
Demographic Factors Influence on Employee Retention

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ABSTRACT

The success and failure of an organization depend on how they address employee turnover predictors within the organization. The play of demographic factors influence is not less significant in turnover intention. Every organization needs to focus on demographic factors that influence turnover intention to enhance better employee retention rates. In the current study, four demographic factors have been suggested to explain its impact on employee retention. The Twenty-first-century new theory of job embeddedness provided support for the demographic factors.

KEYWORDS: *Employee turnover intention, employee retention, demographic factors, age, gender, education, tenure, and job embeddedness theory.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Employee retention is an ongoing process for an organization to sustain an employee for a more extended period. According to Reitz and Anderson (2011), the “reasons why a person stays at a job are not the reverse of the reasons why that same person might leave” (p. 323). Cardy & Lengnick-Hall (2011) also have a similar view that “considerable attention has focused on “will they go” or turnover with far less attention having been paid to “will they stay” or “why do they stay,” or retention” (p. 213). Therefore, why the employee leaves and why employee stay is two different concepts. Research scholars have been paying more attention to several employee turnover predictors. These factors are classified under different heads, i.e., human resource management (HRM) related factors (Iyer, 2011; Kuttappa, 2013; Tangthong, Trimetsoontorn, and Rojniruntikul, 2014), job-related factors (George, 2015), personal factors (Zhang, 2016), push factors (Ali Shah et al., 2010) pull factors (Ali shah et al., 2010), demographic factors (Emiroglua, Akovab, & Tanrıverdic, 2015; Hayes 2015), and organizational factors (Nema & Nougriaya, 2015; Keenam, 2015). According to Hom et al. (2017) “Turnover research is dynamic and ever-changing, and is experiencing a paradigm shift” (p. 534). Accordingly, such changes have been implemented by turnover scholars on a regular basis. This study attempt to expose demographic factors theoretical influence in improving employee’s retention. This study also one of a contribution to turnover research that investigated the demographic factors influence on employee retention.

Demographic factors are reviewed in employee retention studies as they have a strong influence on turnover intention. Walsh & Bartikowski (2013) suggests that organizational leaders need to acknowledge situational factors, such as employee demographics that affect turnover intention within the organization. Lambert et al. (2012) found demographic factors (length of tenure, age, and income) as potential turnover antecedents.

Likewise, job embeddedness theory offers support for linking demographic factors and employee retention (Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, Sablinski, & Erez, 2001). The theory of job embeddedness is also known as the theory of employee retention (Bibi, Pangil, & Johanim, 2016). Employees are more embedded when they feel demographic factors are favorable and they are getting fair outcomes. Consequently, embedded employees are more likely to show positive job outcomes, such as retention and performance (Bibi, Pangil, & Johanim, 2016).

This research attempt to propose the impact of demographic factors impact on employee retention. This study offers theoretical clarification on the part of job embeddedness in mediating the association between demographic factors and employees retention. This paper additionally explains past studies conducted to investigate demographic factors influence on employee retention have similar and conflicting results. Therefore, further research is needed to clarify the relationship between demographic factors and employee retention. Besides, the possible operation of Job embeddedness as a mediator may strengthen the relationship between demographic factors and employee retention.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature source discussed numerous factors under demographic factors and rested relationship with employee retention. Agyeman & Ponnai (2014) states that the literature review of demographic predictors (age, gender, tenure, education, and income levels) found a stable relationship with retention and turnover intentions. Moreover, Emiroglue, Akovab & Tanriverdic (2015) determined the relationship between the demographic factors (e.g., Age, gender, marital status, and education) and the turnover factors such as tenure, wage, position, working department and the turnover intention of employees working in the hospitality industry, Istanbul. The study concluded that demographic factors have a high influence on employee turnover intention. In another study, Almalki, Fitz Gerald & Clarke (2012) found significant associations between employee retention and demographic variables such as gender, age, marital status, dependent children, education level, nursing tenure, organizational tenure, and positional tenure. Therefore, demographic factors are reviewed in employee retention studies since they have a strong influence on turnover intention. This research discussed the following demographic factors that affect employee retention.

2.1 Age

Literature sources identified that an employee's age had a direct effect on turnover intention, employee's perceptions of satisfaction, and employee commitment (Lambert et al., 2012). Rani & Samuel (2016) asserted that managing the dynamics of a multigenerational workforce is a crucial challenge for today's managers. Generally, there are three generations of workers in an organization, i.e., Baby Boomers (born between 1943-1960); Generation X (born between 1961-1981); Generation Y or the Millennial (born between 1982-2001). Unique abilities and competencies characterize each generation, and leveraging them is a crucial challenge to an organization's success (Rentz, 2015). Okun et al. (2013) suggested that employees aged 35 to 55 have different perspectives on their jobs than younger and older workers. Gibson & Sodeman (2014) also have a similar view that employees between 35 and 55 were relatively stable, focused, and loyal to their organizations. Okun et al. also noted that younger employees (35 years and under) were more likely to move to new jobs than employees aged 35 to 55.

