

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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Drawing from the concept of work-life balance, the author used the concept of the spillover effect to theorize the mediating role of work adjustment in the mechanism from homesickness to job satisfaction and turnover intentions. Using a sample of 307 migrant workers in a manufacturing firm in China, the author found that migrant workers' homesickness was negatively related to job satisfaction and positively related to turnover intentions. Meanwhile, work adjustment mediated the relationship between homesickness and job satisfaction but did not mediate the relationship between homesickness and turnover intention. Moreover, theoretical and managerial implications were discussed in a migration study context.

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Homesickness in Chinese Migrant Workers: Investigating the Mediation Effects of
Work Adjustment between Homesickness and Job Satisfaction and Turnover
Intentions

by
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I understand that my thesis will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University libraries. My signature below authorizes release of my thesis to any reader upon request.

Qu Zhang, Author

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Recently, a tremendous amount of attention has been drawn to the Chinese migrant workers in western media (Gaetano & Jacka, 2004; McGregor, 2014; Wong, Fu, Li, & Song, 2007; Zhang, 2014). Chinese migrant workers are identified as those workers who leave their rural villages and towns to work in other cities. The total population of migrant workers is over 268 million with an average increase of three percent every year (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2014). Migrant workers' well-being becomes interesting because it will have a significant impact on their companies' human resource management and the industries' labor supply (Zhang, 2012). These individuals work in industrial cities and are perceived as the engine of the development of China by supplying cheap labor force to the labor intensive and export-oriented industries, especially manufacturing industries (Harney, 2008). Since China's economic reform and open policy in 1978, western countries have been enjoying China's cheap labor, and now rely heavily on the import from the Chinese "world factory" (Fallows, 2007). Given that a tremendous amount of rural Chinese workers now work remotely from their home and families, researchers have become increasingly interested in gaining an understanding of what migrant workers, who are the engine of the world factory, go through as they leave their homes to work in China's large industrial cities (Gaetano & Jacka, 2004; Knight, Song, & Huaibin, 1999).

The reported problems that Chinese migrant workers face in their work lives include discrimination, emotional burdens, and even suicide (Harney, 2008; McGregor, 2014; Zhang, 2014). After 2010, the series of suicides by migrant workers working for Foxconn, a Taiwanese owned manufacturing firm in China, has gained huge attention and criticism from researchers and scholars all over the world (Chan & Pun, 2010; Guo, Hsu, Holton, & Jeong,

2012; Watch, 2010). For example, Guo et al. (2012) suggest that the suicides in Foxconn involves not only workers' psychological problems and the work conditions faced in the sweatshop environment, but also the workers' perception of social injustice. Consequently, in recent years, issues and problems about Chinese migrant workers' well-being are frequently revealed and discussed by both Chinese and western media. Besides the issues faced by the migrant workers in their work lives, those left-behind may suffer as well. "Empty-nesters" and "left-behind children" are identified as the most important and problematic issues that have significant impact on both Chinese society and further influence migrant workers' well-being. These two issues are raised because too many migrant workers leave their home to work in large cities so that they cannot take care of their family. (Biao, 2007; Chang, Dong, & MacPhail, 2011; Gao et al., 2010; Liu & Guo, 2007; Liu, Sun, Zhang, & Guo, 2007).

"Empty-nesters" refers to the old parents who live separately from their offspring (Liu & Guo, 2007), and "left-behind children" are the children left behind by their migrant worker parents who have left rural villages and towns for employment (Biao, 2007). Among these two groups of people, empty-nesters suffer from feeling of loneliness and getting insufficient health care (Liu & Guo, 2007; Liu et al., 2007), and left-behind children experience mental problems and academic difficulties (Fan, Su, Gill, & Birmaher, 2010). These issues faced by the ones left behind further influence migrant workers because they face the dilemma of staying and taking care of elderly and children or leaving home for employment. Specifically, leaving home to make money to support their families might create emotional burdens for migrant workers because they cannot stay home to meet the social norm of taking care of their old parents and educating their children. Furthermore, migrant workers cannot bring their children with them because of the high living expense and the Chinese "Hukou" system (Chan & Buckingham, 2008) that discourages migrant workers' children from attending

public schools in cities (e.g. long application process, extra fees, etc). In addition, because factories only close during Chinese spring festival, migrant workers can only visit their family during this period in every year (Zhang, 2012). During the year, migrant workers may use telephones to contact their family but it may be limited because of their low income and the high expense of long-distance calls. As a result, thinking and worrying about their parents and/or children left behind without the opportunity for regular contact will potentially create emotional burdens for migrant workers, such as grief, anxiety and depression. Thus, homesickness, a stressful grief-like psychological emotional state related to preoccupied home-related thoughts (Van Tilburg, Vingerhoets, & Van Heck, 1996), might be experienced by workers. This psychological state further creates more problems for both migrant workers' well-being in their new workplace and for management in the companies that employ them. For example, high turnover rate and even labor shortage after spring festival are widely reported because many workers do not want to come back after visiting their home and reconnecting with family and friends (Zhan & Huang, 2013). In addition, because most of migrant workers live in dormitories and have long-shift working hours, their social circle is often limited to other migrant workers, and they cannot get enough social support or resources (Harney, 2008). As a result, it makes migrant workers vulnerable to emotional burdens and they might have negative attitudes and actions toward the company (e.g. dissatisfaction, strike, and suicide).

