

## *Original Paper*

# A Quantitative Study of the Impact of Human Competences of Distribution Logisticians on Their Intention to Leave

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Received: February 28, 2019

Accepted: April 8, 2019

Online Published: April 17, 2019

doi:10.22158/ibes.v1n1p49

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22158/ibes.v1n1p49>

### **Abstract**

#### **Context:**

*Distribution logistics is the field of the logistics, which is a key sector at the center of economic issues and concerns of the public authorities. Distribution logistics is recognized as a powerful tool for achieving the competitiveness of a company, which is why a growing need has been observed for highly qualified employees who can handle difficult processes.*

*The issue of logistics skills is important for management, career development and training. Nevertheless, human skills remain an important factor in retaining employees in Moroccan boards.*

#### **Objectives:**

*This research thus contributes to the construction of theories in the contemporary literature on human competence, in particular on the skills necessary for distribution logisticians to succeed in their jobs and careers.*

#### **Research approach:**

*On a methodological level, our positivist approach in its paradigm of human skills modeling, is based on a research in a public company, which we preceded by the examination of the point of view of the managers and technicians in distribution logistics, thanks to confirmatory research.*

#### **Methods:**

*The study was conducted in Morocco with 95 logisticians in different autonomous administrations of water and electricity distribution. We used SMART PLS to analyze the results.*

#### **Results:**

*Our contribution consists of demonstrating how the two variables: social skills, decision-making skills influence the intention to leave through the mediation of individual performance.*

**Keywords**

*human skills, distribution logistics, individual performance, intention to leave*

**1. Introduction**

Over the last 30 years, the field, profession and practice of logistics and supply chain have undergone a profound transformation within the company. This study uses the theory of observation and practice to explore the nature of human skills in logistics. The results suggest that distribution logistics values social and decision-making skills and in practice rather than focusing solely and exclusively on technical skills, since this is first and foremost a team work. The existing literature shows that the skills of the logistics manager must be varied and complete (logistics managers in particular more than all other types of managers), with particular importance for communication skills and interpersonal skills (Christopher & Mangan, 2005).

Logistics as a discipline has a common criterion by which important skills could be recognized. The fundamental objective of this research is to identify the skills of the logisticians of the autonomous water and electricity distribution systems in Morocco where logistics represents an emerging and important discipline in the accomplishment of their tasks in an efficient way. The autonomous administrations are public companies. It is precisely for this criterion that we chose this type of company to analyze the location of human resources in the Moroccan market. Therefore, we opted for an exploratory approach with a qualitative logic. To analyse data, the partial least squares technique (of structural equation modelling) was used. PLS is suitable for small sample sizes such as this one (70 logisticians).

**2. Theoretical Background**

The aim is to summarize the specific literature: Human skills (2.1), individual performance (2.2), distribution logistics (2.3) and the intention to leave (2.4).

**2.1 Human Skills**

Several authors have been interested in the notion of human skills ((Ahmed et al., 2012) (Casado-Lumbreras et al., 2010) (Englund et al., 2000) (Gilbert, 1978) (Lindgren et al., 2003) (Litecky et al., 2004) (Myers et al., 2014), (Ogbu, 1981) (Seery et al., 2016) (Boyatzis, 2008)), because companies are giving more and more importance to these out-of-school skills, different from the knowledge acquired in traditional training, then they cannot teach at school and have a high weight in the lists of requirements defined to characterize a vacant position (L'évy-leboyer, 2009).

According to the literature, the following table represents the set of definitions used for human skills:

**Table 1. Adapted from Dell'Aquila et al. (2016, p. 11) Personal Synthesis**

| authors                | definitions   |
|------------------------|---|
| (Svetli & Kajn, 2009)  | Intangible knowledge related to personal characteristics and acquired with experience and practice.   |
| (Moss & Tilly, 1996)   | Capabilities and traits specific to personality, attitude and behavior rather than the formal technical knowledge required for each level of skilled service employment.                              |
| (Gilothe, 2000)        | -Competencies related to critical thinking, oral communication, personal qualities and interpersonal and/or teamwork that contemporary business workers require. - Skills associated with work ethic. |
| (Nickson et al., 2012) | Non-technical skills involving interpersonal and intrapersonal skills to manage performance in different contexts.  |
| (Marie et al., 1997)   | The behavioral characteristics of an individual in direct relation with the effective or remarkable performance of a job  |
| (Robles, 2012)         | Interpersonal qualities including traits, attitudes and behaviors rather than the technical skills or knowledge needed to find a job.   |

