



The Factors Affecting Turnover Intention, with the Moderating Role of Intrinsic Intention in Jordanian Five-Star Hotels

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Abstract

In majority of industries, the issue of high rates of turnover has always exists as a result of which several studies have been dedicated to it, particularly in the hospitality industry context. This study examined the moderating effect of intrinsic motivation on the relationship between factors affecting turnover intention namely, HRMs and work engagement in Jordanian five-star hotels. The study provided details of the findings in every theme highlighted and described the relationships between the factors, using one single model. This study also conducted a comprehensive review of literature and presented quantitative findings on turnover intention from Jordan. Based on the findings, there is a positive and significant relationship between HRMs and work engagement, and turnover intention, with the moderating role of intrinsic motivation. The study has implications to theory in that it provided an expansive explanation of the outcomes of HRMs and work engagement in five-star hotels and their connection to the employees' turnover intentions.

Keywords: HRMs; Work Engagement; Intrinsic Motivation; Turnover Intention; Five-Star Hotels.

1. Introduction

The hotel industry has progressed into a global industry, with clients and service providers spread all over the globe. The hotel industry is deemed to be one of the main contributors to the economic development of many countries [1]. In addition, the hotel sector has become an industry sub-section that contributes to the strength and progress of the tourism industry. It has been transformed and expanded in such a way that its contributions to economic development have been enormous and unprecedented. In a related study focused on examining human resource management (HRM) and turnover intention in the Jordanian hotel sector, Altarawmneh and Al-Kilani [2] revealed a reasonable inclination of hotel workers to opt for turnover. According to them, over half of the examined participants wanted to quit their positions owing to three reasons namely, young age of majority of the participants, seldom provision of bonuses/financial rewards/salaries, and contextual factors found in the work environment (suitability, working conditions, working atmosphere, career planning, etc.). The authors found that the Jordanian hotels have considerable investments in HRM practices, through the dictates of the Jordanian government through the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities which mandated the provision of quality standard services among hotels.

In the present study, five-star hotels were found to be suitable as target samples owing to the accurate and detailed information provided about them. In Jordan, the popular tourism destinations are Amman, Dead Sea, Aqaba and Petra and thus, the study focused on hotels located in these areas and the turnover intention of their employees, particularly owing to its high rate. This study expects to contribute valuable information in the context of Jordanian five-star hotels.

The study particularly attempts to fill the gap in literature about the turnover rate in the Jordanian hotel sector in light of the role of

HRM practices. These include career growth and work engagement and the moderating role of intrinsic motivation between the variables and turnover intention. The study findings are expected to be used in resolving issues related with hotel staff turnover in Jordanian five-star hotels. The current increasing turnover among hotel employees in Jordan is an issue of concern and generally speaking, turnover has always been a top issue among managers. In fact, turnover intention has been a significant topic among researchers, specifically when it concerns employees' turnover behavior [3]. In the tourism sector, the rates of turnover are higher compared to other sectors because former depends on the season. Therefore, this calls for effective strategies to be implemented. Added to the seasonality of the sector are other issues, which are low salary and performance, bad customer relationship, lack of job guarantees and career planning [4].

After being employed as a hotel worker, there is a 50% chance that such worker will leave within a year of employment [5]. Therefore, the repercussions on the hotel could take the form of hiring and training costs, lower productivity during high season, and in some instances, loss of clients. In this regard, turnover of employees in the hospitality sector are always higher when compared to other industries but there are several strategies that hotels can adopt to enhance their retention rates and make sure that their employees remain committed to the hotels in the long-term. It is notable that HR practices, career growth, work engagement intrinsic motivation and continuous training are the major areas of the hospitality industry that needs attention in order to mitigate the high rate of turnover and transform it to high rate of retention. Figure 1 depicts the rate of turnover in the Jordanian five-star hotels for seven consecutive months in a year, with percentage increase and decrease in every region. The figure reflects the unstable employment in the country's five-star hotels, affecting its costs, training and organizational running.

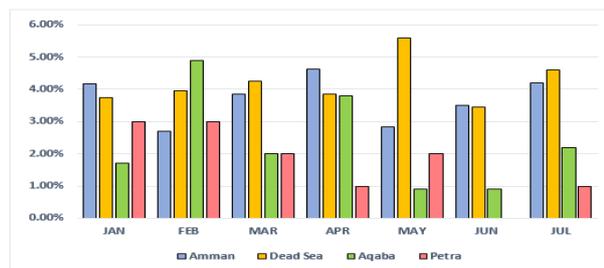


Fig. 1: The Rate of Turnover in Jordanian Hotels.