Even in light of these very substantive potential issues, little work in the organizational literature investigates what migrant workers go through on their way to adjusting to their new work in the industrial cities. Questions such as what makes migrant workers less likely to turnover or what increases migrant workers' job satisfaction currently remain unanswered by the management or organizational literature. Given that there are some

similarities between migrant workers and expatriates, such as they both leave their home and work far away from their hometown, some questions might be explained through theories and findings from the expatriate research. A sizable body of research exists on expatriates, who leave their home country and work on an international assignment, which suggests that there is a spillover effect from their personal lives to work lives such that their personal life experience will affect their adjustment, attitude and behaviors at work (Bhaskar-Shrinivas, Harrison, Shaffer, & Luk, 2005; Black & Stephens, 1989; Takeuchi, Yun, & Tesluk, 2002). For example, expatriates' spouse adjustment to the new environment will affect expatriates' adjustment in the new environment and increase their intentions to quit their international assignment because they care and worry about their children (Black, 1990; Black & Stephens, 1989). However, other than spouse adjustment and culture novelty (the difference between expatriates' native and host cultures) (Black, Mendenhall, & Oddou, 1991), other non-work factors, such as homesickness, have not been studied in the expatriate adjustment literature. Nevertheless, migrant workers differ from expatriates because they still reside in a similar culture where the same language is spoken. Thus, whether and how migrant workers' experience in their personal lives will affect their work lives still remains unexamined.

Fortunately, the literature on homesickness provides some evidence regarding how the experience from people's personal lives will spillover to influence people's attitudes and behaviors in work lives (Fisher, 1989; Van Tilburg et al., 1996). For example, homesickness among university students leads to adjustment difficulties in the new environment (Stroebe, Vliet, Hewstone, & Willis, 2002), and withdrawal from school (Thurber & Walton, 2012). However, homesickness has been developed and mostly studied in the context of educational environment by Fisher and his colleagues (Fisher, 1989; Fisher & Hood, 1987; Hendrickson, Rosen, & Aune, 2011; Scopelliti & Tiberio, 2010). Nevertheless, some research findings

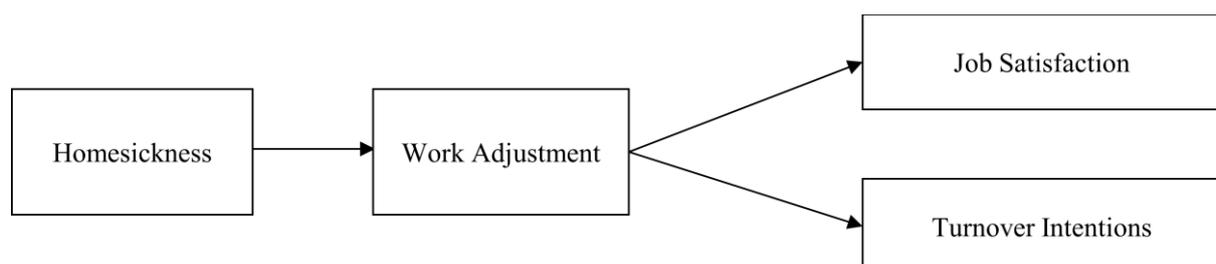
about university students could potentially be applied to migrant workers because they share some similar characteristics. For example, students and migrant workers are alike because they both leave their home and are separated from parents and might experience the same process of homesickness. However, they are also different. First, since migrant workers leave home to take the responsibility of making money to support their family, the motivation of migrant workers is different from students who are spending money to prepare themselves for their career. Second, the expectations for migrant workers and students are different. Companies expect migrant workers to create value for them but university students are receiving educational services. As a result, the requirement, rules, and responsibilities will be stricter in workplaces than that in universities. Thus, while there is some preliminary evidence that homesickness, as an experience in university students' personal lives will affect individuals' attitudes and behaviors at school, whether and how migrant workers' homesickness will affect their attitudes and behaviors at work are still unanswered questions.

In addition, even though little research on homesickness has been done in workplaces among expatriates or migrant workers, a qualitative research was conducted on homesickness among migrant workers working in different countries and expatriates by Hack-Polay (2012). Specifically, using interview techniques, results from this study suggest that homesickness will lead to lack of interest to embrace the new environment, a general state of feeling unwell and difficulty in adjusting to the new work tasks (Hack-Polay, 2012). Thus, even though in this study, migrant workers are within country boundaries which is different from that in Hack-Polay's (2012) study which includes migrant workers who work in different countries, the results of that research provided the initial knowledge of homesickness in workplaces. Therefore, I propose that homesickness, an experience in migrant workers' personal lives, will affect migrant workers' adjustment to the work tasks, and further affect their work

attitudes. Thus, an additional contribution of this study is to provide clarity on homesickness of migrant workers by exploring the mechanism underlying the relationship between migrant workers' homesickness and work domain variables, such as job satisfaction and turnover intentions. In the present study, work adjustment, the comfort regarding ones' job assignments or work tasks (Black et al., 1991), is proposed to play a mediating role in linking homesickness to job satisfaction and turnover intentions. The spillover effect of homesickness will be expressed by the workers' reduced adjustment to the work tasks due to the preoccupation of home-related thoughts and lack of initiative caused by homesickness.

