HR, Workplace Bullying, and Turnover Intention: The role of Work Engagement

Gadi Dung Paul[1]*, Daisy Mui Hung Kee[2]

[1] School of Management, Universiti Sains Malaysia, 11800 Penang, Malaysia; Email: dunggadi@student.usm.my
[2] School of Management, Universiti Sains Malaysia, 11800 Penang, Malaysia; Email: daisy@usm.my

Abstract

The turnover among academicians is established in Nigeria by Nigeria Institute of Management, citing turnover rates in tertiary institutions ranging from 11% to 18.3%. Therefore, this paper provides a review of HRM, workplace bullying and turnover intention. It is argued that both HRM and workplace bullying are two important conditions that affect employee's turnover intention. Drawing on social exchange theory, this paper suggests that there is a significant relationship between HRM, workplace bullying and turnover intention. The study used 45 research papers such as (EBSCOhost, Emerald, JSTOR, PsycINFO, SAGE Premier, ScienceDirect, Scopus, SpringerLink, Springer Protocols, and Taylor & Francis) to unearth out appropriate data for the study. The researchers extracted articles that are as relevant as possible. The research conducted from April to September 2018 and supported by peer-reviewed research papers published in English. This paper proposes work engagement could be a potential mediator between HRM and turnover intention. In addition, this paper also proposes if work engagement mediates the relationship between workplace bullying and turnover intention. This paper conceptualizes HRM into five main dimensions, namely career development, performance appraisal, training and development, reward and recognition and recruitment and selection. Suggestions and implications for future study on HRM, workplace bullying, and turnover intention are also suggested

Keywords: Workplace bullying; HRM; work engagement; turnover intention.

1 Introduction

Employee turnover is a common issue in developing countries, especially higher institutions. Employee turnover intention acts as an alternative to actual employee turnover. One of the challenging issues faced by the universities in Africa today is how to manage the changing employee-employer relationship (18).

Turnover has been a center of concern for human resources management (HRM) specialists for a long time, and retaining of their top talent has been and continues to remain their priority (18, 19). The past decades have been the most threatening period for the universities in Nigeria in retaining their employees (15). Retention of university lecturers in Nigeria is a great challenge. The National University Commission (NUC) (2015) and the Ministry of Higher Education (MHE) (2013) warned that in two decades, the shortage of qualified lecturers will double. Therefore, retention of competent and qualified lecturers is crucial in universities success and ranking. This has added pressure on the policymakers to come up with serious HRM interventions to retain their Lecturers and ensure the delivery of high-quality research and teaching (5, 7). In Nigeria, the universities depend greatly on part-time, contract and visiting lecturers. However, previous research that studied factors motivating turnover intention revealed several key variables such as workplace bullying, HRM practices, work engagement, perceived support

(perceived organizational support and perceived supervisor support), organizational commitment, satisfaction and variables such as demographics (23, 24). Therefore, the Nigeria Educational strategy (2018) emphasizes the importance of exercising effective HRM retention strategies. Therefore, constant evaluations of talent management practices should occur, due to the perpetual transformation of working environments and changing market landscapes confronted by industries.

Excessive employee turnover has been recognized as a plague in the academic profession for a long time and it persists judging by the numerous research studies on employee turnover among academicians over several decades which is still carried out today. Substantial academic staff turnover rates were witnessed in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The turnover among academicians is also established in Nigeria by Nigeria Institute of Management, citing turnover rates in tertiary institutions ranging from 11% to 18.3% (27, 28).

Fuqua, Hellman, and Worley (2009) stated that, in a social exchange relationship, employees are likely to reciprocate by increasing their investment in the organization via greater emotional attachment. However, on the basis of the social exchange theory, we predict that HRM practices reflect different exchange relationships and can result in differential patterns of turnover intention. Social exchange theory is used in establishing the research framework which later leads to empirical testing of the interrelationships among the main constructs under investigation. We suggest that employees may reciprocate or return the favor rendered by employers who well-treat them by staying with the organization. The

Corresponding author: Gadi Dung Paul, School of Management, Universiti Sains Malaysia, 11800 Penang, Malaysia; Email: dunggadi@student.usm.my.

exchanged favors are indicators of investment in the relationship and mutual support (6). Eisenberger et al. (1997) suggested that social exchange takes place when employees receive a good deal of support from their organization, they tend to pay their organization back with their behaviors at work.

