

Examining the Impact of Human Resource Management Practices on Employee Turnover Intention: A study of Healthcare Sector in Pakistan

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Abstract

Background: In modern times, most organizations encounter challenges in administering and retaining their skilled employees, as most of the organizations have rapidly grown and the competition among these organizations becomes high so as to sustain their business. Furthermore, employee's turnover intention is also a subject of constant attention for health sector as it can realize the significance regarding healthcare cost, continuity and quality of care services, stress and burnout of remaining healthcare professionals. This study aims to determine the relationships between salary, training and development, promotion opportunity and nurse's turnover intention in the public healthcare settings of Pakistan.

Materials and Methods: This study was cross-sectional in nature and employed quantitative research techniques. A structured questionnaire comprising of 238 charge nurses working in different public hospitals of Punjab, Pakistan were used for the data collection procedure. Smart PLS 3.2 was used to analyze the study hypothesis. Proportionate stratified sampling technique was employed for data collection.

Results: The findings of this research demonstrated that use of HRM practices (salary, training and development, promotion opportunity) have a significant impact on nurses leaving intention. The result of this study advances the literature to non-western context, like Pakistan by extending the literature on nurse's turnover intention.

Conclusion: The statistical finding of this study concludes that HRM practices (salary, promotion opportunity) can reduce nurses leaving intention, whereas training and development has no significant effect upon their quitting intention in the public healthcare settings of Pakistan. The theoretical and practical contributions of this study along with the limitations and recommendations for further research are also addressed on basis of study findings.

Keywords: HRM practices, Salary, Training and development, Promotion opportunity, Turnover intention, Healthcare sector, Pakistan.

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I. Introduction

In today's world of increasing competition and financial performance, human resource is the major component that promotes the growth and development of an organization, the capability of the organization in maintaining its human capital will eventually bring success and rewards to the organization [1]. In accordance with Aruna and Anitha [2] it is an undeniable fact that the long-term success of an organization is entirely dependent in administering and retaining skilled employees. Furthermore, a survey carried out by Abdulkareem, Chauhan [3] on employee turnover revealed that organizations around the globe are persistently facing serious problems related to employee's quitting intention.

Furthermore, employee's turnover intention is an area of special interest for health sector as it can realize the significance regarding healthcare cost, continuity and quality of care services, stress and burnout of remaining healthcare workers [4, 5]. In addition, healthcare sector is also encountering severe retention issues [6, 7]. In accordance with Almaaitah, Harada [7] Jordanian Ministry of Health is facing nurses and doctors retention issues in the public hospitals and their estimated shortfall of medical staff varies from 30% to 40%. As stated by Liu, Goryakin [8] it has been assessed that by 2030 there will be shortage of 3.2 million healthcare professionals which consists of nurses in both middle and low income countries (for instance, Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Yemen and Pakistan). This demand arises from low investments on human capital and being unable to attract and retain healthcare professionals in places of critical requirements [7]. Moreover, it is anticipated that approximately 19000 skilled professionals including the healthcare staff move from Asia-pacific

each year for the better career prospects in developed countries such as United Kingdom, USA, Germany, Canada and Australia [3].

Likewise, Pakistan has no exception from employee turnover issues in the public sector hospitals [9]. It is happening because of the organizational transformation, poor policies implemented by government, change of profession, an imbalance between demand and supply and spending 0.5 to 0.9% of GDP on the health sector from last ten years that is far less from 6% WHO benchmark making it much difficult for nurses to stay in public hospitals of Punjab, Pakistan [10-12]. It is really painful to state that Pakistan is among one of few countries where healthcare policy has received little attention from the policy makers since 1947 [13]. The glimpse of healthcare services in third world countries like Nepal, Bangladesh, Yemen and Pakistan is really depressing and require enormous consideration and efforts when compared with developed countries, for instance, UK, USA, Canada and Australia [13]. Such attitude of the policymakers has made nurses in Pakistan to shift in private hospitals and to settle abroad for better career structure and incentives [14]. These factors are worsening the problem of nurses shortage in public healthcare settings of Pakistan [15]. Therefore, the current study proposed to examine HRM practices (salary, training and development, promotion opportunity) that may influence nurse's turnover intention in public healthcare settings of Pakistan.