In sum, by investigating work adjustment as a mediator linking homesickness to job satisfaction and turnover intentions, I will endeavor to generate knowledge on *why* migrant workers' homesickness will relate to job satisfaction and turnover intentions, as shown in Figure 1. It is crucial to understand these questions because it will contribute to the scant academic research on migrant workers by studying the novel psychological construct of homesickness, and introducing it as a new antecedent for adjustment. In addition, examining these questions will 1) address the urgent need of managers to understand the experience of homesickness that millions of their migrant worker employees may be struggling with; 2) provide theoretical foundations to develop strategies and methods to facilitate their coping with homesickness and subsequent adjustment to the workplace, especially because migrant workers' adjustment may affect employees' job attitude and turnover intentions.

Figure 1. The Conceptual Model of the Current Thesis



CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, I formulate the research hypotheses tested in this thesis by first presenting the definition of the focal constructs. Then I present theoretical foundations and previous empirical research findings of the relationships. Finally, I present hypotheses concerning the relationships between these constructs.

Relationship between Homesickness and Work Domain Variables

Homesickness

“Homesickness” refers to a common psychological experience of distress that occurs after relocation among those who leave their home to live in a new environment (Fisher, 1989; Van Tilburg et al., 1996). Early medical and clinical research conceptualize homesickness as a process of grief (Archer, Ireland, Amos, Broad, & Currid, 1998; Fisher, Murray, & Frazer, 1985). Consistent with this, homesickness has been defined as a psychological state of yearning, grieving and preoccupation with the past (Fisher & Hood, 1988). Thus, homesickness should be viewed as a grief-like reaction that involves preoccupation of home-related thoughts (Archer et al., 1998; Van Tilburg et al., 1996).

Homesickness has been developed and mostly studied in educational environment by Fisher and his colleagues (Fisher, 1989, 1990; Fisher & Hood, 1987, 1988; Fisher et al., 1985). It is viewed as an illness that has complex symptoms that are emotional, cognitive, behavioral and even somatic (Fisher, 1989). For instance, homesickness sufferers are preoccupied by home-related thoughts and will show lack of initiative and little interest to the new environment (Van Tilburg et al., 1996). In addition, research on university students suggests that homesickness is related to emotional disturbances such as depression (Stroebe et al., 2002) and absent-mindedness (Fisher & Hood, 1987), and will spill over to their new lives as student at university by making it difficult for them to focus on their studies (Thurber

& Walton, 2012). Similarly, even though homesickness among migrant workers has not drawn attention from researchers, findings of the qualitative research conducted by Hack-Polay (2012) suggests that migrant workers and expatriates who work in different countries suffering from homesickness will 1) be irritated easily because they are experiencing negative emotions; 2) lack of initiative and interest in the new environment; 3) have poor concentration and feel difficulty adjusting to work tasks because they frequently think about home and families. Therefore, I propose that homesickness will spill over to affect migrant workers' work lives.

Meanwhile, research on "work-life balance" has provided a theoretical foundation as to why homesickness will have a spillover effect on individuals' attitudes and behaviors in work. This stream of literature has addressed the spillover effect between employees' personal and work lives by suggesting that employee' performance in one domain will be damaged by the demands, emotions and stress from another domain (Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1992; Keene & Reynolds, 2005; Kirchmeyer, 1992; Kossek & Ozeki, 1998). For example, Leiter and Durup (1996) suggest that emotional exhaustion and stress play an important role in the spillover between employees' work and life domains. Similarly, if migrant workers are suffering from homesickness and are preoccupied by the home-related thoughts, they will likely carry over the negative experience of homesickness during their work and might be distracted. They will frequently think about their home and family, which creates stress for them especially they might feel guilty because they cannot stay and take care of their family members who are "empty-nesters" and "left-behind children" who need their presence and care.

Thus, migrant workers who experience homesickness, a preoccupation with home-related thoughts, are likely to be affected by the negative experience of homesickness in their

work via the mechanism of spillover. In the next section, I will link this spillover effect of homesickness to employees' job satisfaction and turnover intentions.

Homesickness and job satisfaction

The concept of job satisfaction refers to the pleasurable emotional state after employees evaluate their job or job experience (Locke, 1976). It describes how employees feel about their job and their work experience. Specifically, job satisfaction is the experience of the negative or positive feelings when people think about their job or the activities they are taking part in (Colquitt, Lepine, & Wesson, 2009). It is the general evaluation for different facets including pay, promotion, supervision, coworker, and work itself (Colquitt et al., 2009). Research on job satisfaction has a long empirical and theoretical history and has suggested that job satisfaction is a critical variable because it is related to all kinds of positive employee behaviors and organizational outcomes, such as task performance, organizational citizenship behaviors, and organizational commitment (Colquitt et al., 2009; Harrison, Newman, & Roth, 2006; Judge, Thoresen, Bono, & Patton, 2001).

