?

☐ No education ☐ Primary school

☐ Lower secondary school ☐ Upper secondary school

☐ JC / Pre-University ☐ ITE

☐ Polytechnic ☐ University

☐ Others: _____

4. What is your marital status?

☐ Single ☐ Married

☐ Divorced ☐ Separated

☐ Widowed ☐ Others: _____

<u>Part B</u>

1. What is your current job?

_____

2. When did you start working in the current job?

_____

3. The current job was…

☐ Assigned to me. ☐ Taken up by me voluntarily.

4. How many days do you work per week?

_____

5. On average, how many hours do you work per day?

☐ Less than 3 hours ☐ Between 3 – 4 hours

☐ Between 4 – 5 hours ☐ Between 5 – 6 hours

☐ Between 6 – 7 hours ☐ Between 7 – 8 hours

☐ More than 8 hours: _____

6. What is your monthly income (before tax and CPF deductions)?

☐ $500 or below ☐ $501 – $1,000

☐ $1,001 – $1,500 ☐ $1,501 – $2,000

☐ $2,001 – $2,500 ☐ More than $2,500

7. Have you been in a similar line of work previously?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, what job was it and for how long:

_____

8. How good are you at your job?

Not good |——————|——————|——————|——————| Very good

         1   2   3   4   5

9. What community based programme / supervision scheme are you in?

☐ Work Release Scheme - Penal ☐ Day Release Scheme

☐ LT2 - Work Release Scheme ☐ Residential Scheme

☐ Home Detention ☐ Others

10. Do you intend to stay in the same job/organisation after your programme/supervision has ended?

☐ Yes ☐ No

11. How long do you see yourself in the present job (from date started)?

☐ Less than 3 months ☐ Between 3-6 months

☐ Between 6-12 months ☐ Between 1-2 years

☐ Between 2-3 years ☐ More than 3 years:

                                           _____

SECTION [B]

Describe yourself as you are now, not as you wish to be in the future. Describe yourself as you honestly see yourself, in relation to other people you know of, who are the same sex as you are, and roughly your age. Indicate for each statement whether it is Very Inaccurate, Moderately Inaccurate, Neither Accurate Nor Inaccurate, Moderately Accurate, or Very Accurate.

		Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neither Accurate Nor Inaccurate	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate
1.	I am the life of the party.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	I feel little concern for others.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	I am always prepared.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	I get stressed out easily.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	I have a rich vocabulary.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	I don't talk a lot.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	I am interested in people.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	I leave my belongings around.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	I am relaxed most of the time.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	I have difficulty understanding abstract ideas.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	I feel comfortable around people.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	I insult people.	1	2	3	4	5
13.	I pay attention to details.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	I worry about things.	1	2	3	4	5
15.	I have a vivid imagination.	1	2	3	4	5
16.	I keep in the background.	1	2	3	4	5

		Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neither Accurate Nor Inaccurate	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate
17.	I sympathize with others' feelings.	1	2	3	4	5
18.	I make a mess of things.	1	2	3	4	5
19.	I seldom feel blue.	1	2	3	4	5
20.	I am not interested in abstract ideas.	1	2	3	4	5
21.	I start conversations.	1	2	3	4	5
22.	I am not interested in other people's problems.	1	2	3	4	5
23.	I get chores done right away.	1	2	3	4	5
24.	I am easily disturbed.	1	2	3	4	5
25.	I have excellent ideas.	1	2	3	4	5
26.	I have little to say.	1	2	3	4	5
27.	I have a soft heart.	1	2	3	4	5
28.	I often forget to put things back in their proper place.	1	2	3	4	5
29.	I get upset easily.	1	2	3	4	5
30.	I do not have a good imagination.	1	2	3	4	5
31.	I talk to a lot of different people at parties.	1	2	3	4	5
32.	I am not really interested in others.	1	2	3	4	5
33.	I like order.	1	2	3	4	5
34.	I change my mood a lot.	1	2	3	4	5
35.	I am quick to understand things.	1	2	3	4	5
36.	I don't like to draw attention to myself.	1	2	3	4	5

		Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neither Accurate Nor Inaccurate	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate
37.	I take time out for others.	1	2	3	4	5
38.	I shirk my duties.	1	2	3	4	5
39.	I have frequent mood swings.	1	2	3	4	5
40.	I use difficult words.	1	2	3	4	5
41.	I don't mind being the center of attention.	1	2	3	4	5
42.	I feel others' emotions.	1	2	3	4	5
43.	I follow a schedule.	1	2	3	4	5
44.	I get irritated easily.	1	2	3	4	5
45.	I spend time reflecting on things.	1	2	3	4	5
46.	I am quiet around strangers.	1	2	3	4	5
47.	I make people feel at ease.	1	2	3	4	5
48.	I am exacting in my work.	1	2	3	4	5
49.	I often feel blue.	1	2	3	4	5
50.	I am full of ideas.	1	2	3	4	5

SECTION [C]

Listed below are statements that represent possible opinions that YOU may have about working at your organisation. Please indicate the degree of your agreement or disagreement with each statement by filling in the number that best represents your point of view about your organisation.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
0	1	2	3	4	5	6

1.	My organisation values my contribution to its well-being.	_____
2.	If my organisation could hire someone to replace me at a lower salary it would do so.	_____
3.	My organisation fails to appreciate any extra effort from me.	_____
4.	My organisation strongly considers my goals and values.	_____
5.	My organisation would ignore any complaint from me.	_____
6.	My organisation disregards my best interests when it makes decisions that affect me.	_____
7.	Help is available from my organisation when I have a problem.	_____
8.	My organisation really cares about my well-being.	_____
9.	Even if I did the best job possible, my organisation would fail to notice.	_____
10.	My organisation is willing to help me when I need a special favour.	_____
11.	My organisation cares about my general satisfaction at work.	_____
12.	If given the opportunity, my organisation would take advantage of me.	_____
13.	My organisation shows very little concern for me.	_____
14.	My organisation cares about my opinions.	_____
15.	My organisation takes pride in my accomplishments at work.	_____
16.	My organisation tries to make my job as interesting as possible.	_____

SECTION [D]

Please circle the number for each question that comes closest to reflecting your opinion about it.

