Review Article

Demographics and Turnover Intentions: Can there be Any Link?

Mustajab Ahmed Soomro

University of Tasmania, Australia
mustajabahmed.soomro@utas.edu.au
Correspondence: mustajabahmed.soomro@utas.edu.au

Abstract: Employee turnover intentions is referred amongst some of the most important areas of focus of employees since the past two decades. Therein, much of the studies have remained focused on a variety of different individual and organizational elements to understand what potentially predict employee turnover intentions and how to manage it. In comparison, little is known pertaining to the demographic factors and their relationship with employee turnover intentions. Through appraising extant literature on demographic factors such as age, gender, marital status and education, the present study offers a critical insight to researchers to understand the potential of these factors in predicting turnover intentions. The article offers unique scholarly presentation of prior studies indicating the prominence of demographic factors and their role in predicting several entities and how they could be of similar vitality when it comes to employee turnover intentions. The article offers critical insight on the topic followed by prepositions and conceptual framework.

1. Introduction

Employee retention is a major issue across various occupation sectors (e.g., Ahmed, Umrani & Chauhan, 2018). While several factors have been associated to employee retention, very little attention is channeled to the investigation on the role of demographic factors such as age, gender, marital status, qualification, income, and years of service to employee retention (Reina et al., 2018). In fact, Akova, Cetin and Cifci (2015) observed that these few studies about the relation of socio demographic profile and employee turnover do not usually come into consensus. For example, Monks (2012) observed that several studies have considered age as a factor in turn over however found significant evidence to disagree on such observation. Moreover, Matarid, Sobh and Ahmed (2018) found that age is a factor in determining employee's intention to stay in the organization while Lopina et al. (2012) found none of such relationship exists. The mentioned importance of the study and the varying results thereof motivated the researcher to conduct further study of the said construction company. The understanding of how demographic factors tie in with the employee turnover intentions is going to be greatly beneficial. Thus, the purpose of the study is to propose and indicate towards a framework of acute significance.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Employee Turnover

The turnover of employees is quite a complex happening. It is widely known as a decision an employee makes to leave their job role in an organization. (Reina et al., 2018). The choice to quit could be either elective

or non-elective. When it is elective, this means the employee chose to leave the organization and officially resigns or retires. When it is the opposite, involuntary, it means an organization has decided to make the employee redundant or to fire them for various reasons (Allen, Bryant and Vardaman, 2010). Extensive research displayed by Kim and Fernandez (2017) has shown that personal factors influence the intention to remain in or leave an organization. Some factors uncovered in study and research that influence these intentions include age, education level, marital status, family responsibility, employee and their family's health, employment status and their area of employment. Employee turnover has turned out to be a major issue for businesses since it costs a lot of time effort and money to train and develop an employee. Therefore, when an employee is lost, in a way result in a major intellectual, financial and skill loss for the business (De Winne et al., 2019). This hence asserts that, organizations need to really look into all potential ways through which, it can overcome or minimize the possibility of employees leaving the business.

2.2. Age

Employee age shows that it plays a vital role in an employee's commitment (Roodt & Kotze, 2005), how close of a relationship the employee is in with their job role (Tanova & Holtom, 2008) and whether they stay or leave (Van Breukelen et al 2004). It can be possibly explained using the idea that employees go through stages in their career where their priorities of their job role/workplace shift as well as in their personal life (Cron & Slocum, 1986). Tromp et al. (2010) state that employee age significantly impacts the decision to stay/leave as younger employees seemed hastier to leave their jobs in certain cases. Through research we have discovered age significantly impacts employee decisions to remain in or quit an organization (Sun & Wang, 2017). Specifically, we learned from research that employees 45 and have more of an intention to remain within their organization compared to youthful employees that are 45 or lower, according to Kwon and Kang (2019).

Workers that are young were discovered to have left regularly, compared to the older ones (Schubert & Andersson, 2015). This has to do with younger people's uncertainty and also various opportunities and options. Another reason may be because older people have worked longer in their organizations and find it harder to leave after time whereas younger employees may not have that level of commitment.

2.3. Education

The education level of employees is shown to influence their intention to remain in or finish up with an organization. Studies have found many contradictory findings with education status as a factor in this. Boxall et al. (2003), looked into the data of workers from New Zealand and discovered barely any difference in whether an employee would to stay or finish up with their organization because of their individual level of education. This study was a general research on New Zealand employees inside of many different workplaces. Although, in a study of US nurses, the opposite was found to be true - a correlation between education status and an employee's intention to stay was found. In short, the more educated an employee was, the more likely they were to leave (Kash, Naufal, Cortes & Johnson, 2010).

The US study (Kash et al., 2010) also asserted that an employee with higher education is more likely to leave – this may be because they have more available options due to their qualifications.

