

The Relationship between Human Resource Development Factors and Turnover Intention: A Conceptual Framework

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Abstract

Retaining the best employees is of high concern for most organizations and this issue has become a significant focus of attention for many researchers. For this reason, this paper discussed different factors which influence the employee turnover intention-behavior in the organization, specifically to examine the effect of salary, performance appraisal, training & development and career growth (career goal progress, professional ability development, promotion speed, and remuneration growth) on turnover intention. In addition, based on the social exchange theory this paper explains the mediating role of organizational commitment in the relationship between human resource development factors and turnover intention. In order to develop a theoretical understanding, a detailed literature review is conducted that includes books, empirical and conceptual papers, a magazine about employee turnover intention and other related factors that influence turnover intention. The suggested framework may also contribute the existing literature on the relationship between human resource practices, career management practices, and employee turnover intention.

Keywords: Salary, Performance Appraisal, Training & Development, Career Growth, Organizational Commitment, Job Stress, Career Concerns, Turnover Intention.

Introduction

Researcher generally observed turnover and its proxy, turnover intentions as the withdrawal procedure of employee. Price (2001) and Cotton and Tuttle (1986) initially defined

turnover behavior as “the movement of employee to other organizations”, whereas the term turnover intention signify “the employees perceived possibility of leaving the existing organization”. The phenomenon of employee turnover has become a major concern of employers, as it indicates an ongoing challenge for contemporary practitioners and researchers (Abdulkareem *et al.*, 2015). For example, In the United States of America (U.S.A.), about 7.7% of the full time faculty members from various universities and colleges had left their posts for other institutions (Abdulkareem *et al.*, 2015). Among these academicians, only 30% were being retirees, whilst the remaining 70% had left their institutions for number of reasons (Tower & Watson, 2013; Abdulkareem *et al.*, 2015). Similarly, according to Long *et al.*, (2014) and Abdulkareem *et al.*, (2015) recent estimates have indicated that in the year 2012 to 2015, approximately around 19,000 professionals, which includes medical staff, lecturer from various colleges and universities leave Asia-pacific every year to look for a better opportunities in Western countries such as United States, Canada, Germany and United kingdom, among others. Other than that, in the context of higher education institution of Pakistan, majority of the qualitative and quantitative research findings indicate that faculty turnover is one of the major problem for higher education institution especially in private universities of Pakistan due to high switching rate of academicians as compare to public universities of Pakistan (Mubarak, 2012; Yusoff & Khan, 2013).

Employee turnover is one of the major problems in private universities of Pakistan due to tremendous growth of the education industry and high switching of academicians as compared to public universities (Mubarak, 2012; Shahzad, 2010; Yusoff & Khan, 2013; Khan *et al.*, 2014). In line with these studies due to high ratio of employee turnover, higher education institutions face two kinds of cost. First is direct cost which include recruitment and training cost, selection, placement, loss of time-worked and the second one is indirect cost which includes reputation of institution, academic consequences and reduction of overall performance of the organization. The main reason is that, it is surprisingly true that most of the private universities of Pakistan don't have well-established human resource departments, that may cause high employee turnover rate (Ahmad Bodla, Hussain, & Chen, 2014). Therefore, it requires more attention of employers and researchers to see the reasons why employees might decide to leave the organization.

Gap of the study

Indeed there are many studies that have been done to understand the factors that might affect turnover intention (Cheng & Waldenberger, 2013; Verhees, 2012; Abdulkareem *et al.*, 2015; Thirapatsakun *et al.*, 2015; Naqvi & Bashir, 2015; Kadiresan, Selamat, Selladurai, & Spr, 2015; Rubel & Kee, 2015). Therefore, none of these studies have used the career stage theory and social exchange theory to explain the relationships between human resource development factors such as salary, performance appraisal, training & development and career growth and turnover intention.

In past a lot of studies recognized that there is a relationship between salary, performance appraisal, training and development career growth and turnover intention

without conforming why and how those relationships exist; this study will contribute to exiting body of knowledge by establishing how and when those relationship exist by introducing organizational commitment as mediator to solve the causality of the relationship among human resource development factor, career growth and turnover intention.