The issue of logistics skills is important for management, career development and education. Some may consider a group of skills more important than others (Suttiwatnaruput et al., 2014). Several research studies conclude that human skills are soft skills involving interpersonal and intrapersonal skills to manage performance in different contexts (Nickson et al., 2012). This definition we will treat in the field of distribution logistics. To be able to determine the influence of human skills on the performance of the distribution logistics manager.

### *2.2 Individual Performance*

The issue of job performance is central to the competitiveness of companies, as staff appraisal can identify weaknesses or reveal potential to be capitalized.

However, the effectiveness of qualified employees will be limited if they are not motivated to do their job. The shape and structure of an organization's HRM system can affect employee motivation levels in many ways (Delaney, 1996).

Intellectual capital is seen as a mediating construct between HR and organizational performance configurations, thus combining research into HR and management strategies (Youndt & Snell, 2004).

The theory of human capital, suggests that intellectual capital can create value and improve organizational performance by lowering costs, increasing benefits for clients or by making a combination of both (Youndt & Snell, 2004).

The impact of human resources management on performance has become the dominant research question in the field. There has been a series of studies showing a positive association between Human Resources Management (HRM) and performance, encouraging those who have always advocated a separate approach to human resources management (Guest, 1997).

There is no general theory of performance per se. However, we have a number of approaches and models,

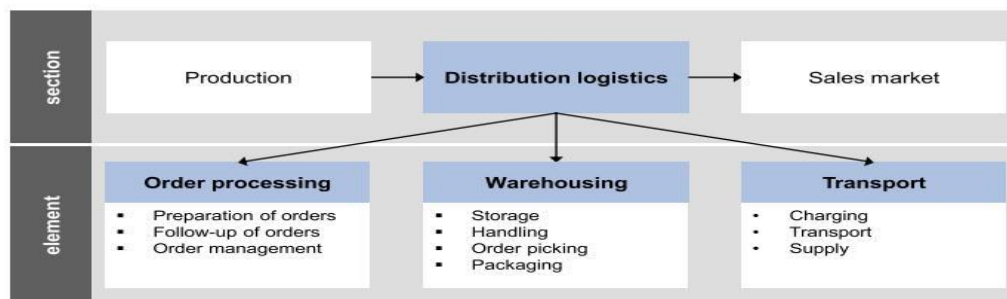
often built on specific disciplinary perspectives, such as economics, psychology, or production management, that help us understand and categorize aspects of performance (Guest, 1997). Then we will have to validate the relationship between human skills and performance.

### 2.3 Distribution Logistics

Logistics can be defined as a set of activities to promote efficient and effective supply management. These include supplier partnerships, physical goods material (logistics) and information sharing throughout the supply chain to meet customer requirements (Srivastava, 2006).

In general, logistics activities related to production can be categorized into supply logistics, internal logistics and distribution logistics. Logistic distribution activities take place once the goods leave a production plant (Koivusaari, 2016).

Distribution logistics play a vital role as it represents the functional component of the corporate logistics that interacts directly with the customer (Becker et al., 2016).



**Figure 1. Sections et Elements for Distribution Logistics (Becker et al., 2016, p. 2)**

The complexity of distribution logistics is essentially determined by the customer structure, product portfolio and distribution structure of a company.

In our case, we are interested in distribution logistics because the context of the study is the autonomous power and water distribution boards, therefore the distribution of a service that is very important in everyday life, as soon as the autonomous administrations occupy the monopoly of the markets for the distribution of water and electricity.

### 2.4 Intention to Leave

The intention to leave the company is considered an indicator of the level of loyalty of employees to the company. The fidelity does not translate into actual present behavior, it is not a directly observable phenomenon. Reichheld (1996) recalls that the intention of future behavior (fidelity) is different from the actual behavior of the individual: fidelity is thus difficult to measure. Evrard et al. (2003, p. 290) stress that “the result of a measurement is not the phenomenon itself, but an indicator reflecting this phenomenon” (Giraud, 2012).