One of the distinct features of the hotel and hospitality industry has been the high rate of turnover that has plagued it [6], [7]. High level of turnover from staff that leads to high personnel costs related to the new staff recruitment and replacement constantly experienced by the hotels [8], [9]. In fact, such concern on the high turnover level among employees and the related costs incurred by hotels is not new as the consequences has a high likelihood to affect the profitability of the establishments [10]. Studies have also been dedicated to examining the turnover magnitude and costs in the same context [11]. Table 1 tabulates some of the reasons that lead to turnover in five-star hotels that were mentioned by Aksu, Bahtiyar [4] in their study.

Table 1: Push and Pull Factors in Turnover

Push Factors	Pull Factors
Insufficient training	High salary
Bad relationship with supervisors	Better working hours
Insufficient organizational image	Continuous employment
Insufficient terms and conditions	Alternative employment
Irregular work conditions	Better career potential
Low salary	
Long and irregular working hours	Better training and individual development
Insufficient autonomy	

2. Turnover intention

Turnover intention is referred to as the employee's behavioral intention to quit his employment or is the behavioral intention that highlights the intention of the individual to leave his place of employment and is considered as the primary antecedent of actual turnover behavior. Mitigating the rate of turnover in a new business set up is significant for productivity and maintenance of a suitable corporate reputation and image. In this regard, Mastar, Darus [12] explained that determining the effects of turnover are crucial for organizations in order so that they may resolve the issue in the right way. Turnover among employees, as mentioned, is not a new phenomenon and it has been extensively examined in management literature [13-17]. The general argument of the authors is such that mitigating employee turnover is crucial for the effective running of the organizations. Prior researchers have also dedicated their efforts and time into determining and examining the antecedents of turnover and categorized them into work-related and non-work-related factors (individual level), supervisor-related factors (dyadic-level) as well as other factors concerning the organization (group level).

3. Human resource management practices (HRM)

The HRM role in the organization has a significant effect on the ability of the firm to realize its objectives and to obtain and maintain sustainable competitive advantage in the market [18]. This is possible through the use of the firm's policies and the methods it employs for the attraction and retention of the right employees [19]. HR practices comprise of the entire activities in the organiza-

tion that are focused on managing the human resource pool and making sure that they are working towards meeting the goals of the organization [2]. In a related meta-analysis of 104 articles, Boselie, Dietz [20] highlighted 26 HR practices as the top practices, whereas other authors proposed different views on them as to the level of their importance [19], [21-23]. A new branch of HRM empirical literature has been dedicated to examining the outcomes of the attributions of HRM practices among employees and this includes the studies conducted by Kehoe and Wright [24], Martin [25] and Nishii and Wright [23].

This premise is reinforced by other studies such as those by Sims [26] and DiPietro and Condly [27] who offered solutions to employers as to how to identify and overcome the factors overcoming employee satisfaction from the onset of recruitment and throughout their career. It is indubitable that service sector employees, specifically in the hospitality industry, are a crucial business part, and they should feel that they are so. This calls for management's commitment to meet their needs from their recruitment throughout their career. According to Chew and Chan [28], recruitment and selection comprise the first steps of pre-training of employees, which indicates the recruitment of individuals who are willing to invest their time in training, the job itself and in the long-run. Other researchers urged the understanding of the employment relationship from recruitment in order to plan training and mitigate intentions towards turnover among employees [29].

In the academic setting, training and development is one of the major HR practices components that significantly impacts job satisfaction, and in turn, it may also impact turnover decision [25]. Aligned with this notion, organizations providing training to improve skills and competence of staff are faced with lower rate of turnover compared to those that provide no such activities to develop staff [30, 31]. Realistically, training and development assists in enhancing and enriching the capability of the staff and guiding and supporting them to realize their long-term career development in the workplace. Furthermore, it was evidenced that focusing on growth opportunities (training and development and career advancement) can influence the turnover intention among employees [32].

Contrastingly, some researchers have a different view on the training-turnover intention relationship. To begin with, Hai-yan and Baum [33] argued that high quality human resources are difficult to find in the hospitality sector as most employees do not plan to stay long working in the front office owing to the demanding work, low wages and uncertain promotion opportunities. Therefore, it is crucial for employers to concentrate on improving the work environment in light of pay and benefits to attract and maintain a talent pool [34]. In fact, Chan and Kuok [35] revealed that better salary and benefits offered by other rival establishments are major reasons for the turnover among employees in the hospitality sector. This can be resolved if the establishment provides promotion opportunities and competitive salaries [36].

