



The Mediating Effect of Employee well-being in relation to Role Stressors and Turnover Intention: A Conceptual Study

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ABSTRACT

The technological revolution has escorted diverse roles with deleterious effects, which in turn triggers stress. Role stressors are comprehensively conceptualized as two distinctive variables, role conflict and role ambiguity. In literature, studies have shown a positive relationship of role conflict and role ambiguity with turnover intention while a negative relationship of employee well-being and turnover intention. However, very limited studies have attempted to examine the indirect effect of employee well-being between role stressors and turnover intention. The main objective of this conceptual study is to propose a framework whereby examining the relationship between role stressors and turnover intention with the mediating role of employee well-being. Simple random sampling will be used for data collection from IT executives of software companies of Malaysia in order to examine the relationship between role stressors, employee well-being and turnover intention with the help of structure equation modeling. This study emphasizes the considerable importance of employee well-being interventions at the workplace to enhance the retention strategy.

Keywords: Role Stressors, Employee Well-being, Turnover Intention, Structure Equation Modeling

JEL Classification: J52

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the decades, organizations are encountering with globalization, tough competition, and technology innovation which reorganizes the structure of the workforce (Dewe and Kompier, 2008; Van der Vaart et al., 2013). Through prompt technological reform and higher customer demand for products and services have affected the organization of work-design and the position of employees (Vanhala and Tuomi, 2003). As an outcome of this restructuring of work-design and position, employees are continuously more exposed to mental work demands (Howard, 1995; Paoli and Merllié, 2000). Due to mental work demands and stress, 51% of workers report being less productive in the workplace (American Psychological Association, 2009), work-related stress assumed to cost over \$300 billion per annum among American companies, which persuades to absenteeism and turnover (Rosch, 2001; Schultz et al., 2014).

Physical science defines stress as “the force placed upon an object to cause breaking, straining or bending” (Ahmadi and Alireza, 2007). However, the human being perception and psychology are considered as a threatening at the workplace in terms of favorable or unfavorable demands, when demands exceed than our ability, then human observes stress (Hussain and Lei, 2015). Observing all these threatening demands triggers stress, which is called stressors (Hussain and Lei, 2015). Stressors are the critical factors that ultimately trigger the role of employees at the workplace. Role stressors are generally conceptualized as two distinctive constructs, which are role conflict and role ambiguity (Rizzo et al., 1970). Role conflict arises based on job demands while role ambiguity arises based on undefined information (Larson, 2004).

In Malaysia since independence period, economic development has been changed into the conclusive of a cardinal framework with industrialization programs. The primary goal of the Malaysian plan

and vision is for the setting up of a highly progressive, prosperous, firmly united nation via significant accomplishment through an energetic as well as a sustainable rate of economic development (Ramlan et al., 2007). Malaysia IT industry is confronting with the challenges of turnover issue Malaysian Employer Federation (MEF Report, 2012). Moreover, it's one of the global phenomena, and Asian countries are significantly affected, while Malaysia is positioned sixth in Asia Pacific countries for employee turnover with a 15.9% attrition rate in 2011 (Hewitt, 2009-2011). Malaysia IT industry, turnover rate is more than 75% (Nasyira et al., 2014), which is deeply more affected than other service industries.

To date, a number of researchers have explored the direct relationship of role stressors and turnover intention. As for indirect relationship, various studies found out the mediating relationship of role stressors and turnover intention. However, according to the best knowledge of a researcher, we could fail to identify the research which has examined the relationship of employee well-being as a mediating between role stressors and turnover intention. A study which has been conducted by Firth et al. (2004) where they found different results of direct and indirect effects on the antecedents of turnover intention. This is worth evaluating the job stressors on turnover intention based on direct and indirect effects (Van der Vaart et al., 2013). According to Kaplan et al. (2014) there is a need of employee well-being intervention, which is the best interest of employers and employees to promote the well-being at the workplace (Schultz et al., 2014). According to the Wright (2006) employee well-being may ultimately prove to be a more robust predictor for employee's retention. This paper is proposing one of the mediating variables "employee well-being" to minimize the turnover intention among IT executives of Malaysia. A very little attention has been given to employee well-being as a mediator, and it can be safely assumed that it will be helpful for employers to retain their employees for a longer period of time.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Role Stressors, Turnover Intention, and Employee Well-being Relationship