In particular, intention to leave was considered a proximal antecedent since it captures the perceptions and evaluations of employees about job opportunities ((Allen, Shore, & Griffeth, 2003; Mobley, Griffeth,

Hand, & Meglino, 1979), cited by (Loi et al., 2006)).

For our case there is a negative relationship between (the performance of the logistics manager who has human skills) and his intention to leave his job, because when a logistics manager has important social skills, when he can manage his time easily, when he is able to solve his problems in an effective way, when he is a good analyst in decision-making. He begins to think seriously about leaving his company, so there is a negative and significant correlation between job satisfaction and a manager's intention to leave his job, especially in the logistics sector (Basoda, 2015).

### **3. Conceptual Model and Hypothesis Development**

The conceptual model uses a set of variables derived from the review of the literature and the results of the exploratory qualitative study. It includes, among others, variables related to human skills (social competence, decision-making), a mediating variable (individual performance) and a dependent variable (the intention to leave employment).

Do the social skills of distribution logisticians have an influence on their individual performance in the autonomous administrations of water and electricity distribution? Several theoretical justifications allow to answer in the affirmative (Heshizer, 1994). First of all Harland (1996) et Lamming et al. (2000) examined the skills managers need to function effectively in a logistics distribution network. While Knight et al. (2005) explored team building capabilities for individuals in a supply management role and operating in inter-organizational networks. These authors develop a list of skills required in areas such as strategic supply management, network understanding, relationship management, strategy formulation and implementation, and finally learning and management of skills. knowledge in a team environment (Sohal, 2013).

Social skills reflect the ability to develop the way of communicating with employees, to deploy the interpersonal skills necessary to develop favorable attributions and the motivation of subordinates (Myers et al., 2004). Social competence also plays an important role in workplaces as a prerequisite for good individual performance and the efficiency of businesses and organizations (Seeber & Wittmann, 2017). Our study aimed to verify the following hypothesis:

**H1: the social skills of a distribution logistician have a significant influence on his individual performance.**

Do the decision-making skills of distribution logisticians have an influence on their individual performance in the autonomous administrations of water and electricity distribution? Several theoretical justifications allow to answer in the affirmative (Heshizer, 1994). First, decision-making skills are defined as the qualities that enable managers to make decisions in an efficient way for the company. Managers, with well-developed decision-making skills and ideas, can see problems in a holistic manner and better analyze complex scenarios. This allows managers to better deal with ambiguous situations, which leads to safer and more timely decisions. Moreover, the ability to remain objective in the decision-making process and avoid a "managerial inertia" also allows managers to remain flexible and

make difficult decisions in dynamic or volatile markets. This enhances the company's ability to respond to competitive pressures or environmental changes (Myers et al., 2004). We therefore formulate the following hypothesis:

**H2: the making decisions skills of a distribution logistician have a significant influence on his individual performance.**

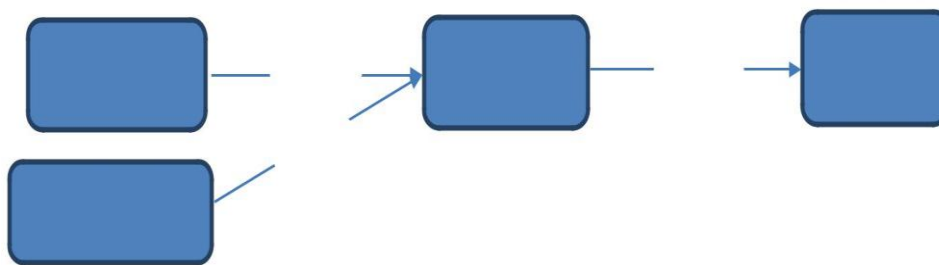
The individual performance of distribution logisticians has a positive influence or a negative influence on their intentions to leave the autonomous administrations of water and electricity distribution? Several theoretical justifications allow to answer in the affirmative (Heshizer, 1994). First of all McEvoy et Cascio (1987) explain in their studies that some models predict that the good performance of employees increases the ease of movement and will therefore lead to a positive relationship between performance and intention to leave. Other models do not postulate such a link and suggest a negative relationship between performance and intention to quit.