More recently, there have been a significant number of empirical studies conducted to investigate the direct relationship between performance appraisal and turnover intention, with mixed results. For instance, on one end of the spectrum, researchers argued that performance appraisal negatively impacts employee turnover intention, indicating that if the employees think that their performance appraisal and other related HR practices are fair and just, then their quit intention is mitigated [37-41]. On the other end, some authors contended that performance appraisals built on unfair office politics can lead to maximized intention to leave among employees [42-44].

4. Work engagement

In the field of industrial and organizational psychology, research on work engagement is multiplying [45-47], owing to its positive outcomes for both employees and the organization as a whole [45, 48, 49]. In this relation, higher work engagement levels decreases turnover intention, improves job performance, productivity and

commitment, and increases organization's profits and revenues as evidenced by prior studies including Bakker, Albrecht [45], Bothma and Roodt [50], Halbesleben [51], Harter, Schmidt [52], Truss, Soane [47] and Wollard and Shuck [49]. Also, studies like Bakker, Albrecht [45] and Bakker, Schaufeli [48] evidenced that higher engagement also leads to enhanced employee wellness, lower burnout and stress. Finally, employees who have higher level of work engagements tend to be more attached to their work and organizations and have a lower likelihood to leave them [53].

5. Intrinsic motivation moderating role between HRM, work engagement and turnover intention

Human resource mismanagement can negatively impact the running and outcomes of the organization. Based on the expectancy theory, the level of motivation of an individual hinges on the attractive rewards that he seeks and the probability of obtaining them, which can influence the management's objective in the organization in order to realize high productivity and competitive edge in the market. In this regard, employees are attracted to a compensation system that is fair, just and one that commensurate with the skills and expectations that they have. Hence, it can be argued that pay is a crucial consideration in an organization as it is perceived as a tangible reward and recognition for employees' services and a representation of their livelihood [54-56]. In related studies, Abdullah, Bilau [54] and Struebing [57] stated that lack of performance appraisal can negative impact the motivation of employees, which could push them to have turnover intentions. In this line of argument, when employees perceive performance appraisals to be based on politics, then their job satisfaction is affected and they may opt for experience turnover intentions [57]. In theory, employee performance management stressed on the need to relate appraisal to promotion, transfer, and layoff and to legal matters that relate to discrimination allegations. Other more current approaches have linked performance appraisal to the training needs and developed growth plans of employees, and as such, the aim behind performance management is to open up avenues to determine the employees' weaknesses and strength in working towards the goals and targets established by the organization.

In an organization, employee relations refers to the maintenance of healthy working relationship between employees and managers, in order to achieve and maintain productivity, motivation and high working morale that can contribute to enhanced job satisfaction among employees, and to achieve organizational goals [58].

More importantly, work engagement may contribute higher validity to the prediction of variables like job satisfaction and turnover intentions as it encapsulates the motivation behind the two. In this regard, Schaufeli and Bakker [59] supported the notion by indicating that work engagement is predicted by job resources and it has a mediating role between job resources and turnover intentions in four various groups of occupations. It is thus expected that work engagement and turnover intention indirectly relates to the obligations of the employer, via the contributions of the employees. Despite the shared characteristics between work engagement and employee contributions (performance motivation), they have distinct theoretical and empirical constructs [60].

Employees who are characterized by having work engagement and attachment are intrinsically motivated towards acquiring and creating new resources (competencies) via higher levels of contributions in response to higher levels of obligations. It is thus expected that employee's intrinsic motivation moderate work engagement and turnover intention as suggested by Bal, De Cooman [60].

6. Research gaps

Turnover intention is basically categorized into voluntary and involuntary intention [61]. Thomas [62] referred to voluntary turnover intention as the intention of the employee to quite when

he perceives that another opportune position is better than his current one. Better opportunity is linked to higher pay, recognition and location. Meanwhile, involuntary turnover refers to the laying off of employees owing to high production cost, lack of efficiency, redundancy, lack of skills and ability or the need for restructuring to increase productivity [62]. Both types of turnover reflect theoretical and practical gaps, necessitating more studies to focus on turnover intentions in organizations from the employees' viewpoint in the hotel industry context.

