

## Thriving at Work and Perceived Overqualification as Predictors of Employee Career Outcomes

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### ABSTRACT

This study develops and tests a model which views career outcomes from both positive and negative sides, namely career satisfaction and turnover intention. To understand the predictors of career outcomes, researchers posit thriving at work and perceived overqualification as positive and negative antecedents that will influence individual career outcomes purpose of this study is to understand the influence of thriving at work and perceived overqualification on employee career outcomes, which is seen from career satisfaction and turnover intention. This study is carried out on service company employees in Bandung, West Java. The sampling technique in this study is carried out by simple random sampling, with the final number of samples of 110 respondents. The data collection is done by distributing questionnaires using online platforms to the respondents. The questionnaire items used are measured using a 5-point Likert scale. The data is then processed using multiple linear regression analysis with SPSS 23 software. The results of this study indicate that thriving at work positively influences employee career satisfaction, and negatively influences turnover intention. On the other hand, perceived overqualification negatively impacts career satisfaction and positively influences turnover intention.



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**Keywords:** Thriving at Work; Perceived Overqualification; Career Satisfaction; Turnover Intention

## INTRODUCTION

A career is a lifelong and ongoing process in someone's life as an evolving sequence of a person's work experience over time. Currently, one of the phenomena in Indonesia regarding individual careers is related to job overqualification. There are horizontal and vertical mismatches in one's education and skills overqualification with their job, reaching 53% in 2020 (Kompas, 2020). Due to the recession and decreasing employee opportunities, perceived overqualification has become one of the important issues in business (Zhang et al., 2016; 2020; Kaymakci et al., 2022).

This issue arises because there are many cases where overqualified employees work in low-quality jobs, thus leading them to experience negative career outcomes. Aside from the perceived overqualification, which predicts negative career outcomes, this study also viewed thriving at work as the predictor of positive career outcomes. This phenomenon of person-job misfit and thriving at work, as well as the condition by which it affects career outcomes, are important to be studied.

One of the negative career outcomes used in this study is turnover intention. Turnover intention is the individual's intention to leave their job (Chen et al., 2020; Meyer & Allen, 1984). The turnover intention has been recognized as the main predictor of actual turnover; thus, this concept and phenomenon have become a crucial topic in the business environment. Considering

the importance of maintaining individuals in the organization, one must understand the aspects that might drive or reduce turnover intention.

Another career outcome that is contrary to turnover intention is career satisfaction. Career satisfaction is an individual's satisfaction with various career aspects (Huo & Jiang, 2021). Companies realize that human resources or their employees are important assets for them. Therefore, they must also look for ways to satisfy their employees. Thus, they will remain in the organization.

Many scholars have identified the relationship between perceived overqualification, thriving at work, career satisfaction, and turnover intention. Huo and Jiang (2021) confirmed the positive relationship between thriving at work and career satisfaction. Regarding perceived overqualification, Harari et al. (2017) have mentioned that it is associated with negative job attitudes such as turnover intention and high counterproductive behavior. However, Erdogan et al. (2018) addressed that the outcomes of perceived overqualification on individual career satisfaction are still largely neglected, and the results suggest that perceived overqualification negatively influences career satisfaction.

This study was conducted to fill the research gaps in the literature regarding thriving at work, perceived overqualification, and career outcomes. Erdogan et al. (2018) addressed that person-centric outcomes such as career satisfaction and turnover intention still have limited study on the relationship between perceived overqualification and work-related outcomes (Harari et al., 2017).

This study investigated the underlying mechanisms that influence individual career outcomes. The authors developed and tested a model which viewed career outcomes from both positive and negative sides, namely career satisfaction and turnover intention. To understand the predictors of career outcomes, the authors posited thriving at work and perceived overqualification as positive and negative antecedents that would influence individual career outcomes.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### ***Perceived Overqualification and Career Satisfaction***

Overqualification is when employees have skills, education, experiences, and other qualifications that exceed their job requirements (Wasserman et al., 2017). Perceived overqualification means that an individual perceives a discrepancy between the current job and the one they believe they should have. Greenhaus et al. (1990) defined career satisfaction as an individual perception of the degree to which their career-related goals are met. People who have career satisfaction feel a sense of accomplishment in their careers.