1.1 Turnover Intention

Employee turnover is an endemic issue in the higher education sector in Africa (Ma et al, 2016). Employee turnover intention acts as an alternate for actual employee turnover. One of the challenging issues faced by the universities today is how to manage the changing employment relationship. According to Tandung (2016), turnover intention explains the relative strength of an individual's purpose or intent toward voluntary permanent withdrawal from an organization. It is basically a motive or purpose that drives an employee to quit from his or her current workplace. Saeed and Rizwan (2014) explain turnover of an employee as the rotation of workers between the condition of employment and unemployment, jobs and occupations around the labor market and firms.

According to Akhtar, Ghufran, and Fatima (2017), turnover is the ratio of the total number of employees who quits an organization at a particular time period with the average number of employees staying in that organization at the same time. It is a behavior which describes the process of leaving or replacing employees in an organization. Turnover intention is associated with elements of an employee which is; the thought or feeling to quit the job, the intention to find for another job and intention of quitting the job (12, 13). In most cases, turnover intention can happen either voluntarily where the employee willingly decides to leave the company or involuntarily, replacing an employee for a job position, mostly without the prior willingness of the employee (29, 30). According to Terez (2000), there are several costs will incur in the view of high turnover, namely, training cost, replacement cost, vacancy cost, and separation cost. Employee turnover is also costly as it incorporates with different cost such as recruitment cost, the cost that needs to be covered during the time when there is a vacancy, the cost of training new employees, etc. Finally, various factors that lead to turnover intention such as employee's attitude, workplace bullying, job satisfaction, commitment, management, compensation offered and their own evaluation and judgment regarding decisions (11).

1.2 Human Resource Management Practices

HRM is a section of the organizational functions that support to the effectiveness of an organization's performance and give an organization a competitive advantage through the implementation of its practices. HRM practices are recognized individually by personnel, and can, in turn, influence the employees' attitudes and behaviors (e.g. turnover intention).

Bakker and Demerouti (2008) supported the need for organizations to rank resources for HRM practices in demand to increase workers' work engagement. Conceivably a positive outcome occurs "because workers who have resources that ease their job tasks are more appropriate to invest energy and individual resources in their work roles". HRM practices have revealed the influence of work engagement in a number of studies. Salanova et al. (2005) collected data from service workers and customers when examining the association between performance, organizational resources and work engagement. Three classifications of organizational resources were used, consist of organizational training. Their results confirm that when workers perceive the accessibility of organizational resources they experienced more engaged. Bal,

Kooij, and Jong (2013) similarly ascertained an important relationship between training practices at the unit level and work engagement at the worker level. Also, in a longitudinal study, Schaufeli, Bakker, and Rhenen (2009) examined the influence of job resources, comprising of training and development, on work engagement. They discovered that over time when controlling for initial levels, work engagement increased when training resources increased. They argue that job resources foster work engagement through a motivational process where fulfillment of autonomy- and competence needs to create motivation for reaching one's goals. Kuvaas, Dysvik, and Buch (2014) also argues that HRM inducements may promote positive attitudes that improve work performance and motivation. From these studies, the following can be expected:

1.3 Workplace Bullying

Though there are many definitions of workplace bullying by different authors, most definitions do share a periodic theme. Saunders, Huynh, and Goodman-delahunty (2007) classified these definitions into four basic conditions: (1) the negative consequence of the behavior on the recipient, (2) the occurrence and (3) continuance of the behavior, and (4) the power inequity resulting from the behavior. Workplace bullying is defined as repeated manners directed at one or more employees that cause embarrassment, violation, and suffering, and that may affect job accomplishment such that the negative actions could steer to a hostile working environment. Furthermore, the bullying behavior ought to place victims in an inferior standpoint where defending themselves turn out to be difficult. However, such conduct includes bullying, public humiliation, intimidation, unpleasant name-calling, demeaning of one's opinion, social exclusion, and annoying physical contact (1, 9).