Consequently, Job change behavior was very high among generation Y employees. For instance, Lopina et al., (2012) study revealed 33% of the study population who were generation Y employees (aged 18-34) voluntarily terminated employment within six months. Consequently, Older workers can access less openings and stayed remain with an association (Wren, Berkowitz, & Grant, 2014). Bjelland et al. (2011); Lambert et al. (2012); Monks (2012) also found similar results that older employees were more likely to stay employed with their organization than younger employees. Furthermore, turnover intentions decreased among older employees and those that had more tenure with the organization (Lambert et al., 2012). Ouimet and Zarutskie (2014) also found a higher employee turnover among younger employees than older employees. Okun et al. (2013) stated that younger employees wanted new challenges, promotions, and higher pay. Therefore generation Y employees tended not to remain in one organization and left organizations sooner in pursuit of more extensive opportunities.

Rani & Samuel (2016) found a significant difference between the working styles of Generation Y and older generations. Okun et al. (2013) claim that workers older than 55 believe they are valued with experiences they offered their employers. Subsequently, older age groups tend to be knowledgeable, experienced, and skilled at performing tasks (Wolfson, Cavanagh, & Kraiger, 2014). As a result, older workers possess internal knowledge and could transfer their expertise to the younger employees, thereby helping organizational leaders retain organizational knowledge (Eastman, et al., 2014; Griffin, 2014; Wolfson, Cavanagh, & Kraiger, 2014). Acharya and Mahanty (2007) expressed that nearly 60% of the IT professionals in India are between the ages 15 to 59, with more than half being below the age of 25 as cited by Iyer (2011).

Several researchers found a positive and negative relationship between age and turnover intention. Borman and Dowling (2017) conducted a meta-analysis among the Teachers. The study results found that Teachers who are 51 years of age or older are nearly 2.5 times more likely to quit teaching than Teachers who are 50 or younger. Fu, Deshpande, & Zhao (2014) examined the ethical behavior of employees with job satisfaction, promotions, co-workers, and supervisor. Fu found that employee's age had a direct effect on ethical behavior. Fu added that young employees displayed better ethical behavior than that of older employees. Therefore, leaders mitigate the attrition of younger employees through contractual binding (Chang, Wang, & Huang, 2013). Similarly, Kabungaidze, Mahlatshana & Ngirande (2013) also found age as a predictor of employee turnover intention.

Agyeman & Ponniah (2014) investigated the relationship between demographic factors with employee retention. The investigation revealed a positive and statistically insignificant relationship between age and employee retention. Likewise, Tanova & Holtom (2008) investigated the causes of voluntary turnover based on large European workforce. Tanova & Holtom investigated job embeddedness theory tested in the United States to assess its generalizability in the European context. The study found a negative relationship between age and voluntary turnover. The study results also found a negative relationship between age and turnover in Denmark, Italy, Spain, and Finland. Accumulated evidence provided both direct and indirect effect between age and employee retention. Therefore, the researcher proposes the following:

Proposition: 1 There is a positive relationship between employee age and employee retention.

2.2 Gender

An organizational gender disparity issues influence employee turnover intention. Jepsen & Rodwell (2013) suggested organizations to maintain gender quality. Researchers have a different opinion about gender difference in an organization. Researchers linked gender disparities to personality traits and opportunities for promotion (Speck et al., 2000). Similarly, an employee's peripheral parental role was a factor influence employee retention. Psychological contracts affects turnover intentions for mothers with infant children (Botsford-Morgan & King, 2012).

A supervisor's gender and leadership style was a crucial factor for turnover intention (Grissom, Nicholson-Crotty, & Keiser, 2012). However, job satisfaction was very high with employees supervised by individuals of the same gender (Grissom, Nicholson-Crotty, & Keiser, 2012). Likewise, Walsh & Bartikowski (2013) found gender disparities had a moderating effect on psychological contracts and turnover intentions. Consequently, a supervisor's unfulfilled psychological contracts could have explained a mother's decision to leave the organization (Botsford-Morgan & King, 2012).