2.4. Marital Status

According to Cotton and Tuttle (1986) husbands, wives and life partners significantly impact an employees' intention to leave or remain in an organization. Seeing as things like retirement, relocating and financial decisions are very often choices that are made together in marriages (Chen, Ayoun & Eyoun, 2018). Lu et al. (2002) showed that more senior females would leave because they want to be with their families and spouse more. Also, the spouses of the older employees working in public services typically

have the greatest impact on the reason to stay and continue working or enter retirement. (Cheung & Wu, 2013).

This appears to be true as marriage can most certainly affect choice making in situations; including an employee's propensity to stay (Watanabe & Falci, 2016). Thus, it can be said that older females can leave the work force with their reason being they will have more time for their family. These evidences suggest that marital status can make an impact on employees` decision to whether stay with the organization. Critical appraisal of the aforementioned literature also outlines that when hiring organizations need to consider the marital status of employees to ensure they recruit people who will stay with them for long. This ideally becomes more important for businesses that very much concerned for the marital status of the employees such as airline industry and so on.

2.5. Gender

Furthermore, studies done on the turnover intentions when it comes to gender involve a lot of mixed opinions. There are arguments for male employees being more committed to an organization due to them have better jobs/positions in the company than the female employees. In another argument it is said that the women are less committed due to being more family focused and prioritizing their roles as a wife/mother etc. over their role in an organization (Aven et al., 1993). this is the case as females take quite some time off from this positions due to maternity leave, as well as family requirements and commitments to their child, the role of a wife and mother can quite often overshadow their role in the workplace.

Chen and Francesco (2000) conducted a study in China and this study states that due to the traditional Chinese society - where the role of women was subordinating to that of men, their organizational commitment turned out to be lower and the possibility of them leaving was much higher. Mölders et al. (2019) also did a study on the topic, the study shows that gender has an impact on the decision related to employment made by individuals whilst keeping in view the responsibilities towards their families. North (2019) focused his study on the age variable, saying that younger employees had higher commitment to their organizations because they had less job experience in general and did not have the options that more experienced, older employees had which would grant them the ability to change jobs in smoother fashion.

Important to note that, studies have mixed opinions here - they each make valid points in the sense that if women are ranked lower than men by default, this is obviously going to put females off of working and weaken their commitment to their job roles. Seemingly, in many cases as family has come up in many of these studies as a driving force for working/not working. Employee retention is the ability an organization has to keep its valuable employees from leaving the organization.

There are a variety of people management strategies that are used to make sure that employee behavior, interaction and relationships encourage employees to stay within the organization. Opportunities in career development, reward systems and recognition programs are other strategies used to monitor and enhance an employee's satisfaction in their job and create a happier place to work in (Awang, Ahmed, Hoque, Siddiqui, Dahri & Muda, 2017; Ahmed, Kura, Umrani & Pahi, 2020). Keeping good strategies of retention as a focus in an organization is hugely significant because an organization's workers certainly are valuable for success and sustainability of an organization both in the short-term and long-term (Kynd et al., 2009).

3. Way Forward

Roodt and Kootz (2005) underlined that as well as age, variables like gender were differently perceived when relating to organizational support, modifications and changes reward and their likelihood to leave. This discovery was also supported by verifiable evidence (Tromp et al., 2010) they put out the idea that gender may very well be a moderator between the psychological contract and intention to leave. The

barriers when it comes to promotion may also impact a female's choice to leave or to stay with an organization.

The research also found that the patterns of turnover of well educated women are very similar to men; more similar than the turnover patterns of less educated women in common organizations/workplaces, employees exist who excel at their positions help to improve an organization. These employees are typically known to leave and work elsewhere. Should this occur at any organization, the company will notice the impact in a very negative way. It could suffer a loss of productivity; customers may be waiting longer for service and if the organization attempts to add/introduce new programs there will be not enough good employees to implement/function it. And so, this means the organization could stray off the path it was on towards its goals should these losses occur. (Weiss & Lincoln, 1998). Furthermore, it is stated in the above study that employees who excel at their positions improve an organization – if such an employee should leave and work elsewhere the organization could suffer a substantial loss.