Another contribution of this study is the introduction of career concern and job stress as a moderator between the relationship of organizational commitment of employees and turnover intention. On the other hand, studies that introduced job stress and career concern as intervening with turnover intention are not many, some of them has been studied by Heponiemi *et al.* (2016), Imam and Shafique, (2014), Wong and Laschinger, 2015, Cohen (1991), Conway (2004), Lin (2005). Furthermore, they argued that those employees who encounter high levels of job stress as well as career progression were not the best performer as well as less committed to their job and organization, which ultimately increase the level of employee turnover intention. Hence, this paper proposed that the strength of the relationship between employees attitude and turnover behavior will be depending on employees' career concerns and job stress, especially where employees perceived job stress and career change. Under such situations, career concerns and job stress will moderate the relationship between organizational commitment and turnover intention.

Literature Review and hypothesis Development

Employee turnover will continue to be a serious problem that is faced by all organizations around the world and employers need to be creative in handling this problem by identifying the various factors to understand the reasons why employees might decide to leave their organizations (Grissom *et al.*, 2012). Generally, in past most studies that have been done to see the reasons why employees might decide to leave the organization (Abdulkareem *et al.*, 2015). For example, majority of the previous studies have revealed that human resource practices may affect employees turnover intention (Giauque *et al.*, 2010; Pirzada *et al.*, 2013; Juhdi *et al.*, 2013; Long *et al.*, 2014; Abdulkareem *et al.*, 2015). Other than that, some studies have demonstrated that individual variables such as job alternatives, (Maertz & Campion, 1998); autonomy, organizational justice, job stress, pay, promotional chances, and social support (Kim *et al.*, 1996); person-organization fit (O'Reilly *et al.*, 1991); job incompatibility (Villanova *et al.*, 1994); citizenship behavior (Chen *et al.*, 1998); job performance (Martin *et al.*, 1981); absenteeism (Farrel & Stamm, 1998); organizational, work, and personal factors (Porter & Steers, 1974). But limited number of research works has considered human resource development factors in explaining employee turnover behavior. Indeed there are many studies that have been done to understand the factors that might affect turnover intention. Therefore, none of these studies have the career stage theory and social exchange theory to explain these relationships.

To fill up this theoretical gap, the current research extend previous literature by examining organizational commitment as an important mechanism by which human resource practices and its various functions such as salary, performance appraisal, training and development and career management practices like career growth could be related to employee's turnover intention. Organizational Commitment (OC) has long been acknowledged

as the key variable in the working relationship that has also been widely accepted the way to decrease volunteer turnover by enhancing employee organization commitment (Raihan, 2012). Within the organizational settings, organizational commitment might be defined as “the psychological attachment felt by the employee for the organization or psychological state of mind which binds the individual to the organization (Allen & Meyer, 2003). In line with previous discussion, the significant role of commitment as a mediating variable in the relationship between salary, performance appraisal, training and development, career growth and employee’s turnover intention can be supported by social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), which postulate that, fair compensation and high salaries may signal that, organizations are willing to invest in their employees and also cares about the wellbeing of its employees. Performance appraisal and training & development programs for employees may illuminate that, they are valued assets for the organization. While, career growth opportunities also indicate that, organizations give value to its employees by investing in their future and career prospects in order to increase employee’s inspiration and motivation towards their work and organization. As a result, they will less likely to leave the organization. Furthermore, when individuals developed positive perception in terms of salary, performance appraisal, training and development and career growth, they will reciprocate by remaining on their present job (Abdulkareem *et al.*, 2015).

One important factor that has been found to affect employee turnover intention or stay with an organization is the career concern of employees. Career concern of employees is important because it argued that the desire .need and intention of employees assume to change during their lifetime of career (Cohen, 1991). Now a day’s, employees are highly concerned about their career (i.e. the progression of their career) they are more likely to leave their current organization, especially if their prospect of advancing their career are not clear or non-existence. It is normal for people who are concerned about advancing their career to move from one organization to another. They do this especially when the other organization offers a better salary or/and better position. In addition to that, having work experience in several organizations usually looks good on an individual’s resume, and often builds up ones’ credibility. Hence, these cause such employees to move from one organization to another.