Literature source have identified both positive and negative relationship between gender and employee retention. Hayes (2015) found gender as a determiner of turnover intentions. Jepsen & Rodwell (2013) researched the dissimilarities amongst male and female view of organizational equity, work fulfillment, organizational responsibility, and turnover aim. The examination comes about uncovered that gender difference prompts turnover expectation inside an association. Similarly, the most significant factor that affected turnover was the relationship between male employees with female supervisors (Grissom, Nicholson-Crotty, & Keiser, 2012). Likewise, Agyeman & Ponnaiah (2014) investigated the significant factors that affect employee retention in MSMEs (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises). The study results supported the association between gender and retention. Hence, the researcher proposes the following:

Proposition: 2 There is a positive relationship between employee gender and employee retention

2.3 Education

Alasadi & Alsabbagh (2015) states that individuals have the potential to capitalize on the skills upon preparation of education and training. The acknowledgment of advanced levels of education improved employee marketability (Stanley, Vandenberghe, Vandenberg, & Bentein, 2013) which leads to turnover intention. Once employees gained higher education status, they inclined to seek employment with other organizations (Wren et al., 2014). Islam et al. (2013) also had a similar view that turnover intentions were more likely in individuals with advanced levels of education.

Literature source has both positive and negative effect between education and turnover intention. Maya (2014) investigated demographic factor effects on the turnover intention with a sample size of five Information technology companies classified by the National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM) based on the revenue. The study revealed that educational qualification of employees showed a significant association with stay intention than other factors. On the contrary, Bianchi (2013) examined the current job market trend during economic crisis. The investigation revealed that graduates are satisfied with their job compared to other workers who entered the workforce during better

economic times. Moreover, Nicholas et al. (2016) also found that graduates are more satisfied because of their educational background. However, Jayasingam & Yong (2013) found lower instances of turnover among knowledge workers.

Islam et al. (2013) stated that well-educated workers and knowledge workers sought employment opportunities through knowledge-intensive firms or firms that conducted intellectual work. Islam et al. also indicated that when viewing the effects of education, individuals with higher degrees were more likely to leave the organization than employees that did not have degrees were. In line with the previous findings, Agyeman & Ponnaiah (2014) conveyed a positive association with age and gender, level of education or qualification with the turnover. Moreover, educated employees are more likely to quit more than other employees. Kabungaidze, Mahlatshana, & Ngirande (2013) decided the effect of job satisfaction and demographic factors on workers turnover goals of instructors in Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. The investigation demonstrated that training can foresee worker turnover aims and influences worker retention. Besides, Spell et al. (2014) also found associations between employee education level and employee retention. Therefore, this research proposes the following:

Proposition 3: There is a positive relationship between employee education and employee retention

2.4 Tenure

One of the primary determinants of employee retention was employee tenure. It was observed that the people with high tenure have generally had the lower turnover intention (Nadiri & Tanova, 2010). Ng & Feldman (2013); Butler, Brennan-Ing, Wardamasky, & Ashley (2014) defined tenure as the lengths of time that employees spend at the current occupation. Dinger et al. (2012) found that worker's conviction concerning affective commitment identified with associations tenure. Additionally, since quite long tenured workers display larger amounts of employment fulfillment and occupation embeddedness (Maden, 2014). Moreover, long tenured workers exhibit more demonstrable skill than their short-tenured partners appear and are less mindful of occupation options outside the associations (Dinger et al., 2012).

Avery et al. (2011) discovered worker's length of tenure as a moderating variable between employee intention and turnover goals. Be that as it may, Avery et al. discovered contrasts in the direct impacts of long and short-tenured workers. Since quite a while ago tenured workers are not as reliant on trade connections since the workers knows about the desires for the organizational leaders (Bal, De Cooman, and Mol, 2013). Moreover, long-tenured employees are more likely to have adequate person-organization fit (Bal, De Cooman, & Mol, 2013). Bal, De Cooman, & Mol (2013) also found a relationship between long tenure, employee contribution, and employee obligation. In contrary, Dinger et al. (2012) found a negative relationship between job alternatives, employee retention, and length of tenure. Also, Ng and Feldman (2013) found no association between increased tenure and job performance. On the other hand, long-tenured employees experience fewer absences than short-tenured employees can (Ng & Feldman, 2013).

Agyeman & Ponnaiah (2014) investigated the significant factors that affect employee retention in MSMEs (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises). The research examined the relationships between the demographic variables and employee retention. The study results found a significant association between employee tenure and retention. Furthermore, Emiroglue, Akovab&Tanriverdic (2015) conducted a study to determine the relation between

the demographic factors (e.g., Age, gender, marital status, education) and the factors such as tenure, wage, position, working department and the turnover intention of employees working in the hospitality industry, Istanbul. The study discovered employee tenure as one of the determinants of employee turnover intention. Therefore, the researcher proposes the following

Proposition 4: There is a positive relationship between employee tenure and employee retention.