Unmet expectations, or discrepancies between their current and expected jobs, can be an important precursor to career satisfaction (Erdogan et al., 2018). Furthermore, a person's job fit and career satisfaction are strongly related (Erdogan & Bauer, 2005). This job fit occurs when individuals believe that they are suitable for their job, or in other words, when they have the qualifications that match their job.

When individuals perceive that they are overqualified for the job they are currently doing, it can raise unpleasant feelings (Erdogan et al., 2018). It can lead individuals to think that their current job is only a stepping stone to getting a better job that suits their qualifications or quality (Vaisey, 2006). Erdogan et al. (2018) found that perceived overqualification negatively influenced career satisfaction through relative deprivation. In addition, Erdogan et al. (2020) and Wasserman et al. (2017) also stated that employees who perceive high overqualification are less satisfied with their careers. When individuals consider that their career goals are not met because they do not get to use their skills, education, and experience in their current job, this condition will not satisfy them with their careers. The higher individuals perceive that they are overqualified for the job, the lower their career satisfaction would be. Based on this explanation, the first hypothesis proposed is as follows:

H1. Perceived overqualification negatively influences career satisfaction.

### ***Perceived Overqualification and Turnover Intention***

Perceived overqualification is closely related to various negative outcomes, namely less positive job attitudes, career stress, and a tendency to leave an organization or job (Erdogan et al., 2020; Erdogan & Bauer, 2009). Employees who perceive that they have more qualifications for the job they are currently doing may get bored with carrying out repetitive and simple routine tasks that only have a few challenges. They might feel that doing these kinds of tasks in the organization would not get promoted (Chen et al., 2020) because overqualified employees perceive that they can carry out a task or a job with higher demands.

Erdogan et al. (2020) examined the relationship between perceived overqualification and employee career outcomes and found that perceived overqualification can predict turnover intention. Turnover intention is the tendency or likelihood of employees to leave their job or organization. Turnover intention is defined by Jacobs & Roodt (2007) as an individual's judgment that dominates their decision to continue or leave their job. Several studies have shown that individuals can develop turnover intention when they feel their role in their job is giving less motivation (Abid et al., 2015; Kaymakci et al., 2022).

Previous studies have also shown that overqualified employees tend to develop negative emotional reactions toward unfavorable situations (Gibson & Callister, 2010) because they perceive they have superior knowledge, skills, and abilities fit for their job but cannot do so. When these feelings arise, employees can get unmotivated and fed up with doing their job, leading to their intention to quit. Based on this explanation, the second hypothesis proposed is as follows:

H2. Perceived overqualification positively influences turnover intention.

### **Thriving at Work and Career Satisfaction**

Abid et al. (2015) defined thriving at work as a positive psychological state in which individuals experience a sense of vitality and learning. According to Spreitzer et al. (2005), a sense of vitality is when individuals experience the feeling of energized, positive, and alive at work. It enables an individual to develop attention to remain in the organization. On the other hand, a sense of learning is growing and getting better at what one does at work. It also refers to acquiring and applying individual knowledge and skills to develop their abilities. These two aspects of vitality and learning constitute the concept of thriving at work.

Career satisfaction is a person's satisfaction with their career experience (Lounsbury et al., 2003). Several previous studies have found a positive relationship between thriving at work and career satisfaction. Individuals who thrive at work can learn and grow in their careers and work. Chang et al. (2020) found that thriving could help individuals actively set their career goals and acquire skills for career growth. Therefore, individuals tend to be more positive about their career development, thus enabling them to achieve career satisfaction.