In addition, personal variables have been studied as antecedents predicting job satisfaction, such as personality traits (Brown & Peterson, 1993; Mount, Ilies, & Johnson, 2006). Specifically, Judge, Heller, and Mount (2002) concluded that employees who are less emotionally stable will experience lower satisfaction because they are more likely to experience negative affective emotions at work. For example, if employees get angry easily, they will feel lower job satisfaction because they are more likely to be sensitive or even misinterpret others' behavior. Similarly, homesick migrant workers who are preoccupied by home-related thoughts and suffer from anxiety and depression will potentially become emotionally unstable and get irritated easily (Hack-Polay, 2012), they might become sensitive to or misinterpret others' behaviors at work as negative or insulting. As a result, these

experiences might be perceived by migrant workers as part of their work. Thus, job satisfaction might be reduced.

A parallel explanation for the negative relationship between homesickness and job satisfaction may be offered from the perspective of emotion and moods. Research has shown the important influence of mood and emotion on job satisfaction even when employees are satisfied with their work itself (e.g. tasks). For example, Colquitt et al. (2009) concluded that employees will feel lower job satisfaction when they feel sad even though they feel satisfied with their work. Because job satisfaction is an attitude based on their emotional state when evaluating job experience, people will refer to their general feelings when they are working. According to the “affect-as-information” model (Forgas & Bower, 1988), people will simply appraise “how do I feel in general” to get the answer instead of thinking about every component of the question. For example, when people are asked to answer whether they are satisfied with their life, people will not appraise each facets of their life, (e.g. income, relationship with others, and living conditions). Instead, they will simply draw from their affective feelings in their life. Thus, if people feel happy all the time, they will give a “yes” to the question of life satisfaction. Similarly, homesickness among migrant workers is a grief-like reaction that has symptoms relating to emotional disturbances, such as anxiety and depression (Fisher & Hood, 1987; Van Tilburg et al., 1996). Thus, migrant workers are likely to carry these negative emotional experiences with them during their work. As a result, the overall working experience might be affected by the emotions carried from homesickness. Thus, job satisfaction is likely reduced. Therefore, the first hypothesis of this study is:

Hypothesis 1a: Migrant workers’ homesickness will negatively relate to job satisfaction.

Homesickness and turnover intentions

Turnover intentions refer to the employees' willingness to voluntarily and deliberately departure from their current company (Tett & Meyer, 1993). A tremendous number of empirical studies and reviews have been conducted on employee turnover (Griffeth, Hom, & Gaertner, 2000; Lee, Mitchell, Wise, & Fireman, 1996; Mobley, Griffeth, Hand, & Meglino, 1979). It has received such attention because turnover is extremely costly across industries (Hinkin & Bruce Tracey, 2000; Watlington, Shockley, Guglielmino, & Felsher, 2010). However, given the limited access to actual turnover data, turnover intentions have been examined as the strongest cognitive predictor of eventual turnover (Michaels & Spector, 1982). In this study, turnover intention among migrant workers might be a strong predictor of whether they will come back for next year after they visit home during spring festivals.

Lee et al. (1996) suggested an unfolding model that indicates there are four paths of turnover decisions. The second path provided a theoretical foundation for the relationship between homesickness and turnover intention. Specifically, it describes that first there is a shock event (e.g. failed for promotion) happens to employees and makes them start appraising whether their values and goals (e.g. career achievement or higher income) align with the current jobs. If they perceive there is a serious misalignment, and it is not worthwhile to compromise their values to keep the current job, they may leave the organization (Lee et al., 1996). This model could be adopted in the migration context. Specifically, if migrant workers are suffering from homesickness, various home-related events may become "shock" types of events (e.g. children's birthday and an elderly parent's sickness) that cause migrant workers to appraise whether working far away from home compromise their desire to take care of "empty-nesters" and "left-behind children" and whether it is worthwhile to do so. Therefore, those migrant workers who are homesick might

experience this decision process to consider quitting their job and going back home or working in another place close to their family. In addition, this model explained the phenomenon that there is a high turnover after spring festival when migrant workers visit their family. Migrant workers who suffer from homesickness visit their family during spring festival and finally recognize that it is not worthwhile to compromise their willingness of staying home by working far away from home. Thus, I propose the second hypothesis in this study as:

Hypothesis 1b: Migrant workers' homesickness will positively relate to turnover intentions.

The Mediating Role of Work Adjustment in Homesickness

To explain how migrant workers' homesickness influences their job satisfaction and turnover intentions, work adjustment is proposed as a mediating mechanism.

Work adjustment

Adjustment theory has been developed with an international perspective for expatriates. Black et al. (1991) define cross-cultural adjustment as the comfort level expatriates feel concerning their new environment. Moreover, cross-cultural adjustment has three dimensions: general adjustment (comfort regarding the general living conditions, e.g. food, transportation and entertainment); interaction adjustment (comfort regarding interaction with local communities); and work adjustment (comfort regarding job assignments or tasks). A number of studies have been conducted on expatriates' adjustment because it is viewed as a major contribution for the extremely expensive failures of international assignments (Shaffer & Harrison, 1998; Takeuchi et al., 2002). In addition, research on expatriates shows that expatriates' adjustment is an important predictor to many work domain variables, such as

job satisfaction, turnover intention, job performance (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005; Black & Mendenhall, 1991; Black et al., 1991; Black & Stephens, 1989; Takeuchi et al., 2002).