While thoroughly looked into literature many authors have come up with different definitions of role stressors. According to Hussain and Lei (2015) role stressors are factors that affect the role of employees in an organization. Role conflict and role ambiguity are two of the widely discussed constructs of role stressors (Rizzo et al., 1970). It was in 1964 when the origin of the role conflicts and role ambiguity was actually initiated by (Kahn et al., 1964). According to Kahn et al., role conflict and role ambiguity are the potential psychosocial stressors that can trigger to physiological, behavioral and psychological consequences (Kahn et al., 1964; Schmidt et al., 2014). Role conflict arises when there is an uncertainty between the assigned tasks i.e., facing more than one conflicting role expectations and consistently role demands of others, whereas ambiguous information results in role ambiguity i.e., resulted in a scarcity of information as well as unexplained job position (Kahn et al., 1964).

This uncertainty and ambiguity put employees away from the expected roles and further prompted to a purely psychological

conflict in which they are not only uncertain about the roles of the job but also about job objectives (Schmidt et al., 2014). Role conflict arises due to a number of different job demands being demanded by the employers that further results into role strain, where individuals experience burden, exhaustion, and tension (Gordon et al., 2012). Various studies found the positive consequences of role stressors (role conflict and ambiguity) in terms of lower job satisfaction, absenteeism, work-family conflict, low-level commitment and turnover intention (Floyd and Wooldridge, 2000; Good et al., 1988; Memili et al., 2015; Schmidt et al., 2014; Tubre and Collins, 2000) which are costly for organizations (Memili et al., 2015).

Work-related stress triggers due to conflicting and ambiguous assigned tasks affects the well-being of the employees which has been discussed by different authors in their studies (Cooper et al., 2001; Siu, 2002; Vander Elst et al., 2014). A study of Wright and Bonett (1992) found that employees with poor well-being hardly stay on their job and always look into varied job opportunities. Similarly, (Wright, 2006) suggested that improved employee well-being decreased the turnover in an organization.

2.2. The Mediating Effect of Employee Well-being between the Role Stressors and Turnover Intention

Employee well-being is more than just people's health at workplace and can extensively be described as "the overall quality of an employee's experience and functioning at work" (Warr, 1987). Generally speaking, employee well-being has been categorized into three-dimensions related to happiness (Appelbaum, 2000; Gould-Williams, 2003; Whitener, 2001), health (Appelbaum, 2000; Ramsay et al., 2000) and relationships (Bartel, 2004; Gelade and Ivery, 2003; Tzafrir, 2005). A study of Grant et al. (2007) deliberate employee well-being as encompassing happiness, health as well as relationship oriented elements. Boxall and Macky (2014) in their study enlightened happiness, health and relationship into three different ways. They enclose happiness with global job satisfaction, health-related with the concepts of fatigue/stress and finally relationship-oriented with work-life balance.

The effect of independent variables on dependent variables can be best explained by the help of mediation analysis to explore psychological processes (Rucker et al., 2011). Employee well-being is regard as a personal resource in conservation of resource (COR) theory. According to the COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989; 2001), employee's experience of a resource loss or its threat that contributes to perceive stress. Employees then attempt to retain, defend and develop those things they value (i.e., resource) (Hobfoll and Shirom, 2001). Vander Elst et al. (2014) employees who feel emotionally exhausted to have little energy and hence reduced resources. Whenever employees experience the threat of resource loss, they might devote less energy to the existing job to avoid additional resource losses (Cheng et al., 2014). This resource loss put the concerns of experiencing psychological stress that might lead to negative psychological or behavioral outcomes (e.g., burnout, absenteeism) (Chiu et al., 2015) and makes them perceive more stressors (Vander Elst et al., 2014).