Similarly, Jiang et al. (2020) also examined the influence of thriving at work and career outcomes, one of which is career satisfaction. The results indicated a positive relationship between thriving at work and career satisfaction. The components of thriving at work, namely a sense of learning and vitality, could lead employees to be engaged in their work and be satisfied with their careers. Employees could develop and use their job resources to create a favorable job environment and improve their perceptions of capability and efficacy by practicing thriving at work. Based on this explanation, the third hypothesis proposed is as follows:

H3. Thriving at work positively influences career satisfaction.

### **Thriving at Work and Turnover Intention**

Thriving at work can also be understood as a positive psychological experience of development that invigorates and enlivens the individuals (Carver, 1998; Abid et al., 2015).

Thriving at work can only occur when individuals exhibit both vitality and learning. Thriving at work allows individuals to experience carrying out their job while promoting personal development. When it is associated with turnover intention, thriving at work is predicted to be one of the factors that can reduce it. Individuals who thrive at work can evaluate their job, which can help them develop and grow to be better.

Huo & Jiang (2021) suggested that thriving at work, which constitutes learning and vitality, enables individuals to carry out their work while driving their personal development. Individuals who practice thriving at work will be able to learn more, feel positive, and feel alive at their workplace. It will reduce their intention to leave their job. Abid et al. (2015) have proven that thriving at work significantly negatively influences turnover intention. Individuals thriving at work minimize their intention to leave the organization. It occurs because individuals experience learning and vitality jointly while doing their job, encouraging them to stay and reduce their turnover intention. Based on this explanation, the fourth hypothesis proposed is as follows:

**H4.** Thriving at work negatively influences turnover intention.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study used a quantitative approach to understand the causal relationship between the variables. The population of this study was employees of a service company in Bandung, West Java, with 152 employees. The sampling technique in this study was carried out by simple random sampling, with the final 110 respondents counted by the Slovin formula. The data collection was done by distributing questionnaires online to the respondents. The questionnaire items used were measured using a 5-point Likert scale. The data was then processed using multiple linear regression analysis with SPSS 23 software. The measurement for each variable in this study is as follows:

1. Perceived overqualification is measured using items from Maynard et al. (2006), which consists of nine items.
2. Thriving at work is measured using scales developed by Porath et al. (2012), which consist of two dimensions (learning and vitality) and 10 items.
3. Career satisfaction is measured using scales developed by Greenhaus et al. (1990), which consist of five items.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### ***Validity Test***

A validity test examines the extent to which a measurement tool is used to measure what should be measured (Ghozali, 2009). Based on the calculation of the validity test, all variables in this study met the criteria  $>0.30$ . Therefore, all items of the variable in this study were valid.

### ***Reliability Test***

Ghozali (2009) stated that a questionnaire is reliable if respondents' answer to the statement shows a consistent result from time to time. The criteria for acceptance of the reliability test are  $>0.6$ . In this study, all variables have the Cronbach's Alpha value of  $>0.06$ , which is presented in Table 1 below.

**Table 1. Results of Reliability Test**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>
Perceived Overqualification	0,738	Reliable
Thriving at Work	0,726	Reliable
Career Satisfaction	0,795	Reliable
Turnover Intention	0,769	Reliable

*Source: Processed Data, 2022*

**Multicollinearity Test**

The results indicated no symptoms of multicollinearity between the independent variables because the VIF value is below 10, and the tolerance value is above 0.1. The results of the multicollinearity test are presented in **Table 2**.