However, a good number of researchers concur on the universal definition mentioned above; nevertheless, the definition as to the occurrence and duration of the negative behavior has been generally debated. Many scholars argue that the negative behavior must take place on a regular basis, for instance weekly or monthly and beyond a given period of time for example the preceding six to twelve months. More so, most of the researchers subscribed in a more open-ended method where the incident of the bullying behavior can happen at any time in an employee's career. However, another researcher suggested that workplace bullying can be viewed in a manner that a single case of the negative behavior can qualify as bullying established on its gravity and the employee's ability to manage with it (9). Equally Staale Einarsen, Hoel, and Notelaers (2009b) defined Workplace bullying as "stressing, offending, harassing, publicly excluding the employee or negatively affecting an employee's job tasks. Sequentially for the label bullying to be valid to a specific occupation, interaction, it has to occur frequently and repeatedly (weekly) and over a period of time (about six months). Bullying is an increased threat in the course of which the employee threatened ends up in an inferior position and turn out to be the target of regular negative social doings" (9).

According to Gupta, Bakhshi, and Einarsen (2017), workplace bullying has been classified into two distinctive categories: related health issues and related job consequences. Related Health issues, consequences include pressure, nervousness, low self-esteem, post-traumatic-pressure-disorders (PTPD), and several other psychological and psychometric health illnesses. A research of 437 workers from multiple organizations in Sweden, by Giorgi, Arenas, & Leon-Perez (2011) examined the relationship between workplace bullying and health consequences of employees and witnesses of bullying.

The findings revealed that exposure to workplace bullying was highly correlated to unhappiness, unease, and negative affectivity among employees of bullying, and unease among employees who witnessed the bullying actions. Likewise, Silva, Aquino, Cardoso, and Pinto (2012) carry out an assessment research to examine levels of psychiatric stress and symptoms of post-traumatic-pressure-disorders (PTPD) in bullied workers. Results revealed that bullied workers testified predominantly higher-pressure levels and more PTPD signs compared to the other individuals.

Related job consequences of workplace bullying, on the other part, consist of absenteeism, job dissatisfaction, organizational commitment, turnover intention, and actual turnover (25, 26). Charilaos et al. (2015) investigated the relationship between workplace bullying and turnover intention among 335 high school teachers in Australia and discovered a positive relationship between the two. Demir and Rodwell (2012) examined a sample of 207 hospital nurses to identify the experiences and outcomes of workplace bullying in Australian. However bullied nurses testified higher psychological suffering and lower organizational commitment than their counterparts out of the three consequences studied such as psychological suffering, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. Though many consequences of workplace bullying have been researched, they generally focus on job attitudes and related health consequences.

1.4 Work Engagement

We propose work engagement as a potential mediator between HRM practices and turnover intention and also propose work engagement as a prospective mediator between workplace bullying and turnover intention. However, a few of previous studies have demonstrated that employee work engagement has a significant and positive effect on employee turnover intention (10) With a great deal of attention being focused on the work engagement domain, many researchers have agreed that work engagement is a strong factor affecting employees turnover intention. Moreover, empirical studies have offered sufficient proof to confirm the effect of work engagement on organizational outcomes, such as job fulfillment, organizational dedication, organizational citizenship performance, and turnover intention (2, 8, 10).

Employee engagement is associated with employee's viewpoints, intentions, and activities (Ram & Prabhakar, 2011). Employee engagement has a significant influence on organizational consequences, worker productivity, and simplicity of recruitment and worker retention. Lockwood (2007) affirms "In a global survey of the work engagement levels of 50,000 workers in 27 countries, examine by the Corporate Leadership Council highlights the relationship of engagement to business achievement and its direct influence on turnover retention" (p. 9). Furthermore, Shuck and Wollard (2010) also presume the similar thing that "It is positively true that the more engaged workers are also more liable to remain with an organization". Nevertheless, research that examines the level to which employee engagement in their job might impact retention.