		Disagree very much	Disagree moderately	Disagree slightly	Agree slightly	Agree moderately	Agree very much
1.	I feel I am being paid a fair amount for the work I do.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2.	There is really too little chance for promotion on my job.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3.	My supervisor is quite competent in doing his/her job.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4.	I am not satisfied with the benefits I receive.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5.	When I do a good job, I receive the recognition for it that I should receive.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6.	Many of our rules and procedures make doing a good job difficult.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7.	I like the people I work with.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8.	I sometimes feel my job is meaningless.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9.	Communications seem good within this organisation.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10.	Raises are too few and far between.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11.	Those who do well on the job stand a fair chance of being promoted.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12.	My supervisor is unfair to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13.	The benefits we receive are as good as most other organisations offer.	1	2	3	4	5	6

		Disagree very much	Disagree moderately	Disagree slightly	Agree slightly	Agree moderately	Agree very much
14.	I do not feel that the work I do is appreciated.	1	2	3	4	5	6
15.	My efforts to do a good job are seldom blocked by red tape.	1	2	3	4	5	6
16.	I find I have to work harder at my job because of the incompetence of people I work with.	1	2	3	4	5	6
17.	I like doing the things I do at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6
18.	The goals of this organisation are not clear to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
19.	I feel unappreciated by the organisation when I think about what they pay me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
20.	People get ahead as fast here as they do in other places.	1	2	3	4	5	6
21.	My supervisor shows too little interest in the feelings of subordinates.	1	2	3	4	5	6
22.	The benefit package we have is equitable.	1	2	3	4	5	6
23.	There are few rewards for those who work here.	1	2	3	4	5	6
24.	I have too much to do at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6
25.	I enjoy my co-workers.	1	2	3	4	5	6
26.	I often feel that I do not know what is going on with the organisation.	1	2	3	4	5	6
27.	I feel a sense of pride in doing my job.	1	2	3	4	5	6

		Disagree very much	Disagree moderately	Disagree slightly	Agree slightly	Agree moderately	Agree very much
28.	I feel satisfied with my chances for salary increases.	1	2	3	4	5	6
29.	There are benefits we do not have which we should have.	1	2	3	4	5	6
30.	I like my supervisor.	1	2	3	4	5	6
31.	I have too much paperwork.	1	2	3	4	5	6
32.	I don't feel my efforts are rewarded the way they should be.	1	2	3	4	5	6
33.	I am satisfied with my chances for promotion.	1	2	3	4	5	6
34.	There is too much bickering and fighting at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6
35.	My job is enjoyable.	1	2	3	4	5	6
36.	Work assignments are not fully explained.	1	2	3	4	5	6

SECTION [E]

Listed below are a series of statements that represent possible feelings that individuals might have about the company or organisation for which they work. With respect to your own feelings about the particular organisation for which you are now working, please indicate the degree of your agreement or disagreement with each statement.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

1.	I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this organisation be successful.	_____
2.	I talk up this organisation to my friends as a great organisation to work for.	_____
3.	I feel very little loyalty to this organisation.	_____
4.	I would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep working for this organisation.	_____
5.	I find that my values and the organisation's values are very similar.	_____
6.	I am proud to tell others that I am part of this organisation.	_____
7.	I could just as well be working for a different organisation as long as the type of work was similar.	_____
8.	This organisation really inspires the very best in me in the way of job performance.	_____
9.	It would take very little change in my present circumstances to cause me to leave this organisation.	_____
10.	I am extremely glad that I chose this organisation to work for over others I was considering at the time I joined.	_____
11.	There's not too much to be gained by sticking with his organisation indefinitely.	_____
12.	Often, I find it difficult to agree with this organisation's policies on important matters relating to its employees.	_____
13.	I really care about the fate of this organisation.	_____
14.	For me this is the best of all possible organisations for which to work.	_____
15.	Deciding to work for this organisation was a definite mistake on my part.	_____

SECTION [F]

<u>Part A</u>

Here are some statements about you and your job. How much do you agree or disagree with each?

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1.	I will probably look for a new job in the next year.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.	I often think about quitting.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.	In general, I don't like my job.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

4.   Have you seriously considered quitting your current job?   Yes / No

Appendix B

1.   Are you still employed in the same company/job?   Yes / No
2.   What made you stay/leave the company/job?
a.   What would have made you change your decision/consideration to stay/leave?
b.   Do you think being on programme played a part in your employment decisions?
                How did it affect your decisions? (From taking up of job to current status)
c.   Has the pandemic affected your decision to stay/leave the company/job?
            How did it affect your decisions?
                Has it affected your intention to leave?
                Has the economic impact/crisis affected your decisions?
                Did the changes in job market affect your decisions?
3.   How has the pandemic affected/reshaped your mindset about future employment?
        How has it affected your views on job security/stability?
        How has it affected your views on future employability?