**Table 2. Results of Multicollinearity Test**

	Model	Collinearity Statistics	
		Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)		
	Perceived Overqualification	1.000	1.000
	Thriving at Work	1.000	1.000

*Source: Processed Data, 2022*

**Hypothesis Test**

1. The relationship between perceived overqualification and career satisfaction shows significant influence, indicated by the value of  $t\text{-count} > t\text{-table}$ , namely  $3.533 > 1.9826$ , and the significance value of  $< 0.05$ . Thus, hypothesis 1 is accepted.
2. The relationship between perceived overqualification and turnover intention shows positive influence, indicated by the value of  $t\text{-count} > t\text{-table}$ , namely  $3.175 > 1.9826$ , and the significance value of  $< 0.05$ . Thus, hypothesis 2 is accepted.
3. The relationship between thriving at work and career satisfaction shows significant influence, indicated by the value of  $t\text{-count} > t\text{-table}$ , namely  $2.873 > 1.9826$ , and the significance value of  $< 0.05$ . Thus, hypothesis 3 is accepted.
4. The relationship between thriving at work and turnover intention shows significant influence, indicated by the value of  $t\text{-count} > t\text{-table}$ , namely  $3.175 > 1.9826$ , and the significance value of  $< 0.05$ . Thus, hypothesis 4 is accepted.

**Table 3. Results of Hypothesis Test**

Causal Relationship	t-count	Sig.	Conclusion
Perceived Overqualification => Career Satisfaction	3,533	0,000	H1 Accepted
Perceived Overqualification => Turnover Intention	3,175	0,000	H2 Accepted
Thriving at Work => Career Satisfaction	2,873	0,001	H3 Accepted
Thriving at Work => Turnover Intention	2,512	0,001	H4 Accepted

*Source: Processed Data, 2022*

**Determinant Coefficient Test**

The value of the determinant coefficient or the magnitude of simultaneous influence of the variable on another variable is as follows.

1. Perceived overqualification has an influence of 43.2% on career satisfaction.
2. Perceived overqualification has an influence of 58.9% on turnover intention.
3. Thriving at work has an influence of 60.1% on career satisfaction.
4. Thriving at work has an influence of 54.8% on turnover intention.

**Table 4. Results of Determinant Coefficient Test**

Variable	Adjusted R Square	Percentage
Perceived Overqualification => Career Satisfaction	0,432	43,2%
Perceived Overqualification => Turnover Intention	0,589	58,9%
Thriving at Work => Career Satisfaction	0,601	60,1%
Thriving at Work => Turnover Intention	0,548	54,8%

*Source: Processed Data, 2022*

**Regression Analysis**

Perceived Overqualification has a negative influence on Career Satisfaction. This result is known from the regression analysis with the following equation:

$$\text{Career Satisfaction} = 9.481 - 0.638 \text{ Perceived Overqualification}$$

From this equation, it can be known that if there is no value of perceived overqualification, the value of career satisfaction will reach 9.481. If the value of perceived overqualification increases by 1 value, the value of career satisfaction will decrease by 0.638.

Perceived Overqualification has a positive influence on Turnover Intention, which can be seen from the regression analysis with the following equation:

$$\text{Turnover Intention} = 2.538 + 0.533 \text{ Perceived Overqualification}$$

From this equation, it can be known that if there is no value of perceived overqualification, the value of turnover intention will reach 2.538. If the value of perceived overqualification increases by 1, the value of turnover intention will increase by 0.533.

Thriving at work has a positive influence on Career Satisfaction, which can be seen from the regression analysis with the following equation:

$$\text{Career Satisfaction} = 7.966 + 0.353 \text{ Thriving at Work}$$

From this equation, it can be known that if there is no value in thriving at work, the value of career satisfaction will reach 7.966. If the value of thriving at work increases by 1 value, the value of career satisfaction will increase by 0.353.

Thriving at work has a negative influence on Turnover Intention. This result is known from the regression analysis with the following equation:

$$\text{Turnover Intention} = 4.707 - 0.359 \text{ Thriving at Work}$$

From this equation, it can be known that if there is no value in thriving at work, the value of turnover intention will reach 4.707. If the value of thriving at work increases by 1, the value of turnover intention will decrease by 0.359.