Over the year majority of the studies that were conducted to explore the relationship between career stage concern, organizational commitment and turnover intention. However with regard to study of Griffin *et al.* (2013) and You and Conley (2014) who found that employee attitude and behavior change according to their career concern at each stage of career, due to this changes employee commitment with organization become more and less which lead to employee intent to leave the organization. This argument is also validated by Conway (2004) who stated that negative association between organizational commitment and turnover intention is moderated by career concerns of peoples, such that it is stronger for lower than for higher level of career concerns. Furthermore, Bassham (2009) found that when employees experiencing high level of career concerns, perceived less organizational commitment will report high turnover intention. Similarly, Chang *et al.* (2007) claimed that if organization satisfy the career need of the employees at different career stages, then

employees commitment towards organization may increase and employees turnover intention may decrease.

So the strength of relationship between organizational commitment and turnover intention is moderate; but this relationship is in line with career stage theory and majority of previous literature which revealed that behavior and attitude of employees were influenced by their career concerns or need.

Apart from that, now a day's work-related stress has been a growing number of research attentions and is now perceived as a major concern for both employers and employees (Heponiemi *et al.*, 2016). In 2001, Gillespie defined stress as the force exerted on a person that causes tension. Similarly, Kawada and Otsuka (2011) identify that job stress results from job demands, absence in decision making process and social problems.

Majority of the Literature related to organizational commitment and turnover intention highlighted that job stress has positive relationship with employee turnover intention such as (Yusoff & Khan, 2013; Kinman, 2008; Chen *et al.*, 2010; Jamal & Ph, 2011; Kawada & Otsuka, 2011). On the other hand, studies that introduced job stress as intervening with turnover intention are not many, some of them has been studied by Heponiemi *et al.* (2016), Imam and Shafique, (2014), Wong and Laschinger, (2015). Furthermore, they argued that those employees who encounter high levels of stress were not the best performer as well as less committed to their job and organization, which ultimately increase the level of employee turnover intention. The use of job stress as an intervening variable having an indirect effect, instead of direct effect was also supported by Heponiemi *et al.* (2016), who suggested a more marginal role of job stress in the withdrawal process.

This notion is also supported by social exchange theory (Blau, 1964). Likewise social exchange theory based on the assumption that exchanges that people have at their job attach to the positive or negative feelings they have about their organization. This might help out to explain why people decide to leave an organization, as they attribute the stress of the job to their workplace.

Over the year majority of the studies used job stress as predictor with job satisfaction, employee performance, organizational citizenship behavior, job burnout, organizational commitment and turnover intention (Javed *et al.*, 2014; Velnampy, 2013; Jamal & Ph, 2011). On the other hand, studies that introduced job stress as intervening variable on the relationship between organizational commitment and turnover intention are not many, some of them is the study by Heponiemi *et al.* (2015), Imam and Shafique (2014), Wong and Spence (2015). Likewise, they argued that employees who encounter high levels of stress were not the best performer as well as less committed with their job and organization which ultimately increase the level of employee turnover intention.

Moreover, job stress among employees in higher education institution have been more interesting topic of research for academicians and researchers due to high imbalance between job demands and their ability to respond. Similarly, job stress within the context of Pakistani higher education sector occurs mainly due to certain factors for example, inequitable distribution of rights and duties, no clear rewards policy and mostly ill-articulated but no written code of conduct. Lacks of training and proper counseling add to severity of job stress as employees fail to cope with untoward situations (Yusoff & Khan, 2013). These are the factors which put employees under pressure and state of job stress this leads them to take behavioral decisions for example turnover intention, absenteeism contribute in job stress and knowledge worker turnover.

So the strength of relationship between organizational commitment and turnover intention is moderate; but this relationship is in line with social exchange theory and majority of previous literature which revealed that behavior and attitude of employees were influenced by job stress at work.