Thus, this study focuses on the mediating role of work adjustment that links migrant workers' homesickness to job satisfaction and turnover intentions, for the following reasons. First, work adjustment is an important work domain variable that indicates the spillover from migrant workers' personal life to work life because it shows whether migrant workers fit with the long-shifts and repetitive tasks that require a high level of patience and carefulness while suffering from homesickness. Second, general adjustment may not fit in the migration context because migrant workers are still living in the same country where living conditions such as food, language, and health facilities are not very different from that at their hometown. Third, interaction adjustment may not fit in the migration situation because migrant workers typically do not have opportunity to interact with local communities when working long shifts and living with other migrant workers (Harney, 2008). Thus, focusing on work adjustment, migrant workers' comfort with the tasks and work responsibilities, will provide a better explanation of the spillover effect from migrant worker' personal lives to work lives.

Homesickness and work adjustment

Research has shown that homesickness leads to emotional disturbances such as anxiety, depression, and absentmindedness (Fisher, 1990; Fisher & Hood, 1987; Stroebe et al., 2002). According to work-life balance theories, stress and strains from personal life may make it difficult for individuals to meet the demands of the role at work (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Similarly, the expatriate adjustment literature also shows that non-work factors will affect expatriates' work adjustment because they will be distracted and exhausted from the stress and demands from their personal life (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005; Lazarova, Westman, & Shaffer, 2010). Thus, in this study, homesickness could be viewed as

a personal life factor that will affect migrant workers in their work. For instance, when migrant workers are preoccupied by home-related thoughts and suffering from anxiety, depression, and absentmindedness, they may carry over these negative experiences during their work, which in turn create stress for them. In addition, they may also show lack of initiative and interest to the new work environment and poor concentration on work (Hack-Polay, 2012). Lack of initiative and interest in the new environment might make migrant workers be passive and prevent them from seeking and getting guidance and help on work tasks. Poor concentration might prevent migrant workers from adjusting to their work that involves long shifts and repetitive tasks and to the need for a high level of patience and carefulness. Therefore, migrant workers who experience homesickness might not feel comfortable adjusting their work expectations and responsibilities because of the stress and emotional burdens caused by homesickness. Thus, migrant workers' work adjustment would be reduced if they are suffering from homesickness.

Work adjustment, job satisfaction and turnover intentions

The relationships between work adjustment and job satisfaction and turnover intentions have been well established by expatriate studies (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005; Black & Stephens, 1989; Takeuchi et al., 2002). Specifically, because maladjustment to the work role might create high stress (Takeuchi, Tesluk, Yun, & Lepak, 2005), expatriates may become overwhelmed and frustrated by the stress from their job, and may generate negative evaluation and affect to the job experience that created the stress (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005). As a result, expatriates' job satisfaction, the over evaluation toward their job experience, would be reduced. In this study, migrant workers' maladjustment to the new routines and responsibilities could create stress that might trigger negative evaluations and affect toward the job experience. Therefore, if migrant workers feel uncomfortable with their

work roles, they might have a negative attitude toward their job. In addition, because research shows that withdrawal behaviors such as absenteeism from work and quitting the job are the well-documented reactions to stress (Takeuchi et al., 2005), the stress created by maladjustment to work will potentially lead to an increased turnover intention. Similarly, in this study, migrant workers who experience maladjustment to their work roles will potentially experience stress at work, and thus, they might think about quitting.

An integrated approach addressing the mediation mechanism could be offered from a perspective of stressor-stress-strain framework. According to Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al. (2005), this framework describes how expatriates adjust to the stress caused by different stressors will lead to strains (strains are defined as the reactions to stress, such as job satisfaction and turnover intentions). For example, if expatriates are experiencing the stressor of role ambiguity at work, stress may be generated if they cannot adjust well. As a result, job satisfaction will be reduced as a reaction of strain (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005). In this study, homesickness relating to preoccupied home-related thoughts and emotional disturbances (anxiety and depression), could be perceived as a stressor from migrant workers' personal lives. If homesick migrant workers carry over the negative emotional experience to work, they have to cope with the conflict between the preoccupation of home-related thoughts which distract them and their work roles' expectation of patience, concentration and carefulness in their long-shift and repetitive tasks. If migrant workers fail to adjust the stress, job satisfaction and turnover intention will be generated as the strains. Therefore, the third and fourth hypotheses of this study are:

Hypothesis 2a: Migrant workers' work adjustment will mediate the relationship between homesickness and job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2b: Migrant workers' work adjustment will mediate the relationship between homesickness and turnover intentions.

CHAPTER 3. METHODS

In this chapter, the characteristics of the research sample, data collection procedures, and the measurement scales are presented. In addition, data analytic technique is presented at the end.

Research Sample

To collect data, a survey was conducted in a manufacturing factory located in the city of Shenzhen, China. A total number of 625 questionnaires were distributed to the factory workers including both line workers and supporting staffs. Among the distributed questionnaires, 398 completed questionnaires were collected with an effective response rate of 63.68%.