4. Conceptual Framework

Based on the critical appraisal mentioned above, the present study forwards the following conceptual framework
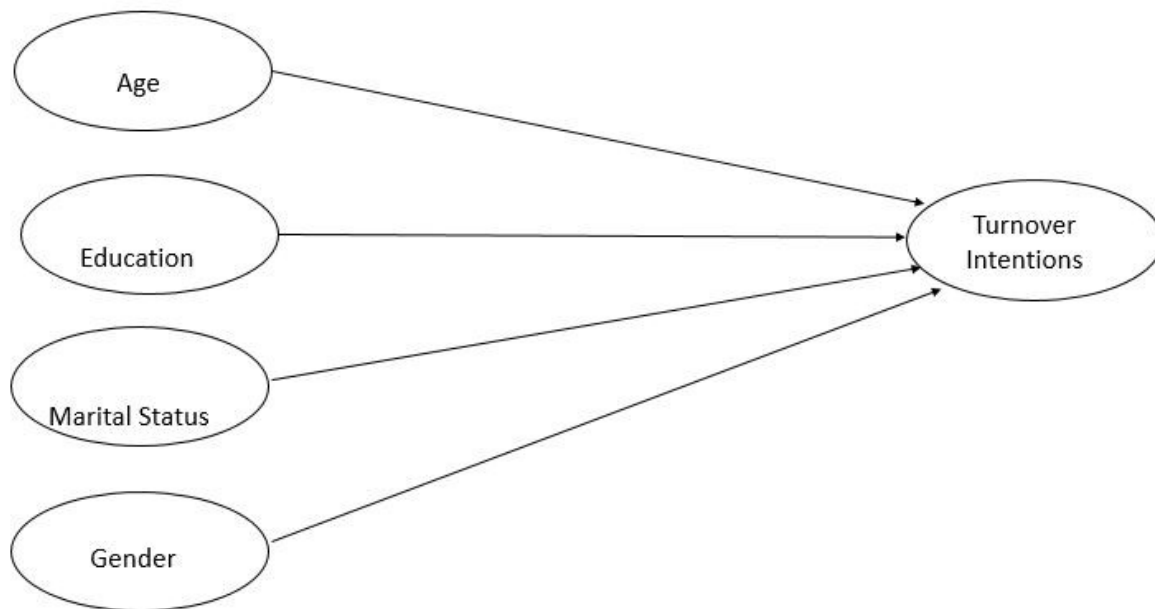
Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

5. Conclusion

Conclusively, the paper has attempted to highlight the potential of demographic characteristics and their link with employees` turnover intentions. The study has indicated that despite some empirical attention in the recent past, these relationships still require further scholarly work to help organizational scholars and practitioners understand the relationship between these constructs; which would aid the existing knowledge and facilitate policy makers in making effective hiring and employee management decisions.

References

Ahmed, U., Kura, K. M., Umrani, W. A., & Pahi, M. H. (2020). Modelling the link between developmental human resource practices and work engagement: The moderation role of service climate. *Global Business Review*, *21*(1), 31-53.

Ahmed, U., Umrani, W. A., & Chauhan, A. A. (2018). Motivation and Retention of Teachers in a Family Business in Education A Case Study from South Asia. *International Journal of Family Business Practices*, *1*(2), 160-173.

Akova, O., Cetin, G., & Cifci, I. (2015). The relation between demographic factors and the turnover intention in pre-opening hotel businesses. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *207*, 377-384.

Allen, D. G., Bryant, P. C., & Vardaman, J. M. (2010). Retaining talent: Replacing misconceptions with evidence-based strategies. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, *24*(2), 48-64.

Alzyoud, A. A. Y., Ahmed, U., AlZgool, M. R. H., & Pahi, M. H. (2019). Leaders' emotional intelligence and employee retention: Mediation of job satisfaction in the hospitality industry. *International Journal of Financial Research*, *10*(3), 1-10.

Aven, F., Barbara, P., & Glenn M., M. (1993). Gender and Attitudinal Commitment to Organizations: A Meta Analysis. Journal of Applied Psychology, 72(1), 642-648

Awang, Z.; Ahmed, U.; Hoque, A. S. M. M.; Siddiqui, B. A.; Dahri, A. S.; and Muda, H. (2017). The Mediating Role of Meaningful Work in the Relationship Between Career Growth Opportunities and Work Engagement. International Academic Confernce on Business and Economics (IACBE 2017), Faculty of Economics and Management Sciences (FESP), Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin (UniSZA), October 07-08.

Boxall, P., Macky, K., & Rasmussen, E. (2003). Labour turnover and retention in New Zealand: The causes and consequences of leaving and staying with employers. *Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources*, *41*(2), 196-214.

Chen, H., Ayoun, B., & Eyoun, K. (2018). Work-Family conflict and turnover intentions: A study comparing China and US hotel employees. *Journal of Human Resources in Hospitality & Tourism*, *17*(2), 247-269.

Chen, Z. X., & Francesco, A. M. (2000). Employee demography, organizational commitment, and turnover intentions in China: do cultural differences matter?. *Human Relations*, *53*(6), 869-887.

Cheung, F., & Wu, A. M. (2013). Older workers' successful aging and intention to stay. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, *28*(6), 645-660.