3.0 Job embeddedness theory and employee retention

Job embeddedness is relatively new-fangled approach to comprehend employee retention. Job embeddedness represents a broad array of influences on employee retention (Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, Sablinski, & Erez, 2001). The concept behind job embeddedness theory (JET) was that embedded employees choose to remain employed despite any attitudinal issues or dissatisfiers (Mitchell et al., 2001). Yao et al. (2004, p.159) defined Job embeddedness as “the combined forces that keep a person from leaving his or her job.” The three dimensions of Job embeddedness are called links, fit, and sacrifice. They are relevant in both the organization and the community. In JET, links are defined as “discernible connections between people and institutions” (Mitchell et al., 2001, p. 8). The more links to the workplace or community develop more highly embedded individuals. Job embeddedness posits that better fit, stronger ties to the organization (Mallol, Holtom, & Lee, 2007).

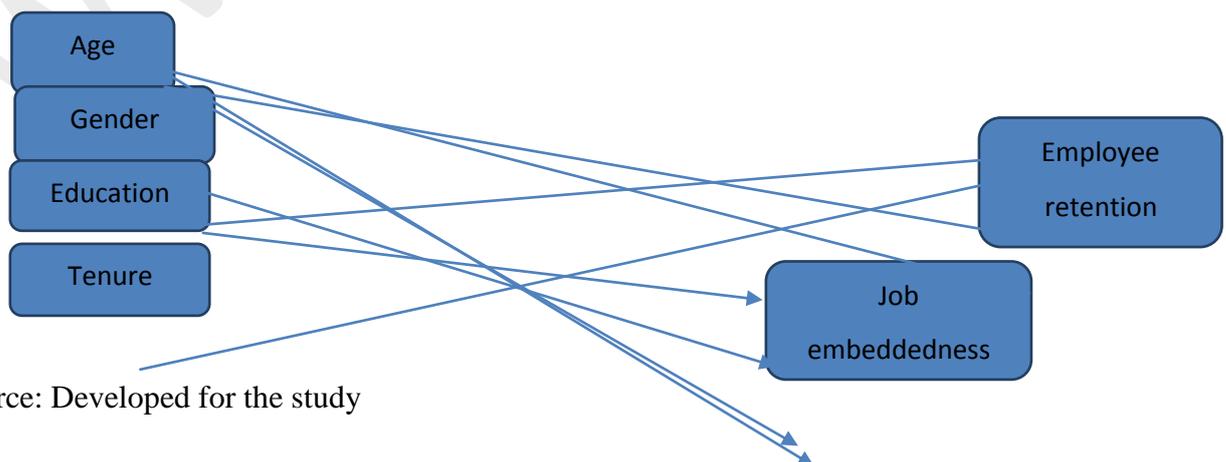
Tanova & Holtom (2008) indicated that job embeddedness theory explains a significant amount of variance on the demographic and traditional variables. Moreover, Hassell (2005) investigated the effect of turnover intent among the United States air force members. The results indicated job embeddedness as a significant predictor of turnover intent. However, the study results found that age, race, gender, and marital status were not found to be substantial moderators of job ‘embeddedness and turnover intent.

Proposition 5: Job embeddedness mediates the relationship between demographic factors (age, Gender, Education, and tenure) and employee retention.

4. Proposed research framework

Based on the above literature review, a proposed research framework for this study illustrating the mediating effect of job embeddedness on the relationship between demographic factors and employee retention is presented in Figure: 1

Figure: 1 Employee retention framework



Source: Developed for the study

In explaining the mediating role of job embeddedness on the relationship between demographic factors (age, gender, education, and tenure) and employee retention, the present study proposes that human resources managers will enhance employee retention through addressing the demographic factors effectively. Moreover, this study recommended that job embeddedness theory would provide empirical support for the mediating role of job embeddedness on the relationship between demographic factors and employees retention.

5. CONCLUSION

This study was conducted to fill the gap that there was little research on the issue of low employee retention. This dissertation replicated the previous research done by Emiroglu, Akova, & Tanriverdi (2015). The literature review has been done to get insights into employee retention research field. Based on the earlier studies and statistic reports, it can be concluded that high employee turnover is a critical issue in organizations. This paper has presented a model on the mediating effect of job embeddedness on the relationship between demographic factors (age, gender, education, and tenure) and employee retention as presented in above figure 1. The proposed study model has critical ramifications to improve employee retention. Right off the bat, if the proposed model is approved, the finding will give fundamental comprehension to experts and administrators to upgrade worker retention. Besides, the interceding impact of job embeddedness on the connection between demographic variables and employee retention will clarify the best possible utilization of demographic elements will embed the workers and bolster the association to retain their workers.

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