Turnover Intention

Turnover intention describes the relative strength of an employee's intent or purpose towards the voluntary permanent withdrawal from the organization. It is generally a motive which drives an individual to quit from his/her current workplace. Similarly, Abbasi and Hollman [16] explain employee turnover as the workers rotation between the state of employment and unemployment, occupations and jobs and around the firms and labor market. In most of the cases, turnover intention can take place either voluntarily where the employee decides to willingly quit the organization [17] or involuntarily replacing the employee from his job position without the employee's willingness [18].

Moreover, the turnover rate varies from organization to organization [19]. Sometimes the employee turnover is beneficial for the organizations in positive ways. Likewise, it is observed that the poor performer is changed by a better educated and skilled individual and also replaced a retired employee by the young one. In accordance with Kadiresan, Selamat [20], turnover occurs for different reasons is also costly as there are several types of costs that an organization will bear in case of their skilled employees turnover. To conclude, following Wayne, Shore [21] and Lum, Kervin [22] within this study's context, the present study conceptualized nurse's turnover intention as the estimated likelihood of permanently leaving the organization in some future period of time.

II. Hypothesis Development

Salary

Murphy and Olsen [23], defined the term salary as "all cash incentives and the fringe benefits mix that an employee receives from an organization" (p.267). According to A'yunnisa and Saptoto [24] a negative relationship exists between salary and employee turnover intention which reveals that when employees perceive better and equitable salaries in the organization, they are less likely to leave the organization. In accordance with Perkins and Scutella [25] international evidence demonstrates that a well-designed system of financial incentives perceived by qualified employees can play a significant role in minimizing their leaving intention. For this reason it is essential for an employer to recognize the factors and preferences of employee's motivation so as to attract and retain qualified employees. Other aspects that require to be addressed are the challenges of determining the appropriate salary system and the type and amount of benefits expected by the employees [26]. Researchers have traditionally emphasized on non-monetary rewards, while recently both scholars and practitioners have highlighted and suggested the added value of emphasizing in economic factors like the role of salary (monetary rewards) in effecting employee's turnover intention in Pakistani context. Therefore, the researcher proposed the following hypothesis.

H1: Salary has a negative and significant influence on employee turnover intention.

Training and Development

Mincer [27], described the training and development as "An investment in acquisition of job related skills, knowledge and abilities or in improvement of employee productivity". Training & development has a negative relationship with turnover intention, which is aligned with the results of existing literature [3, 24, 28, 29]. The research highlighted that most of participants consider that training & development are significant factors in retaining employees and decreasing their leaving intention from the organization [30-32]. Rather surprisingly, little consideration has been paid in the healthcare settings of Pakistan to comprehend the link between training & development and employee turnover intention. Hence, the researcher proposed the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis 1: Training & development has a negative and significant influence on employee turnover intention.

Promotion Opportunity

Allen, Shore [33], defined promotion opportunity as “the extent to which employee’s gets chances of professional upward movement within the organization”. According to Tsai and Wu [34] a negative relationship exists between promotion opportunity and employee turnover intention. They further argued that timely advancement opportunities within the organization enhance employee’s satisfaction and they are more likely to stay longer. This is also supported by Rubel and Kee [1] where professional upward movement is being considered as the most important factor within the organization to retain employees. In another study, Holtom, Mitchell [35] indicated that promotional opportunity acts as an important mechanism for enhancing the sense of commitment and belongingness with the organization that results in long term affiliation with the organization. For this reason it is significant for an employer to comprehend the factors which assists to retain and attract them. Promotional opportunity is a mechanism ensuring the employee to raise his/her position in the organization on the basis of effort and performance [36]. Scholars have traditionally concentrated on different HRM practices, while recently both scholars and practitioners have recommended and highlighted the value of concentrating on promotion opportunity in reducing employee’s turnover intention in the health context of Pakistan. Therefore, the researcher presents the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: Promotion opportunity negatively influences the employee turnover intention.