Firstly, Price (2001) suggests that there is a positive relationship between job performance and turnover, in which the higher the performance, the higher the probability of leaving the job. Secondly, Jackofsky (1986) argues that the most successful employees are likely to have better alternative employment opportunities and therefore greater ease of travel. Therefore, the best performers should be more motivated to quit their job voluntarily.

Thirdly, Zimmerman et Darnold (2009) show that job performance is likely to indirectly influence voluntary turnover, with the intention of leaving employment, so it has direct effects on voluntary turnover. It is based on the rolling pattern of Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

**H3: the individual Performance of a distribution logistician has a significant influence on his intention to leave.**

The Figure 2 shows the conceptual model elaborated from the discussion above.



**Figure 2. Conceptual Model**

#### 4. Methodology

A survey was carried out in the autonomous administration of water and electricity distribution s in Morocco. A questionnaire was developed; items for all constructs were generated and adapted from prior studies ((Hameed & Aamer, 2011) (Myers et al., 2004) (Sohal, 2013) (Murphy & Poist, 1998) (Murphy & Poist, 2006) (Pradhan et al., 2017) (Caesens et al., 2016) (Lee & Jimenez, 2011) (Viator, 2001).

Items were reviewed by three academicians and discussed with four logistics managers who were asked to comment on the appropriateness of the research constructs. Based on their feedback, some items were either modified or eliminated.

The questionnaire has been tested on a sample of 13 respondents to ensure that they fully understand the questions and are not likely to refuse to answer. The final version of the questionnaire, measuring all the items (23 items) on a five-point scale, was administered to 110 target respondents. is administered to 110 distribution logisticians whose number of all autonomous administrations of water supply and electricity existing in Morocco is 11.

In total, 95 questionnaires were returned (with an effective responderate of 86,36%). However, usable responses accounted for only 70 questionnaires. The respondents' profiles are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2. Respondent's Profile**

| <b>Respondent's characteristics</b>                | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Pourcentage</b> |
|--|------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Gender</b>                                      |                  |                    |
| Female   | 35               | 50.00%             |
| Male   | 35               | 50.00%             |
| <b>Position</b>                                    |                  |                    |
| Logistics Technician                               | 22               | 31.43 %            |
| Logistics Manager                                  | 11               | 15.71 %            |
| Head of Division Support                           | 10               | 14.29 %            |
| Purchasing and Logistics Service Manager           | 05               | 07.14 %            |
| Distribution logistics manager                     | 05               | 07.14 %            |
| Purchasing Manager                                 | 04               | 05.72 %            |
| Car Park Manager                                   | 08               | 11.43 %            |
| Administrative Officer in the Logistics Department |                  |                    |
| <b>Level of study</b>                              |                  |                    |
| Middle School                                      | 02               | 02.86 %            |
| High school  | 11               | 15.71 %            |
| Licence  | 14               | 20.00%             |
| Master   | 43               | 61.43%             |
| <b>Workforce of the organization</b>               |                  |                    |
| Lessthan300  | 04               | 05.71 %            |
| Between (300-500)                                  | 31               | 44.29 %            |

|  |    |         |
|--|----|---------|
| Between (500-1000)                     | 22 | 31.43%  |
| More than1000                          | 13 | 18.57%  |
| Number of employees in your department |    |         |
| Lessthan5                              | 04 | 05.71 % |
| Between5-10                            | 45 | 64.29 % |
| More than10                            | 21 | 30.00%  |

## 5. Data Analysis and Results

### 5.1 Exploratory Factor Analysis

Exploratory factor analysis by means of SPSS 20.0 was performed on the four variables of the model. Varimax rotation was used to determine the number of components factors (ML Manning et al., 2007). The final results of the exploratory factor analysis provided in table II show a structure of four factors. These results indicate that all the measurement scales are one dimensional which means that all items are thought to measure a single underlying construct (JF. Hair et al., 2006). Besides, all Cronbach alpha values are greater than 0.7 recommended by (JC Nunnally et al., 1978).