Firth et al. (2004) found no direct association of job stressors with turnover intention, rather an indirect association was found by perceived supervisor support, job satisfaction and job commitment. Various studies of Armstrong-Stassen et al. (1994), Igarria and Greenhaus (1992) did not find direct association of job stressors with turnover intention, while found indirect association (Van der Vaart et al., 2013). To the best of researchers' knowledge there were only two studies where authors discussed employee well-being as a mediating variable. The first was done by McGuire and McLaren (2009) where they found the impact of physical environment on employee commitment in call centers with the mediating role of employee well-being. This study of analysis confirms that employee well-being mediates the relationship between physical environment and employee commitment. Another study of (Van der Vaart et al., 2013) demonstrated that employee well-being mediates the relationship between the state of the psychological contract and an employee's intention to leave the organization. Another study of Chung et al., (2015) results showed that employees' sense of well-being played a positively and pivotally mediating role in the relationship between social capital and employees' tacit and explicit knowledge-sharing behavior in the virtual organization.

3. PROPOSED CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Based on a comprehensive literature review, a conceptual framework has been developed to examine the relationship between role stressors and turnover intention whilst employee well-being imitates as a mediating. Figure 1 depicts the proposed conceptual framework of the study. This is hypothesized that role stressors have a positive relationship with turnover intention and employee well-being mediates the relationship between role stressors and turnover intention.

4. SCALE MEASUREMENT

Measurement scales of this study have been given below to test the scale and its relationship.

4.1. Role Stressors

Role stressors have been categorized with two main distinct factors of role conflict and role ambiguity. Role conflict and role ambiguity measured adopted from the scale of (Rizzo et al., 1970) with seven and five items respectively through Likert scale ranging

from (1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree). The example of a role conflict item is "I work under incompatible policies and guidelines," whereas the example of a role ambiguity item is "Explanation is clear of what has to be done."

4.2. Employee Well-being

Employee well-being will be measured on two scales, likewise, job satisfaction, work-life balance and fatigue.

4.2.1. Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction will be measured by four items from (Macdonald and MacIntyre, 1997) adopted. As an example, the items include as "feel good about working at this company," "On the whole, I believe work is good for my physical health." The items are scored on a five-point Likert scale ranging from (1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree).

4.2.2. Work-life balance

Work-life balance will be measured by five items from (Boxall and Macky, 2014) adopted. As for the item is concerned, it will be "After work, I come home too tired to do some of the things I'd like to do," "My family or friends dislike how often I am preoccupied with my work while I am at home." The items will be ranging from (1 never to 5 very often).

4.2.3. Fatigue

Fatigue will be measured based on eight items, which have been adopted from (Fisk and Doble, 2002). The examples of fatigue items are "Because of fatigue, I feel less alert," "Because of fatigue, I am less motivated to do anything that requires physical effort." Responses will be scored on five scales (1 - No problem) to (5 - Extreme problem).

4.3. Turnover Intention

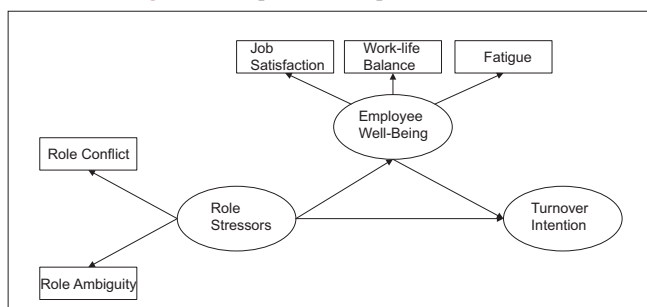
The turnover intention measure is based on five items from (Ganesan and Weitz, 1996) adopted. It included items related to the three cognitions of the thought of quitting, search, and the intention to quit. For instance, the items will be "I do not think I will spend my entire career with this organization." The items based on five Likert scale ranging from (1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree).

5. CONCLUSION

In current era of globalization, the tendency of rivalry instigates worldwide and executing government as well as organizations to uphold a competitive advantage domestically and internationally. In this consideration, all the organizations rely on human capital to accomplish their goals whilst neglecting the concern and well-being of employees, which in turn prompts stress and excels to turnover intention. According to the MEF executive director, the critical factor behind turnover in Malaysia is work-life balance. Additionally, this study intensifies the empirical literature by amalgamating role stressors and employee well-being with the turnover intention.

This conceptual framework will be tested among the executives of IT software industries. As for analysis and relationship of

Figure 1: Proposed conceptual framework



variables, structural equation modelling will be used to validate the proposed framework.

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