A sample restriction was applied based on the literature of adjustment studies. According to the meta analysis by Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al. (2005), the best-fitting model for the U-curve of expatriates adjustment suggests that the curve of cultural adjustment become stabilized after about four and half years. This means that after about four and half years, there is no variance on adjustment because individuals perceive they all adjust to the new environment after that. Thus, given the consideration of the significant effect of time on individuals' adjustment, a sample restriction of less than five years tenure in the city was applied to the current sample. City tenure was chosen over organization tenure because if a worker came to the city earlier, they would be highly likely working in a manufacturing factory and at very similar positions before coming to the current company. Thus, city tenure better reflects workers' adjustment level and provides a better prediction for the relationship with other variables. After the sample restriction, the total number of the sample was reduced to 307.

In this sample, the mean age was 24.19 years (S.D. = 5.29). The mean organization tenure was 11.69 months (S.D. = 10.47). The mean city tenure was 18.83 months (S.D. = 15.76). In addition, 46.4% workers were male, and 47.5% of workers have received higher education than primary school and the rest have an education level of primary school.

Survey Procedure

Since all participants were Chinese, the entire survey questionnaires were provided in Mandarin. The items of measurement scales had originally written in English, thus, a translation-back translation procedure was necessary: First, the author, who was a bilingual in both Chinese and English, translated the entire items into Chinese. Next, a Chinese-English bilingual academic reviewed the translated items to verify conceptual equivalence between the translated items and the original ones. Then two employees at the factory were asked to review the entire translated questionnaire to increase clarification. Finally, the author back-translated the entire items to English to ensure that both Chinese and English items have the same accuracy (Brislin, 1980).

The survey was conducted in July, 2013 over one week period. I and the research team visited the company to administer surveys. Consent forms were presented and confidentiality of responses was assured before migrant workers take the survey, and after completion, they returned the survey directly to the research team on-site. The procedures of the survey were approved by an institutional review board (IRB) for social and behaviors sciences.

Measures

Homesickness

Seven items of homesickness were utilized from the scale of homesickness by Archer et al. (1998). Based on the conceptualization of the current study, items related to “settlement in the new environment” were dropped to avoid the inter-correlation with adjustment scale. In addition, because the questions are developed for university students, some questions are dropped or adapted for this study surveying migrant workers. A sample item for homesickness included “I miss my family back home” (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). The Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was .73.

Work adjustment

Three-item scale of work adjustment was utilized from the scale of cross-culture adjustment by Black and Stephens (1989). The instructions asked respondents to answer that in what extent they adjusted the items in the scale. A sample item included “performance standards and expectations” (1 = not at all, 7 = completely). The Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was .76.

Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction was measured using the three-item scale of job satisfaction from Bowling and Hammond (2008). This scale was a job satisfaction subscale of the *Michigan Organizational Assessment Questionnaire* (Cammann, Fichman, Jenkins, & Klesh, 1983). A sample item was “All in all I am satisfied with my job” (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). The Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was .87.

Turnover intentions

A two-item measure was utilized from Begley and Czajka’s study (1993). The two items were “As soon as I can find a better job, I’ll quit” and “I often think about quitting my job in this factory” (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). The Cronbach’s alpha

coefficient was .69, which was slightly lower than the cut-off point .70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

Data analysis

Data was transferred into SPSS to perform data analysis. To test the direct relationships between the independent variable (i.e. homesickness) and the dependent variables (i.e. job satisfaction and turnover intentions) (Hypothesis 1a and 1b) and the mediating effects of work adjustment in the hypothesized relationships (Hypothesis 2a and 2b), the simple mediation procedure (Sobel test) suggested by Preacher and Hayes (2004) was utilized.

CHAPTER 4. RESULTS

In this chapter, I will present the descriptive statistics to show the basic information and relationship among the variables. Then the results of the simple mediation procedure are presented.

Descriptive Statistics

Means, standard deviations, reliability and correlations among variables are included in Table 1. Cronbach's alphas for all the measures were above the cut-off point of .70, except turnover intentions which was slightly lower at .69. It is shown that homesickness was negatively related to work adjustment ($r = .12, p < .05$), negatively related to job satisfaction ($r = -.11, p < .05$), and positively related to turnover intentions ($r = .21, p < .01$). In addition, work adjustment was positively related to job satisfaction ($r = .37, p < .05$) and negatively related to turnover intentions ($r = -.19, p < .05$).

Table 1 Means, Standard Deviations, Pearson Correlations, and Cronbach's alphas

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
1. Homesickness	5.4	1	(.73)			
2. Work adjustment	3.14	0.92	-.12*	(.76)		
3. Job satisfaction	4.47	1.52	-.11*	.37**	(.87)	
4. Turnover intention	3.98	1.63	.21**	-.19**	-.37**	(.69)

Note: $N_s = 294 - 304$. Cronbach's alphas are presented on the diagonal within parentheses.

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

Hypotheses Testing

The results of the mediation procedures analyses using Sobel test were presented in Table 2 and Table 3. The direct relationships between independent variable and dependent variables (Hypothesis 1a and 1b) were tested in the first step in the Sobel test, and the mediation mechanisms were presented following the first regression steps.