**Table 3. Factor Structure of The Constructs**

|      | Components |      |      |   | Cronbach'alpha |
|------|------------|------|------|---|----------------|
|      | 1          | 2    | 3    | 4 |                |
| S1   | ,867       |      |      |   |                |
| CS2  | ,961       |      |      |   |                |
| CS3  | ,950       |      |      |   |                |
| CS4  | ,964       |      |      |   | <b>.961</b>    |
| CS5  | ,893       |      |      |   |                |
| CS6  | ,864       |      |      |   |                |
| CPD1 |            | ,760 |      |   |                |
| CPD2 |            | ,505 |      |   |                |
| CPD3 |            | ,821 |      |   | <b>.787</b>    |
| CPD4 |            | ,652 |      |   |                |
| CPD5 |            | ,771 |      |   |                |
| CPD6 |            | ,689 |      |   |                |
| PI1  |            |      | ,813 |   |                |
| PI2  |            |      | ,853 |   |                |
| PI3  |            |      | ,805 |   | <b>.849</b>    |
| PI4  |            |      | ,747 |   |                |
| PI5  |            |      | ,742 |   |                |



|     |      |             |
|-----|------|-------------|
| IQ1 | ,778 |             |
| IQ2 | ,875 | <b>.848</b> |
| IQ4 | ,720 |             |

CS: Social Skills, CPD: Making decision skills, PI: Individual performance, IQ: intention to leave. Extraction method: PCA; Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser normalization; KMO 0,707; Bartlett’s test of sphericity = 0,000; Total variance explained 70,295; rotation has converged after 5 iterations.

5.2 Confirmatory Factor Analysis

To analyse data, the partial least squares technique (of structural equation modeling) was used. PLS is suitable for small sample sizes such as this one. Using Smart-PLS (Ringle et al., 2005), the study first examined the measurement model to assess the internal consistency, convergent validity and discriminate validity of the four constructs. Internal consistency is ensured when the reliability of each measurement is > 0.7 (JC Nunnally et al., 1978). To assess reliability, Cronbach’s alpha and composite reliability were used. All the four variables have a Cronbach’s alpha and composite reliabilities with acceptable values to confirm internal consistency of the data. Convergent validity is asserted when each construct has an AVE greater than 0.5 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The results provided in Table 4 show that the AVEs range from 0.624 to 0.841. That means that convergent validity is demonstrated.

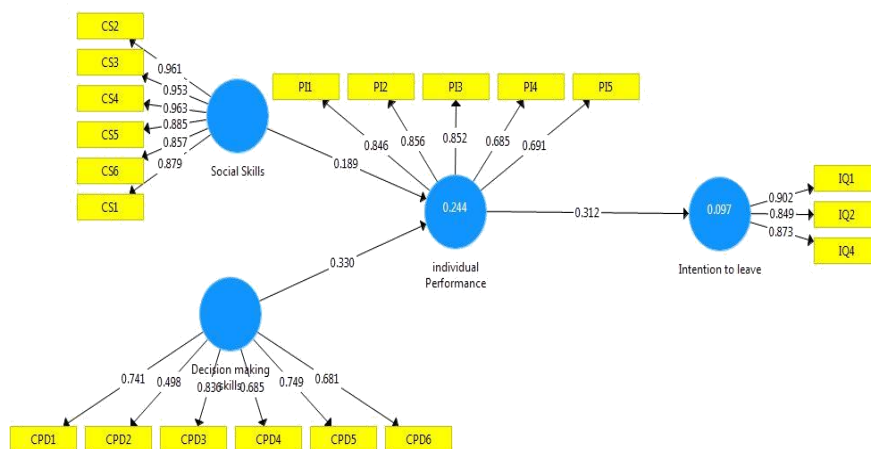


Figure 3. Bootstrapping Procedure Result

**Table 4. Reliability And Convergent Validity**

|                               | Chronbach' alpha | Composite reliability | AVE   |
|-------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|-------|
| <b>Social skills</b>          | 0.962            | 0.969                 | 0.841 |
| <b>Decision making skills</b> | 0.793            | 0.854                 | 0.659 |
| <b>individual Performance</b> | 0.848            | 0.907                 | 0.765 |
| <b>Intention to leave</b>     | 0.852            | 0.891                 | 0.624 |

Discriminant validity is asserted when each item has an item loading greater than 0.6 on its respective construct (JF. Hair et al., 2006), when the square root of all the constructs is larger than all the other Average Variance Extracted (AVEs) cross-correlations, and when no item loads highly on any other construct. The results also show that the values on the diagonal are higher than any value in the lower part to the diagonal which asserts discriminant validity. It is also clear that the items are highly correlated with their corresponding construct and weakly correlated with the other constructs. This confirms the discriminant validity of the measurement scales (Tables 5 and 6).