Work engagement has also been argued to positively relate to employee retention. As explained by Christian, Garza, and Slaughter (2011 p. 120) "engaged workers to experience a high degree of connectivity with their work responsibilities, they strive toward job related goals that are interlinked with their task definitions and scripts, leading to high levels of task performance". Karatepe (2013) found work engagement to have positive effects on hotel employees' job performance and extra-role behavior. He explains this by arguing that when engaged employees are more vigilant and concentrated on their

tasks, they are more successful when dealing with customer requests and problems, which results in high-quality performance. Furthermore, Bakker and Bal (2010) tested a model of job resources, engagement, and performance amongst 54 teachers, and found that daily levels of work engagement, as reported in diaries, were predictive of classroom performance. Li, Sanders, and Frenkel (2012) argued that engagement leads to high levels of energy, mental resilience and willingness to invest effort into challenging tasks, leading to higher job performance. Moreover, Salanova, Agut, and Peiro (2005) linked engagement to performance, mediated by the service climate, among hotel and restaurant employees. A more recent meta-study also supports these findings. Work engagement was found relating to performance, explained by positive employees possessing the drive for succeeding with tasks. Therefore, a positive correlation between employee performance and work engagement is assumed. Empirical studies have found work engagement to be related to several individuals and organizational outcomes, such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, absenteeism, turnover, organizational and employee performance. As previously stated, the expectancy theory assumes that if an employee is to be *productive* they must experience motivation.

Work engagement is frequently defined as an encouraging, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is described by dedication, vigor, and absorption. As suggested in its meaning, engagement denotes three separate proportions. Its first aspect, vigor, can be described as high degrees of energy and endurances workers may exhibit on the job. The second aspect, dedication, is branded by workers who are highly involved in their job and feel recognized for his contribution, passion, and challenge. The third characteristic of engagement, absorption, can be expressed as circumstances of being totally engaged in one's work, whereby time elapses quickly and one has trouble detaching oneself from the job. It is understood that engaged workers are able to surpass those who are less engaged, mostly because of the (1) craft their own career and personal resources (2) understanding positive feelings (3) and are often emotionally and physically better (22).

Scholars and practitioners in many fields, including psychology, business, organization development, human resource development, and management have paid considerable attention to employee work engagement because organizations desire engaged employees who are energetic, dedicated, and absorbed in their work. Employee work engagement makes a positive contribution to the fundamental line of any business and is echoed in the services they provide to customers and clients (16, 17, 20, 21). We present our research model in Figure 1
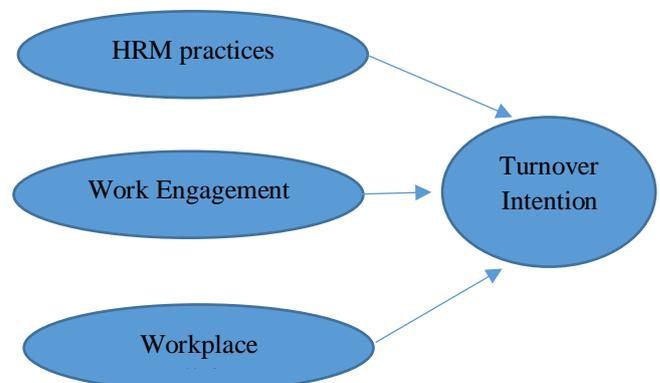

Figure 1: Research Model

2 Problem Statement

HRM practices, workplace bullying, and turnover intention is a prevalent issue in African universities today. Employee turnover intention acts as a proxy for actual employee turnover. One of the challenging issues faced by the universities today is how to manage the changing employment relationship. Work engagement mediates the relationship between HRM practices, workplace bullying, and turnover intention. Is the perception of organizations and employers about HRM and workplace bullying, consistent with turnover intention?

The perception that employees who perceive low levels of organizational support are expected to be different from employees who perceive high levels of organizational support

3 Research Questions

We aim to answer the research questions as follows:

3.1. Does HRM have a negative relationship with turnover intention?

3.2. Does workplace bullying have a positive relationship with turnover intention?

3.3. Does work engagement mediate the relationship between HRM and turnover intention?

3.4. Does work engagement mediate the relationship between workplace bullying and turnover intention?

4 Purpose of the Study

The well-being of academicians is of central concern to the universities. In this paper, we observe the turnover intention among academicians. We begin by examining the relationship between HRM practices and turnover intention. Next, we examined the correlation between workplace bullying and turnover intention. Finally, to achieve the aim of this study, we intend to examine if work engagement mediates (i) the relationship between HRM practices and turnover intention; and (ii) workplace bullying and turnover intention.