**Table 5. Result of Regression Analysis**

Causal Relationship	Unstandardized Coefficients	
	B	
Perceived Overqualification => Career Satisfaction	9,481	- 0,638
Perceived Overqualification => Turnover Intention	2,538	0,533
Thriving at Work => Career Satisfaction	7,966	0,353
Thriving at Work => Turnover Intention	4,707	- 0,359

*Source: Processed Data, 2022*

## DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicated that the first hypothesis proposed, namely the negative influence of perceived overqualification on career satisfaction, was accepted from the value of calculation results, 3.533, and the significance value of <0.05. In other words, perceived overqualification negatively influenced career satisfaction. The results supported previous studies by Erdogan et al. (2018; 2020; Vaisey, 2006; Wasserman et al., 2017). Employees who perceive they are overqualified for their current job tend to be dissatisfied with their careers. The higher the perceived overqualification of employees, the lower their career satisfaction would be. It occurs because when employees consider that their career goals are not met because they do not get to use their skills, education, and experience in their current job, this will not satisfy them with their careers.

The results of this study indicated that the second hypothesis proposed, namely the positive influence of perceived overqualification on turnover intention, was accepted, known from the value of calculation results, 3.175, and the significance value of <0.05. In other words, perceived overqualification positively influenced turnover intention. The results supported studies by Abid et al. (2015; Kaymakci et al., 2022; Gibson & Callister, 2010). Employees' perceived overqualification can lead them to have the intention to leave their job. The higher the perceived overqualification, the higher the employees tend to have turnover intention. Overqualified employees perceive that they have superior knowledge, skills, and abilities that should be able to be used in their job, but they are unable to do so. When these feelings arise, employees can get

unmotivated and fed up with doing their job, leading to them developing their intention to quit their job or organizations.

The results indicated that the third hypothesis proposed, namely the positive influence of thriving at work on career satisfaction, was accepted, known from the value of calculation results, 2.873, and the significance value of  $<0.05$ . In other words, thriving at work positively influenced career satisfaction. The results supported previous studies by Chang et al. (2020; Jiang et al., 2020). Employees who thrive at work by showing vitality and learning tend not to be satisfied with their careers. The higher the thriving at work, the higher employees' career satisfaction. Thriving allows individuals to set their career goals and acquire skills for career growth. The components of thriving at work, namely a sense of learning and vitality, can lead employees to be engaged in their work and be satisfied with their careers.

Finally, the results of this study indicated that the fourth hypothesis proposed, namely the negative influence of thriving at work on turnover intention, was accepted, known from the calculation results, 3.175, and the significance value of  $<0.05$ . In other words, thriving at work negatively influenced turnover intention. The results of this study supported previous studies by Huo & Jiang (2021; Abid et al., 2015). Employees who thrive at work can evaluate their job, which can help them develop and grow to be better. The higher the thriving at work, the lower employees' turnover intention would be. Individuals who practice thriving at work will be able to learn more, feel positive, and feel alive at their workplace and will reduce their intention to leave their job. Individuals thriving at work minimize their intention to leave the organization.

## CONCLUSION

This study provided several conclusions based on the data analysis and discussion results. First, perceived overqualification was found to have a positive relationship with turnover intention and a negative relationship with career satisfaction. Second, thriving at work was proven to influence career satisfaction while negatively influencing turnover intention. This study highlighted the mechanisms by which two factors can influence employee career outcomes: career satisfaction and turnover intention.

In addition, this study has provided several implications. First, perceived overqualification could negatively influence employee career satisfaction because they are uncomfortable being in a position unsuitable for their qualifications. Employees will be more satisfied if they get a job suited to their capacity. Furthermore, overqualification that companies are neglecting will trigger employees to have the intention to leave their organization. Therefore, both employees and firms need to understand and manage this issue.

Regarding thriving at work, employees will have an ability that continues to grow, ultimately positively influencing their career satisfaction and eventually leading to better career growth and development. Thriving at work will also reduce employees' intention to leave their job because they will feel needed and useful in their job.

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