**Table 5. Discriminant Validity-Former and Larcker Criterion**

|                        | Social skills | Decision making skills | individual Performance | Intention to leave |
|------------------------|---------------|------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| Social skills          | 0,917         |                        |                        |                    |
| Decision making skills | 0,792         | 0,706                  |                        |                    |
| Individual Performance | 0,376         | 0,267                  | 0,875                  |                    |
| Intention to leave     | 0,451         | 0,480                  | 0,312                  | 0,790              |

**Table 6. Discriminant Validity-Cross Loadings**

|             | Social Skills | Decision Making Skills | Individual Performance | Intention to Leave |
|-------------|---------------|------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>CPD1</b> | 0,470         | 0,741                  | -0,148                 | 0,263              |
| <b>CPD2</b> | 0,260         | 0,498                  | -0,225                 | 0,250              |
| <b>CPD3</b> | 0,686         | 0,836                  | 0,033                  | 0,466              |
| <b>CPD4</b> | 0,612         | 0,685                  | 0,096                  | 0,392              |
| <b>PD5</b>  | 0,598         | 0,749                  | -0,036                 | 0,324              |
| <b>CPD6</b> | 0,642         | 0,681                  | 0,135                  | 0,239              |
| <b>CS1</b>  | 0,879         | 0,734                  | 0,015                  | 0,463              |
| <b>CS2</b>  | 0,961         | 0,774                  | -0,042                 | 0,465              |
| <b>CS3</b>  | 0,953         | 0,734                  | -0,105                 | 0,402              |
| <b>CS4</b>  | 0,963         | 0,763                  | -0,104                 | 0,449              |

|            |        |        |        |       |
|------------|--------|--------|--------|-------|
| <b>CS5</b> | 0,885  | 0,676  | -0,157 | 0,322 |
| <b>CS6</b> | 0,857  | 0,659  | -0,008 | 0,336 |
| <b>IQ1</b> | 0,021  | 0,033  | 0,902  | 0,275 |
| <b>IQ2</b> | -0,057 | 0,101  | 0,849  | 0,222 |
| <b>IQ4</b> | -0,135 | -0,137 | 0,873  | 0,309 |
| <b>PI1</b> | 0,239  | 0,329  | 0,398  | 0,846 |
| <b>PI2</b> | 0,213  | 0,408  | 0,337  | 0,856 |
| <b>PI3</b> | 0,524  | 0,470  | 0,327  | 0,852 |
| <b>PI4</b> | 0,388  | 0,327  | -0,052 | 0,685 |
| <b>PI5</b> | 0,431  | 0,336  | 0,049  | 0,691 |

Our major aim is then to test the proposed structural model and the hypothesized relationships between the four constructs (JF. Hair et al., 2006). The information “R squared” (R<sup>2</sup>) and path coefficients ( $\beta$ ) are provided in the Figure below. The R<sup>2</sup> value must be greater than 0.1 following the recommendations of J-J. Croutsche, 2002. The Table below provides a summary of hypotheses testing results.

**Table 7. Hypotheses Testing Results**

| <b>Hypothesis</b>   |             | <b>Path <math>\beta</math></b> | <b>T-value</b> | <b>Supported?</b> |
|---|-------------|--------------------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| H1: the social skills of a distribution<br>logistician have a significant influence on his individual<br>performance.           | logistician | 0.189                          | 4.483          | Yes               |
| H2: the making decisions skills of a distribution<br>logistician have a significant influence on his<br>individual performance. |             | 0.330                          | 3.723          | Yes               |
| H3: the individual Performance of a distribution<br>logistician has a significant influence<br>on his<br>intention to leave.    | on his      | 0.312                          | 5.483          | Yes               |

## 6. Conclusion

This study tested three hypotheses to examine the interrelationship among human skills of distribution logistician and his intention to leave using data from 70 respondents. It has been demonstrated that human skills have a strong influence in the intention to leave the company of the distribution logistician. The results show that individual performance is the key to uniting human skills.

Future research should seek using another skills which have a big influence on the distribution logisticians intention to leave the organizations.

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