5 Materials and Methods

This study is a review of the literature on HRM, workplace bullying, and turnover intention. We then discuss the literature review to understand if work engagement is a potential mediator in the above relationship. The current study analysed past studies on HRM, workplace bullying, work engagement, perceived and turnover intention to establish a distinctive phenomenon. This present study used 45 research papers such as (EBSCOhost, Emerald, JSTOR, PsycINFO, SAGE Premier, ScienceDirect, Scopus, SpringerLink, Springer Protocols, and Taylor & Francis) to unearth out appropriate data for the study. The researchers extracted articles that are as relevant as possible. The research conducted from April to September 2018 and supported by peer-reviewed research papers published in English. The review technique in this study is an applied research method for defining and synthesizing the extended body of literature associated with a specific phenomenon.

6 Results

After reviewing literature by the researchers and discussing the effects of workplace bullying focusing on work-related issues and its impact on employees, and the challenges of the HRM practices on turnover intention, we discover many similarities of the influence between HRM practices and Workplace bullying and the impact on turnover intention by the employees. However, the occurrence or presence of support and sources provided by the establishment either moderated or improved the relationship between workers' concerns about emotional violence and their real sense of feeling maltreated. Employees who had concerns about emotional violence at the workplace were more likely to experience emotional violence at work when they perceived their establishment's response to their distresses as ineffective or imaginary compared to when they perceived their establishment's response to their distresses as effective and existing.

Even more interesting are the findings of Karatepe (2013) who tested work engagement as a mediator of the consequences of High-Performance Work Practices on job accomplishment and extra-role customer service. He found work engagement to fully mediate these relationships. He also argued that work engagement plays a mediating role between High-Performance Work Practices and performance outcomes in that beneficial HRM practices induce feelings of reciprocity, carried out through increased engagement, resulting in job performance. This justifies the social exchange theory in which employees receiving economic and social-emotional resources from the organization (e.g., training) feel obligated to reciprocate through work engagement, total commitment, improved performance, and a decrease in intention to quit.

7 Conclusion

The researchers try to emphasize the need for managers and decision makers know the importance of HRM practices in the workplace and the negative impact of bullying that might have a psychological effect on employee's behavior's which can double the operating cost for the organization. The research also tries to find out if bullying behaviors reduce employee performance and productivity that arising from mental and physical distress, which eventually cause financial losses. The Research also provides an insight into the need for managers to find a better way of handling, managing, and protecting bullying behavior within the organization. Finally, the motive of the researchers in determining these models and relating them to the researchers' intent is to provide a general view of what the management needs to know and expect and what are the various avenues available for future consideration to address the acute issues pertaining to workplace bullying, HRM practices, and turnover intention.

References

1. Abishov S, Polyak D, Seidullaeva G, Kermeshova Z. Meaning of fiction in formation of studentsidentity. Opción. 2018;34(85-2):186-204.
2. Agarwal R. Employee Engagement & Retention: a Review of Literature. International Journal of BRIC Business Research. 2017;6(1):1–19.
3. Aktar A. The Relationship between Employee Engagement, HRM practices, and Perceived Organizational Support : Evidence from Banking Employees. International Journal of Human Resource Studies. 2017;7(3):1–22.
4. Cummings TG, Worley CG. Organizational Development & Change. In Standing Conference on Organizational Symbolism (SCOS), Trinity College Dublin. 30th June to 4th July 2001. 2009.
5. El-Ghalayini Y. Human resource management practices and organizational performance in a public sector organization. Journal of Business Studies Quarterly. 2017;8(3):65–80.
6. Fuqua DR, Hellman CM, Worley JA. The Survey of Perceived Organizational Support : Which Measure. SA Journal of Industrial Psychology. 2009;35(1):112–116.
7. Gavhale SR. Inequality of Gender Ratio among Religious And Social Groups In India. Humanities & Social Sciences Reviews. 2016;4(2):68-75.
8. Javed A, Gulzar A, Hussain W. Organizational Politics and Bank Frontline employee Outcomes with the Mediating Role of Work Engagement. International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences. 2015;5(3): 225–233.
9. Kalamdien DJ. The Nature and Prevalence of Workplace Bullying in the Western Cape – A South African Study. 2013.