Cotton, J. L., & Tuttle, J. M. (1986). Employee turnover: A meta-analysis and review with implications for research. *Academy of Management Review*, *11*(1), 55-70.

Cron, W. L., & Slocum Jr, J. W. (1986). The influence of career stages on salespeople's job attitudes, work perceptions, and performance. *Journal of Marketing Research*, *23*(2), 119-129.

De Winne, S., Marescaux, E., Sels, L., Van Beveren, I., & Vanormelingen, S. (2019). The impact of employee turnover and turnover volatility on labor productivity: a flexible non-linear approach. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *30*(21), 3049-3079.

Gibson, L. A., & Sodeman, W. A. (2014). Millennials and technology: Addressing the communication gap in education and practice. *Organization Development Journal*, *32*(4), 63-75.

Jefferson, T., & Preston, A. (2010). Labour markets and wages in Australia in 2009. *Journal of Industrial Relations*, *52*(3), 335-354.

Kash, B. A., Naufal, G. S., Cortés, L., & Johnson, C. E. (2010). Exploring factors associated with turnover among registered nurse (RN) supervisors in nursing homes. *Journal of Applied Gerontology*, *29*(1), 107-127.

Kim, S. Y., & Fernandez, S. (2017). Employee empowerment and turnover intention in the US federal bureaucracy. *The American Review of Public Administration*, *47*(1), 4-22.

Kwon, J. O., & Kang, J. M. (2019). The Effect of Person-Evironment Fit (Person-Job Fit, Person-Organization Fit, Person-Supervisor Fit) and Job Embeddedness on Turnover Intention in Clinical Nurses'. *Journal of the Korea Convergence Society*, *10*(3), 307-317.

Kyndt, E., Dochy, F., Michielsen, M., & Moeyaert, B. (2009). Employee retention: Organisational and personal perspectives. *Vocations and Learning*, *2*(3), 195-215.

Lopina, E. C., Rogelberg, S. G., & Howell, B. (2012). Turnover in dirty work occupations: A focus on pre-entry individual characteristics. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, *85*(2), 396-406.

Lu, K. Y., Lin, P. L., Wu, C. M., Hsieh, Y. L., & Chang, Y. Y. (2002). The relationships among turnover intentions, professional commitment, and job satisfaction of hospital nurses. *Journal of Professional Nursing*, *18*(4), 214-219.

Matarid, N. M., Sobh, O. S., & Ahmed, U. (2018). The Impact of Organizational Justice and Demographics on Faculty Retention in Bahrain. Le travail humain, (3)

Mölders, S., Brosi, P., Spörrle, M., & Welpe, I. M. (2019). The effect of top management trustworthiness on turnover intentions via negative emotions: the moderating role of gender. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *156*(4), 957-969.

North, M. S. (2019). A GATE to understanding "older" workers: Generation, age, tenure, experience. *Academy of Management Annals*, *13*(2), 414-443.

Reina, C. S., Rogers, K. M., Peterson, S. J., Byron, K., & Hom, P. W. (2018). Quitting the boss? The role of manager influence tactics and employee emotional engagement in voluntary turnover. *Journal of leadership & organizational Studies*, *25*(1), 5-18.

Roodt, G., & Kotze, K. (2005). Factors that affect the retention of managerial and specialist staff: An exploratory study of an employee commitment model. *SA Journal of Human Resource Management*, *3*(2), 48-55.

Schubert, T., & Andersson, M. (2015). Old is gold? The effects of employee age on innovation and the moderating effects of employment turnover. *Economics of innovation and New Technology*, *24*(1-2), 95-113.

Sun, R., & Wang, W. (2017). Transformational leadership, employee turnover intention, and actual voluntary turnover in public organizations. *Public Management Review*, *19*(8), 1124-1141.

Tanova, C., & Holtom, B. C. (2008). Using job embeddedness factors to explain voluntary turnover in four European countries. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *19*(9), 1553-1568.

Tromp, D. M., van Rheede, A., & Blomme, R. J. (2010). The relationships between psychological strain, organizational support, affective commitment and turnover intentions of highly educated hospitality employees. In *Advances in Hospitality and Leisure*. Emerald Group Publishing Limited.

Van Breukelen, W., Van der Vlist, R., & Steensma, H. (2004). Voluntary employee turnover: Combining variables from the 'traditional'turnover literature with the theory of planned behavior. *Journal of Organizational Behavior: The International Journal of Industrial, Occupational and Organizational Psychology and Behavior*, *25*(7), 893-914.

Watanabe, M., & Falci, C. D. (2016). A demands and resources approach to understanding faculty turnover intentions due to work–family balance. *Journal of Family Issues*, *37*(3), 393-415.

Weiss, G. E., & Lincoln, S. A. (1998). Departing employee can be nightmare. *Electronic News*, *44*(2210), 1-3.