Furthermore, current study proposed that the strength of the relationship between employees attitude and turnover behavior will be depending on employees' career concerns and job stress, especially where employees perceived job stress and career change. Under such situations, career concerns and job stress will moderate the relationship between organizational commitment and turnover intention.

The Conceptual Model and Proposition Development

Based on the discussion of previous literature, the conceptual framework of this paper showed in Figure 1. This conceptual framework shows the relationship between among variables of the study.

Proposition1: The negative relationship between salary and turnover intention is mediated by organizational commitment.

Proposition2: The negative relationship between performance appraisal and turnover intention is mediated by organizational commitment.

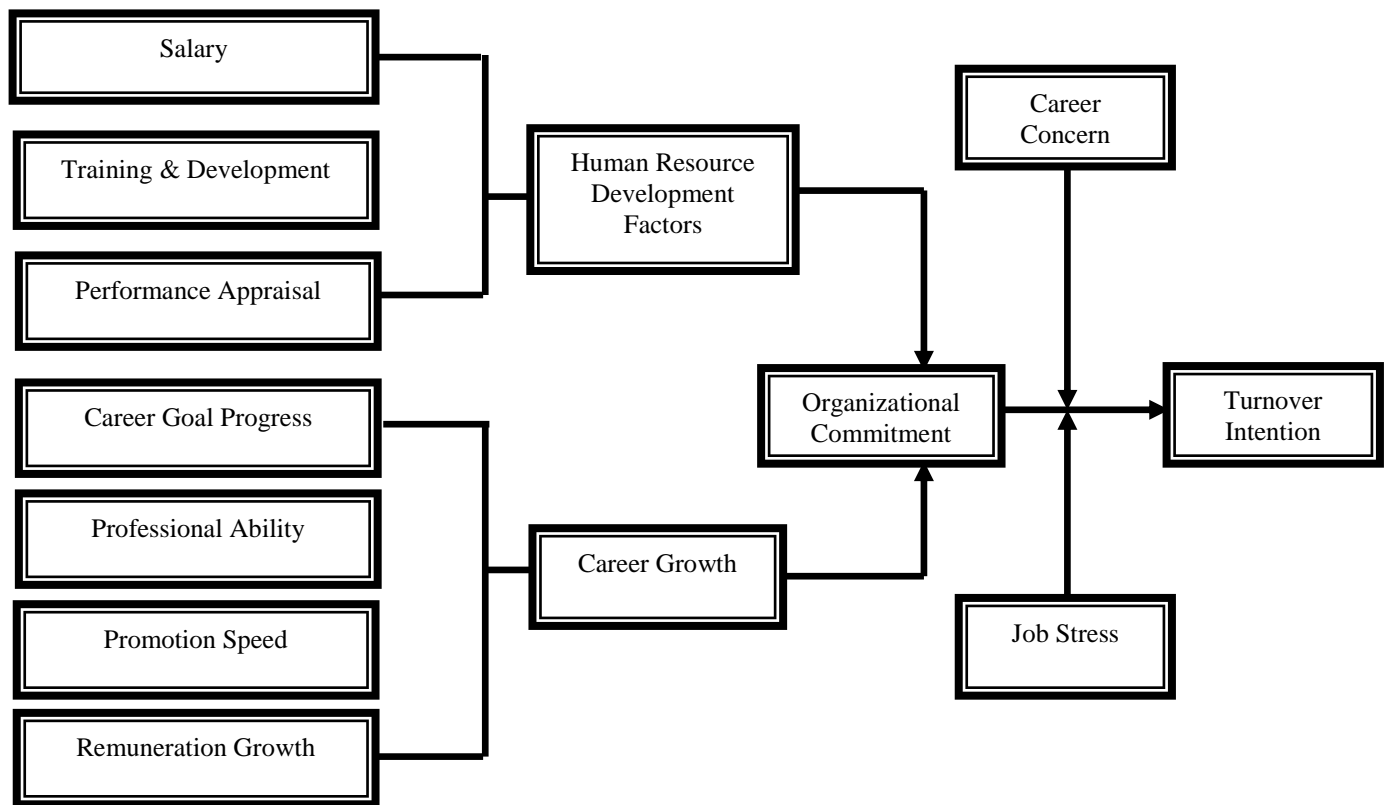
Proposition3: The negative relationship between training & development and turnover intention is mediated by organizational commitment.