10. Langford PH. Measuring organizational climate and employee engagement: Evidence: For a 7 Ps model of work practices and outcomes. Australian Journal of Psychology. 2009;61(4):185–198.
11. Laureano RM, Fernandes AL, Hassamo S, Alturas B. Facebook satisfaction and its impacts on fundraising: a case study at a Portuguese non-profit organization. Journal of Information Systems Engineering and Management. 2018;1.
12. Lee C, Wang M, Liu M, Giorgi G, Wang M. When and How Does Psychological Voice Climate Influence Individual Change Readiness ? The Mediating Role of Normative Commitment and the Moderating Role of Work Engagement. Frontiers in Psychology | Www.Frontiersin.Org, 8(October). 2017:1–11.
13. Lee TW, Hom PW, Eberly MB, Mitchell TR. On the Next Decade of Research in Voluntary Employee Turnover. The Academy of Management Perspectives. 2017;31(3):201–221.
14. Leymann H. Mobbing and Psychological Terror at Workplaces. Journal of Applied Social Psychology. 1990 5(February):119–126.
15. Mahal PK. HR Practices as Determinants of Organizational Commitment and Employee Retention. The IUP Journal of Management Research. 2012;11(4): 37–53.
16. Mahmood F, Iqbal N, Sahu SR. The Impact of Human Resource Management Practices on Employee Performance in the Banking Industry of Pakistan. International Journal of Scientific & Technology Research. 2014;0184(9):86–99.
17. Mehmood B, Mehmood B, Atta M. Mediating Role of Job Burnout for the Relationship of Perceived Organizational Politics and Counterproductive Work Behaviors among School Teachers. Journal of Behavioural Sciences. 2017;27(2).
18. Michael B, Prince A, Chacko A. Impact of Compensation Package on Employee Retention. International Journal of Research in Commerce & Management. 2016;7(10):36–40.
19. Namie G. U.S. Hostile Workplace Survey. Workplace Bullying Institute Research Studies Workplacebullying.Org. 2008.
20. Neves P, Eisenberger R, Neves P. Perceived organizational support and risk-taking. Journal of Managerial Psychology. 2014.
21. Nivethitha S, Dyaram L, Kamalanabhan TJ. The relationship between human resource practices and employee turnover intention in the hospitality industry. Global Journal of Management and Business Research: Administration and Management. 2014;14(1):35–42.
22. Rani SHA, Kamil SNAHBAM. Examining the Influence of Social Support and Mentoring On Entrepreneurial Quality among Graduate Entrepreneurs. Jinnah Business Review. 2016:3–6.
23. Razavi SM, Nasirian M, Afkhami I. The effectiveness sleep hygiene training on the job performance of employees Shift or rotating shifts parvadeh tabas coal companies in. UCT Journal of Management and Accounting Studies. 2015;3(1): 5-7.
24. Rodríguez-muñoz A, Moreno-jiménez B, Sanz-Vergelc AI. Reciprocal relations between workplace bullying, anxiety, and vigor : a two-wave longitudinal study. Anxiety, Stress, & Coping, (February). 2015.
25. Rubel MRB, Kee DMH. Perceived Support and Employee Performance: The Mediating Role of Employee Engagement. Life Science Journal. 2013;10(4):2557–2567.
26. Suifan TS. (2015). The Effect of Human Resources Practices on Organizational Commitment: A Jordanian Study. Journal of Management Research. 2015;7(4):222.
27. Suleri J, Cavagnaro E. Promoting pro-environmental printing behavior: The role of ICT barriers and sustainable values. International Journal of Education and Development using ICT. 2016;12(2).
28. Takeuchi N, Takeuchi T. Committed to the organization or the job? Effects of perceived HRM practices on employees' behavioral outcomes in the Japanese healthcare industry. International Journal of Human Resource Management. 2013;24(11):2089–2106.
29. Williams AA, Owusu-Acheampong E. (). Human Resource Management practices and their effect on Employee Turnover in the Hotel Industry in Cape Coast, Ghana. Global Journal of Human Resource Management. 2016;4(4): 35–45.
30. Xue Y, Liang H, Wu L. Punishment, Justice, and Compliance in Mandatory ITS Settings. Information Systems Research. 2011.