III. Research Methodology

The proposed hypotheses were analyzed by utilizing the quantitative approach. This type of method helps in the statistical verification of theoretical study model and its related constructs. A survey technique which is most widely accepted and commonly used in the studies of social sciences was pursued [37]. The cross-sectional research technique was employed to determine the respondent’s perceptions. Nurses working in public hospitals of Punjab (Pakistan) were the unit of analysis in this study. The data was analyzed by employing SPSS 20 and SmartPLS 3.2 for descriptive and inferential statistics respectively. A total of 315 questionnaires were distributed and 250 questionnaires were received with response rate of 75 %. A total of 238 questionnaires were finally used for data analysis after outlier’s detection and incomplete questionnaires. Data of the respondents reveal that there were 93.7% females and remaining 6.3% were males. 71% of the study respondents were married while 29% were unmarried. Since this study was related to charge nurses from the health department so the 73.6% of nurses have graduation, 17.8% have under-graduate and 8.6% have post-graduation degrees in nursing. Nurses were working in different medical specialties such as, Medical ward, Surgical ward, Pediatrics ward, Cardiac ward, Emergency ward, Operation theater, ICU/CCU and Gynecology ward. Thus, according to specializations the largest numbers of nurses were working in medical ward with 16.7%. Furthermore, most of the nurses have work experience in between 1-5 years, which represents 41.7% of respondents.

Measurement Scales

In the present study, turnover intention was measured by five (5) items scale adapted from Wayne, Shore [21] and [22]. The scale of salary was adapted from Taunton, Bott [38] which contain (6) items. Training and development scale was adapted from Delery and Doty [39] which contain four (4) items. In this study, promotion opportunity was adapted from Curry, Wakefield [40] which contains five (5) items. A seven-point Likert scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (7) strongly agree was used to measure all of the items of study variables.

IV. Partial Least Squares (PLS) Structural Equation Modeling Approach

The partial least square structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) has draw much attention from different scholars in various areas of business research [37]. It is basically a two step process, the measurement model and the structural model. The measurement model also known as outer model explained the relationship among latent variables and their relevant items. The measurement model assessment implies investigating individual items reliability, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, discriminant validity and VIF [41]. Furthermore, the structural model usually comprises of the coefficient of determination (R^2), effect size of coefficient of determination (f^2) and the predictive relevance (Q^2) of study model. All steps of measurement and structural model are pursued and interrupted below.

Individual Items Reliability

An indicator’s reliability or individual item reliability is determined by examining the outer loadings of each item of variables [42]. The general approach is to retain items with loadings >0.70 [41]. In the present study, the reliability of each item of latent constructs attained the satisfactory level.

Internal Consistency Reliability

Internal consistency reliability indicates the level to which, all the items of a particular scale/subscales measuring the similar concept. In accordance with Nunnally [43] the composite reliability (CR) score of 0.70 or greater is considered acceptable. The table 1 has revealed that the CR value of each construct reaches the satisfactory level.

Convergent Validity

Convergent validity is referred as, “the extent to which a measure correlates positively with alternative measures of the same construct” [44]. This study has calculated the convergent validity of latent constructs through the Average Variance Extracted (AVE). Further, Chin [45] has suggested that AVE value should be 0.50 or greater to ensure adequate convergent validity.

Collinearity Statistics (VIF)

Keeping the suggestions of Sarstedt, Hair Jr [46], the present study has demonstrated that the VIF attaining the satisfactory range of > 3 and < 5 [47, 48]. The table no 1 has shown the results of measurement model.