Proposition4: The negative relationship between career growth (career goal progress, professional ability development, promotion speed, and remuneration growth) and turnover intention is mediated by organizational commitment.

Proposition5: The negative relationship between employee organizational commitment and turnover intention is moderated by Career concerns, such that it is stronger for lower than for higher career concerns.

Proposition6: The negative relationship between employee organizational commitment and turnover intention is moderated by job stress, such that it is stronger for lower than for higher job stress.

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework



Methodology

This paper highlights that the important organizational factors that contributed and influence employee turnover intention in Pakistan. To highlight these variables, the researchers have gone through different data bases, reports, books, thesis, empirical and conceptual papers etc. The literature highlights that the role of career growth, Career concerns, and job stress, salary, performance appraisal and training & development in employee turnover behavior. Using career stage theory and social exchange theory, this paper explained the importance of these variables in predicting turnover intention in developing country particularly Pakistan.

Implications

Application of this suggested model may enlarge the managers and organizations understanding of employee retention strategy. Based on this study and past literature, salary, performance appraisal and career management practices which includes career growth and Career concerns are very good predictor of turnover intention. Thus, management focus on these factors should be high, particularly in this crucial time. Other than that, this paper indicates that career management practices are a practical part of techniques that should be viewed as by managers seeking to build a committed workforce. It may be specifically beneficial in that several commitment improving techniques have been instructed toward beginners rather than longer-term employees. Career management is a practice whereby organizations provide career counseling, training, mentoring, career paths, and career planning workshops to their employees. To overcome employee turnover issue, organization should focus on career growth and career concerns policies that could create psychological contract with its employees. As such, employees who expect progress and growth in their career will ultimately stay longer in the organization, which means turnover intention will become less.

Other than that, organizations should focus and retain their best performers and also be aware of attractive job alternatives attracting to their valued employees. Organizations should focus on two fold a retention strategy which includes pro career building and anti career blocking which focuses on career management practices at one end and removal of career blockage on the other hand might have some effects. The understanding is that if the career concerns of employees are relatively close to the external job market in terms of attractiveness then the employees probably will stay with that organization less likely to leave the organization.

Further, this study provides recommendation for organization top management to introduce career development programs for accommodating employee's career needs and also provide career growth opportunities to satisfy their expectations. This argument would also increase the awareness of top management on issue regarding the career growth and Career concerns of employees regarding turnover behavior.

Conclusion and future directions

From the previous literature a lot of studies recognized that there is a relationship between salary, performance appraisal, training and development career growth and turnover intention without conforming why and how those relationships exists. This study will contribute to exiting body of knowledge by establishing how and why those relationships exist by introducing organizational as mediator and career concern as well as job stress as moderator. Similarly, this study contribute to knowledge by creating that direct relationships that were examined between salary, performance appraisal, training and development career growth and turnover intention would also examined through mediating variable such as organizational commitment.

In conclusion, based on previous literature this paper suggested that if employees perceived higher salaries, fair and just appraisal system, good training & development programs and high career growth within the organizations, they become positively attached with organization and chances to quit the organization will minimized. Furthermore, the relationship between organizational commitment and turnover intention will weaken if employee's perceived high job stress and career concerns or need.

So, it is the strong support from the literature that salary, performance appraisal and career growth practices such as career growth and Career concerns absolutely influence turnover intention. It also indicates that failure to implement these factors might be one of the reasons organizations were not much more successful in reducing employee turnover.

Future researchers should continue exploring other factors which influence employee's turnover intention and empirically test the proposed conceptual paper in order to strengthen the employee turnover literature.

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