

EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT AND TURNOVER INTENTION: A REVIEW PAPER

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Abstract: *Turnover has been a critical issue in the field of human resource management. Although thousands of researches have been conducted in previous decades, the issue of turnover has not been solved by the researchers. Turnover intention is crucial to be studied because it is known as the most predictable variable in predicting the actual turnover among employees. Many antecedents have been introduced to improve turnover intention in organizations. Employees' empowerment is known as one of the antecedents. According to Social Exchange Theory (SET), it explains that empowerment could help to reduce turnover intention because positive behaviour of organizations could reinforce the positive behaviour of employees. The employees could reduce the intention to leave in order to reciprocate to their organizations. However, it was claimed that the effect of employees' empowerment on turnover intention is little known. Hence, there is a need to explore the relationship between employees' empowerment and employees' turnover intention. The past studies that investigated the relationship between employees' empowerment and employees' turnover intention are important for this review paper. This review writing involved the articles that are ranged from 2008 to 2018, which is a decade. From the past studies, it was found that the relationship between employees' empowerment and employees' turnover intention among employees is inconsistent. Some studies revealed significant relationship, while other studies claimed that there is non-significant relationship between the variables. The inconsistency of findings has caused ambiguity to the linkage between the variables. It is recommended that future studies should conduct their studies in longitudinal form in order to capture the trend of changes throughout their research.*

Keywords: *Empowerment, Turnover Intention, Review Paper*

Introduction

Since the past decade, turnover has been known as one of the major issues in the field of human resource management (Abbasi & Hollman, 2000). Turnover could put organizations in danger if it happens continuously, such as delaying the planning of human capital, as well as the decreasing of productivity (Condrey, 2005; Bertelli, 2007). Hence, it was claimed that turnover intention should be focused because behavioural intention is recognized as the greatest forecaster of actual behaviour (Egan, Yang, & Bartlett, 2004). Many efforts had been done in the past studies in order to reduce turnover intention among employees. One of the contributors is known as employee empowerment. Employee empowerment is known as one of the elements that could improve behaviour of employees because empowered workers tend to behave positively in organizations (Ali et al., 2017). It is believed that, empowering employees could help in managing human resource effectively, which in turn increasing the

competitiveness of organizations (De Klerk & Stander, 2014). Hence, the leaders in organizations should be thoughtful in empowering their subordinates (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008). Due to the importance of employee empowerment, recent scholars have been including the variable of employee empowerment as one of the elements that could improve the positive psychology at workplace (Mills, Fleck, & Kozikowski, 2013). Because of that, the variable of employee empowerment has been gaining attention in the past decade, hence increasing the evidence of the importance of employee empowerment in organizations (Albrecht & Andretta, 2011).

However, Kim and Fernandez (2017) claimed that, although many studies have been conducted to examine the relationship between employee empowerment and turnover intention, most of the past studies did not capture the full content of empowerment because the scholars studied empowerment in unidimensional. Hence, there is a lack of empirical proofs on the relationship between the constructs of engagement and turnover intention (Ali et al., 2017). In addition to that, the effects of empowerment are yet to be confirmed because it was claimed that different societies could differ the perspective of empowerment, for example Western view and Eastern view (Yip, 2004). Humborstad and Perry (2011) has cautioned that scholars should not overlook the perspective of empowerment in different cultures. Besides, it was argued that previous empowerment researches did not successfully indicate consistent and conclusive findings on the linkage between empowerment and behaviour of employees (Humborstad & Perry, 2011). Based on the issues above, it was highlighted that the linkage between empowerment and turnover intention has been questioned due to the lacking of empirical work on the linkage between the variables (Ali et al., 2017). The inconsistency of findings could bring negative consequences to organizations, for example, it was claimed that the adoption of empowerment programs at workplace is not widespread (Kim & Fernandez, 2017). Hence, due to the problem statement, the authors intended to review the relationship between employee empowerment and turnover intention in the past decade (2008-2018).