Table no 1: Results of the Measurement Model

Constructs	Indicators	Loadings	CR	AVE	VIF
Salary	S1	0.853	0.946	0.747	2.635
	S2	0.858			2.871
	S3	0.882			2.948
	S4	0.842			2.822
	S5	0.888			2.817
	S6	0.862			2.932
Training and Development	TD1	0.898	0.91	0.717	2.073
	TD2	0.799			2.162
	TD3	0.804			2.243
	TD4	0.881			2.334
Promotion Opportunity	PO1	0.877	0.897	0.636	2.453
	PO2	0.766			1.723
	PO3	0.781			1.836
	PO4	0.783			1.692
	PO5	0.778			1.815
Turnover Intention	TI1	0.847	0.896	0.635	2.271
	TI2	0.708			1.487
	TI3	0.838			2.254
	TI4	0.819			2.141
	TI5	0.762			1.739

Discriminant Validity

The Discriminant validity is described as, “the extent to which a construct is truly distinct from other constructs by empirical standards” [44]. In this study the discriminant validity is determined by employing the suggested criteria by Fornell and Larcker [49] and the bold values are square root of AVE.

Table no 2: Results of the Discriminant Validity

Constructs	PO	SA	TD	TI
PO	0.797			
SA	0.268	0.864		
TD	0.104	-0.105	0.847	
TI	-0.547	-0.519	0.079	0.797

Assessing the Significance of Structural (Inner) Path Model

After the evaluation of measurement model, the present study evaluated the structural model also known as inner path model. With a purpose to obtain path coefficient, standard error and the t-values, this study employed bootstrapping technique with 5000 subsamples according to the guidelines of [44]. The present study demonstrated two relationships with dependent variable, which described the coefficients of two hypotheses and their t-values for decision making whether the proposed relationships are empirically significant or not.

Table no 3: Structural Model Results

Path Coefficient	Beta values	SD	t-values	p-values	Decision
SA -> TI	-0.39	0.048	8.127	0.000	Accepted
TD -> TI	0.085	0.065	1.311	0.095	Rejected
PO -> TI	-0.451	0.038	11.972	0.000	Accepted

With respect to the Hypothesis H1, the results revealed that the relationship between salary and employee turnover intention was significant ($\beta=-0.39$, $t=8.127$), thus supported H1. Furthermore, the findings pointed that training and development and employee turnover intention was statistically insignificant ($\beta=0.085$, $t=1.311$), hence H2 was rejected. Further, the findings, as reported in table no 3 indicated that the link between promotion opportunity and employee turnover intention was significant ($\beta=-0.451$, $t=11.972$). Therefore, H3 was supported.

V. Assessment of Variance Explained in the Endogenous Latent Variable

The value of R^2 shows the total percentage of variance explained by exogenous variables on the endogenous variable [50]. The recommended R^2 values by Chin [45] are 0.67 (substantial), 0.33 (moderate) and 0.19 (weak) respectively while employing PLS-SEM path modeling technique. Cross-validated redundancy can be used to determine the predictive quality of research model, denoted as Q^2 [44]. Its value should be greater than zero, this study reported Q^2 values of employee turnover intention, therefore, signifying the model's predictive relevance according to the recommendations of [51]. In this study all values shows the satisfactory level.

Table no 4: R square (R^2) and Predictive Relevance (Q^2)

Dependent Variable	R^2	Q^2
Turnover Intention	0.455	0.265

VI. Discussion

In general the major purpose of the present study was to investigate the relationships of HRM practices like salary, training & development and promotion opportunity with turnover intention of employees. Pertaining to test the relationship of salary with employee turnover intention, the empirical findings have proved statistically significant relationship, hence supported H1 of the present study. The results suggest that salary was an important predictor of employees quitting intention having a negative relationship. In short, when employee's perceives better practice of salary within the organization, their intention to leave becomes minimized. The findings of the current study is consistent with previous studies [52, 53], where there is direct link between salary and employee turnover intention. Additionally, the finding also supports the reciprocity concept of social exchange theory (SET). Kee, Ansari [54], argued that, fairness in human resource practices reveals the nature of relationship that the employees can anticipate to obtain from their organization and reciprocate in a positive manner and stay longer.