Table 2 Results for the Mediation Procedure on Job Satisfaction

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>		
Direct and total effects						
Job satisfaction regressed on homesickness:	-.17	.09	-1.97	.0499		
Work adjustment regressed on homesickness:	-.13	.05	-2.41	.0162		
Job satisfaction regressed on work adjustment, controlling for homesickness:	.60	.09	6.57	.0001		
Job satisfaction regressed on homesickness, controlling for work adjustment:	-.09	.08	-1.16	.2451		
	Value	<i>SE</i>	LL 95% CI	UL95% C	<i>z</i>	<i>p</i>
Indirect effect and significance using normal distribution						
Sobel	-.08	.03	-.14	-.01	-2.25	.0247
	M	SE	LL 95% CI	UL95% CI		
Bootstrap results for indirect effect						
Effect	-.08	.03	-.15	-.01		

Note: $N = 294$. Unstandardized regression coefficients are reported. The number of Bootstrap generated is 5000; LL = lower limit; CI = confidence interval; UL = upper limit

According to the Table 2 above, the first step regressed job satisfaction on homesickness and showed that homesickness was negatively related to job satisfaction ($r = -.17, p < .05$). Thus Hypothesis 1a, migrant workers' homesickness will negatively relate to job satisfaction, was supported. The second regression showed that independent variable (homesickness) was negatively related to mediator (work adjustment) ($r = -.13, p < .05$). Then the third regression showed that mediator (work adjustment) was positively related to job satisfaction, after controlling for homesickness ($r = .60, p < .01$). Finally, after controlling for work adjustment, homesickness became no longer significantly related to job satisfaction ($r = -.09, p > .05$), and an indirect effect was found (-.08). Assuming normal distribution, the two-tailed significance test showed that the indirect effect was significant ($z = -2.25, p < .05$). The bootstrap result also supported the Sobel test by showing the indirect effect with a 95% confidence interval was not containing zero (-.15, -.01). Thus, Hypothesis 2a, migrant workers' work adjustment will mediate the relationship between homesickness and job satisfaction, was supported.

Using the same approach, the results of the mediation mechanism of work adjustment linking homesickness to turnover intentions is reported in Table 3 as follows.

Table 3 Results for the Mediation Procedure on Turnover Intentions

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>		
Direct and total effects						
Turnover intentions regressed on homesickness:	.34	.09	3.67	.0003		
Work adjustment regressed on homesickness:	-.13	.05	-2.40	.0172		
Turnover intentions regressed on work adjustment, controlling for homesickness:	-.30	.10	-2.96	.0033		
Turnover intentions regressed on homesickness, controlling for work adjustment:	.31	.09	3.27	.0012		
	Value	<i>SE</i>	LL 95% CI	UL95% CI	<i>z</i>	<i>p</i>
Indirect effect and significance using normal distribution						
Sobel	.04	.02	-.0034	.0800	-1.80	.0716
	M	SE	LL 95% CI	UL95% CI		
Bootstrap results for indirect effect						
Effect	-.04	.04	.0043	.0864		

Note: $N = 295$. Unstandardized regression coefficients are reported. The number of Bootstrap generated is 5000; LL = lower limit; CI = confidence interval; UL = upper limit

According to the Table 3 above, the first step regressed turnover intentions on homesickness and showed that homesickness was positively related to turnover intentions ($r = .34, p < .01$), Thus Hypothesis 1b, migrant workers' homesickness will positively relate to turnover intentions, was supported. The second regression showed that independent variable (homesickness) was negatively related to mediator (work adjustment) ($r = -.13, p < .05$). Then the third regression showed that mediator (work adjustment) was negatively related to job satisfaction, after controlling for homesickness ($r = -.30, p < .01$). Finally, after controlling for work adjustment, homesickness is still significantly related to turnover intention satisfaction ($r = 3.1, p > .01$), and an indirect effect was not found (.04, $z = -1.80, p > .05$). Thus, Hypothesis 2b, migrant workers work adjustment will mediate the relationship between homesickness and turnover intentions, was not supported.

CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION

In this chapter, I present the research findings and theoretical and practical implications. In addition, limitations and directions for future studies are proposed at the end.

Research Findings

As hypothesized, I found that migrant workers' homesickness was negatively related to job satisfaction and positively related to turnover intentions. Work adjustment mediated the relationship between homesickness and job satisfaction but did not mediate the relationship between homesickness and turnover intentions.

First, Hypothesis 1a and 2a predicted the mediation mechanism of work adjustment between homesickness to job satisfaction and were fully supported. This shows the critical role of work adjustment in the process of spillover mechanism from migrant workers' homesickness (personal life) to their job attitude (work life).

Second, Hypothesis 1b was supported, which also suggested that homesickness will spill over to migrant workers' work domain. However, Hypothesis 2b was not supported, indicating the importance of homesickness in migrant workers' decision making process of turnover. This result suggests that migrant workers' want to quit their job mainly because they suffer from homesickness and might experience various "shock" type events that make them think quitting but not due to their maladjustment to their work. Thus, work adjustment was not the key to reducing the effect of migrant workers' homesickness on their turnover intentions.