According to Herzberg's hygiene theory, true motivating factors (intrinsic motivation) in the workplace comprise of recognition, the work, achievement, advancement, responsibility, and growth opportunities. The above mentioned components result in optimum involvement and satisfaction on the job. Intrinsic motivation was also described as motivation that stems from within the individual as opposed from external rewards (e.g., remuneration) [63]. In this regard, an individual that is intrinsically motivated will resolve an issue because of the challenge of achieving a resolution that would bring contentment. Psychological researchers need to extend the scope of intrinsic motivation so as to include the motivation forms in a new direction.

In the context of the hotel industry, the recruitment practices are not well-defined in that there is a gap between the needs of the hotel and its hiring specifications [64]. This is significant as proper staffing can contribute to the recruitment of the right employees and maintaining their high morale. By implementing effective recruitment and selection strategies, employees can be satisfied as a result of which they will stay on in their positions, and turnover intentions will be reduced along with actual turnover [65]. Similarly, understanding employment from recruitment, training and long-term employment may mitigate turnover intentions.

Related studies to the topic like Truss, Soane [47] and Bothma and Roodt [50] revealed that higher work engagement mitigates employees' turnover intention, improves job performance, productivity and commitment and heightens organizational profitability and revenues. In sum, the benefits that work engagement contribute include enhanced productivity and profits, effective working conditions, lower employee turnover level, lower absenteeism level, higher discretionary effort, higher customer satisfaction and higher performance of the overall organization [52], [66], [67]. A thorough literature review indicates the negative correlation between work engagement and turnover intention [68]. For instance, in a meta-analysis conducted by Halbesleben [51], the author found a significant negative work engagement-turnover intention relationship using population correlations that ranged from 20.25 (vigor) to 20.45 (dedication). Meanwhile, engagement arises when employees are incentivized to achieve higher performance levels, which shows that intrinsic motivation among employees leads to their higher engagement level [69].

Lastly, turnover intention dedicated studies suggested the examination of HRMs [70], [71], work engagement [72], as well as the moderating role of intrinsic motivation in the relationship of the above mentioned variables [73]. This is because, according to Ahmad, Lemba [74], studies that examined the impact of factors on turnover intentions are still scarce.

7. Conceptualization of the research framework

The primarily objective of this paper is to determine the relationship between HRM practices, particularly work engagement and turnover intention, and turnover intention, with intrinsic motivation as the moderating variable. The study uses several relevant theories (social exchange theory, self-determination theory, attachment theory, and Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory) to explain employee turnover in the Jordanian hotel sector. In the same line of theoretical relevance, the social exchange theory (SET) assumes the individuals' relationships with the firm and this makes it suitable to use in explaining turnover intention among employees in the hotel sector.

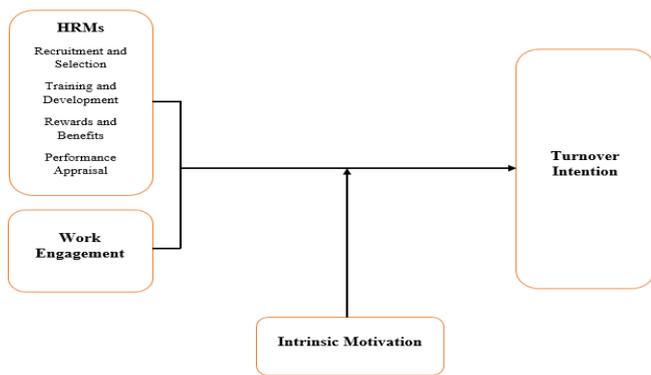


Fig. 2: Research Framework.

8. Conclusion

This work contributes in filling the gap in literature concerning studies dedicated to high employee turnover in the Jordanian five-star hotels. To provide insight into the field, a thorough review of literature was conducted and on the basis of the findings and statistical evidence, it is evident that higher employee turnover is a top issue constantly faced in the hospitality industry. Prior studies have addressed recruitment and selection, training and development rewards and benefits and performance appraisals (HRM practices) in the hospitality industry. They revealed the factors influence on the turnover intention of employees and thus, it is evident that management should provide a clear definition of task roles and performance expectancy from the employees under the hotels' contract. Moreover, this paper highlighted a policy gap when it comes to employee welfare in five-star hotels, and as such, it is suggested that the government establish policies to minimize the gaps, if not eliminate them to decrease employee turnover in the industry.

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