The finding of the present study found an insignificant relationship between training and development and employee turnover intention ($\beta=0.085$, $t=1.311$), hence not supporting hypothesis H2. The results of the current study are also in conformity with previous studies [55, 56], which demonstrated that the relationship of training and development with turnover intention of employees was statistically insignificant, which implies that there is no doubt that training & development programs may enhance their satisfaction level and boost their morale but such activities might have no impact on quitting decision of employees.

Pertaining to the analysis of promotion opportunity and its relationship with employee's turnover intention, the results found a statistical significant relationship. Thus, hypothesis H3 was supported. The finding of current study is aligned with previous studies [1, 57] that promotion opportunity has a significant negative relationship with employee's leaving intention. Hence, in the developing countries context, it also confirms that promotion opportunity is a precursor of quitting intention of employees. Employee's perception of growth and higher position will help them to stay longer in their employing organization. Likewise, SET gives an illustration of research framework to describe how advancement perceptions are related with employees leaving intention. Employees continue to perform work duties given that their employer will similarly reciprocate by extending timely advancement opportunities and other benefits consistent with the social exchange theory [58].

Implications of the study

At the outset, the current study responded to the calls for review of particular HRM practices instead of combined HRM practices so as to make a significant influence upon employee's behavior in healthcare settings of Pakistan. With theoretical justifications and practical evidence, this study included three major HRM

practices (salary, promotion opportunity) and found significant findings between relationships instead of training and development. The present study has some value addition in the previous literature by addressing the role of HRM practices on employee's turnover intention in public healthcare settings of Pakistan. Similarly, the study results are also aligned with the assertions of social exchange theory, which focus on exchange relationships between an individual and employer for shaping their attitudinal and as well as behavioral outcomes. Hereafter, by covering the major lapses especially in the field of HR, the inclusion of such HRM practices has formed the framework more robust and empirical scalable. Generally, the current study not merely contributes to the existing literature but also extends the idea for future research endeavors to address and consider the issue of employee turnover intention in a responsive manner.

On the practical side, the study findings may have numerous implications, particularly for the services sector with a specific focus on public healthcare sector of Pakistan. It may contribute in terms of better understanding about the issue of nurse's turnover intention on the practical side. The retention of nurses in the public healthcare settings would help to reduce the shortage of nurses and assists in the transfer of skills and knowledge to provide quality healthcare facilities to patients. The results of the present study have remarkable contributions for health sector. Practitioners and policy makers may consider the empirical evidence of the current study while formulating and implementing the suitable HRM practices in the health sector so as to decrease employee's leaving intention. Certainly, HR practitioners are anticipated to play significant role in the formulation of fair policies in order to attract eligible, competent and skilled individuals without any political involvement. As such, individuals who expect growth and progress in their working career will eventually stay longer within the organization, which implies that intention to leave will become less.

VII. Conclusions, Limitations and Directions for Future Research

In conclusion, this study has provided empirical knowledge regarding the direct impact of proposed exogenous on endogenous relationships in the public healthcare settings of Pakistan. The statistical evidence provided by the present study supported the study propositions. Firstly, the study results solely depend on the public healthcare sector. Accordingly, it seems difficult to generalize the study findings to other service organizations. Therefore, future researchers would conduct similar study in different services sectors of Pakistan, like insurance, banks, hotels and education in order to verify the present study findings. Secondly, this study was cross-sectional in nature and the data was collected at one time with small population. Thus, the future researchers would conduct a longitudinal study to examine and confirm the hypothesized relationships over a longer period of time. Thirdly, the present study collected the data by employing self-reported questionnaires which possibly create the problem of common method bias in the study. Future researchers therefore review other strategies, like qualitative or mixed method approach in order to analyze from different aspects. Lastly, the current study only considered public healthcare nurses working in Punjab, Pakistan. Future studies may also involve the nurses from other provinces of Pakistan to make the findings more generalized. In addition, it would also be better to conduct and compare the study findings with non profit (NGO's) and private organizations for comprehensive understanding about the prospects of nurse's turnover intention. On the other hand, since the present study was carried out in a developing country context like Pakistan, the results of this study are anticipated to be applied in other developing nations as a means to reduce employee's turnover intention.

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