These findings are intriguing because they show the importance of homesickness, an under-studied but commonly experienced psychological state among migrant workers. Moreover, it expanded expatriate adjustment research by linking it with homesickness and showed the important role of work adjustment in migrant workers' lives.

Theoretical Implications

By linking homesickness to work adjustment, job satisfaction and turnover intentions, this study contributes to the stream of both adjustment research and homesickness research. First, the study introduced homesickness, a novel psychological concept, as an impendent variable that will affect relevant organizational variables, which has been little explored in organizational behavior research. Second, by proposing work adjustment as the mediating mechanism linking homesickness to work domain variables, the study contributes to the international HR management research by introducing an antecedent to work adjustment and by expanding the adjustment theory from expatriate study to within-country migration study.

In addition, the mediation of work adjustment between homesickness and job satisfaction suggested that the migrant worker's work adjustment is the key component in the process that affects their job satisfaction by homesickness. Moreover, the non-significant indirect effect of work adjustment from homesickness to turnover intentions suggested the importance of homesickness on migrant workers' work life.

Managerial Implications

According to the results, this study provides a strong and useful implication for companies and managers which employ migrant workers. First, the relationship between homesickness and work domain variables indicates that managers should not omit the effect of homesickness on migrant workers. Strategies and actions are needed to help migrant workers to deal with the problem of homesickness. Second, by showing the mediating mechanism of work adjustment between homesickness and job satisfaction, managers should understand the important role that work adjustment is playing. Thus, actions are needed to help migrant workers to adjust the work responsibilities to overcome the negative effect of homesickness. For example, orientation or training on how to concentrate on and perform

tasks more efficiently and effectively may be provided. Finally, the rejected Hypothesis 2b suggests that working on improving migrant workers' adjustment might not contribute to reducing turnover rate because homesickness is the key reason. Thus, actions might be taken to help migrant workers to cope with homesickness. For instance, companies could provide long distance call-cards for workers so that they could contact their families regularly and give some gifts for workers to send back to home.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Studies

The present study has several limitations that need further attention for future studies. First, because the data was collected in a cross-sectional way, causal interpretations cannot be made and reverse causality may exist due to common method bias (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003) may exist. Therefore, future research could consider longitudinal study or additional experiment designs. Second, since the results are tested from a Chinese sample, the generalizability might be questionable due to the different culture values which differ from western countries (Hofstede, 2001). Therefore, future research could examine the culture differences among different countries. Third, since the outcome variables are all attitudinal measures and are self-reported, future research on behavioral outcome variables, such as job performance and organizational citizenship behavior rated by supervisors could be tested. Finally, even though this study explains why migrant workers' homesickness will relate to work domain variables by introducing the mediating mechanism of work adjustment, the question of when the effect will be reduced or enhanced is still unknown. Thus, future research might explore possible moderating effects to provide better guidelines for managers employing migrant workers with strategies and methods to cope with the negative effect of homesickness on migrant workers' work life.

CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSION

Previous research on expatriates suggests that adjustment in the new environment plays a critical role in the work life of those employees who left their home and work far away from home. By incorporating homesickness research and expatriate adjustment research, I examined two main questions: (1) Whether there is a spillover effect from migrant workers' homesickness to their work lives (job satisfaction and turnover intention); and (2) What role adjustment plays during these processes. By doing so, this study contributes to current organizational research by introducing a novel psychological concept to adjustment research and meeting the urgent need of managers who employ migrant workers in their business.

The data supported that migrant workers' homesickness would spillover to affect migrant workers' work life by reducing their job satisfaction and by increasing their turnover intentions. However, work adjustment only mediated the negative relationship between homesickness and job satisfaction, but did not mediate the positive relationship between homesickness and turnover intentions. These results suggested that both homesickness and work adjustment are important for migrant workers in their work lives.

This study is only a start to introducing homesickness to management research. By conducting this study, I hope more attention will be paid to homesickness, which is a commonly experienced distress among those employees who leave their home. I believe homesickness is a fruitful and worthy field for future research.

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APPENDIX

Items of measures used to collect data are presented as follows:

Homesickness

Migrant workers were asked to respond a 7 point Likert scale on the extent to which they agree or disagree with the following statements:

1. I think about my home that I left behind.
2. When I am thinking about nothing in particular, my thoughts always come back to home.
3. I think about my friends at home.
4. I often think about my family back home.
5. Thinking about home makes me sad.
6. I feel as if I've left part of me at home.
7. If I had the chance to go home, I would not want to come back here.

Work Adjustment

A 5 point Likert scale was used to ask migrant workers on the extent to how unadjusted or adjusted to the following:

1. Specific job responsibilities
2. Performance standards and expectations
3. Supervisory responsibilities

Job Satisfaction

Migrant workers were asked to respond a 7 point Likert scale on the extent to which they agree or disagree with the following statements:

1. All in all, I am satisfied with my job
2. In general, I like my job.
3. In general, I like working here.

Turnover Intention

A 7 point Likert scale was used to ask migrant workers on the extent to which they agree or disagree with the following statements:

1. As soon as I can find a better job, I'll quit.
2. I often think about quitting my job in this factory.