Literature Review

Definition and concepts of employee empowerment

Several definitions of empowerment were introduced by the past researchers. According to Conger and Kanungo (1988), employee empowerment is defined as the extent to which the employee believes that his or her ability in performing a task in organization. Besides, Thomas and Velthouse (1990) claimed that employee empowerment is one of the types of motivation which could intrinsically motivates an individual. From a perspective of managerial, employee empowerment is described as the extent to which the managers or superiors share the information to subordinates, providing rewards, sharing resources, as well as sharing the authority to subordinates (Kanter, 1979). On the other hand, Spreitzer (1995) believed that employee empowerment could be operationalized into four dimensions, namely impact, meaning, self-determination, and competence, where employees should be actively participating in works. In order to empower employees, it is important to share information such as the performance of the particular organization (Bowen & Lawler, 1995).

Definition and concepts of turnover intention

Turnover intention exists when an employee has determination to quit his or her job (Ali, 2008). When the employee has turnover intention within himself, the employee tends to have firm decision and full deliberation as well as readiness to stop providing efforts to the organizations (Tett and Meyer, 1993). The concept of reasoned behaviour has been arisen in

the initial evolution of the writing of behavioural intent, where the assessment of intention of behaviour is the greatest predictor to the particular actual behaviour (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Past researchers had acknowledged that behavioural intentions could significantly predict turnover, hence it is believed that turnover intention could be the most vital element in order to reduce actual turnover (Abrams, Ando, & Hinkle, 1998). Generally, turnover intention has been recognised as the utmost forecaster to actual turnover (Egan, Yang, & Bartlett, 2004).

Methodology

In this review paper, the methodology that adopted was named literature searching and reviewing. The debates about empowerment and turnover intention were reviewed during the process of writing. The objective of this review paper was to determine the differences of linkage between empowerment and turnover intention among different backgrounds of respondents. In order to accomplish the objective of this paper, the authors reviewed the empirical research papers which are ranged between the years of 2008 to 2018. The articles were comprehensively searched through several databases, such as Scopus, Elsevier, and Google Scholar. In order to collect the papers that are suitable for this review paper, five inclusions were determined by the authors. Firstly, the authors included empirical papers which provided findings, such as case studies, field studies, and surveys. The authors did not include non-empirical papers, such as theoretical papers. Secondly, we included those studies that provided the values of reliability and validity of instruments. Without valid information of instruments, it can affect the validity of findings. Thirdly, we included those studies that examined the variables among corporate personnel samples. It was claimed that student samples and personnel samples are significantly different in research. Next, we included only those relevant variables. The authors focused on the selected variables in this review paper only, which are empowerment and turnover intention. Lastly, the authors included only turnover intention which was rated by employees themselves, instead of the actual rate of turnover in selected studies.

Results

After reviewing the past studies ranged from 2008 to 2018, it was found that there are few past studies that examined the relationship between empowerment and turnover intention. Empowerment to employees is able to influence the intention of turnover among employees, where it was revealed that empowerment has significant linkage with turnover intention (Oh & Chung, 2011). The scholars measured empowerment as self-determination, meaning, and competence, where these dimensions of empowerment could help to reduce turnover intention. Similarly, Fook et al. (2011) and Kebriaei et al. (2016) measured empowerment under the same dimensions as well. The scholars revealed the consistent finding, where there is a significant relationship between empowerment and turnover intention. The finding is consistent with another study that was conducted by Albrecht and Andreetta (2011). The scholars measured empowerment in terms of self-determination, meaning, and competence as well. With similar dimensions of empowerment, Albrecht and Andreetta (2011) revealed the similar findings, where there is significant linkage between the variables among the respondents. This suggests that, similar dimensions of variables could contribute to the similarities of findings.

Another study that was conducted by Park and Park (2008) revealed that, empowerment had significant relationship with turnover intention. The scholars measured empowerment in forms of opportunity, information, support, and resources. Similarly,

another study showed that there is significant linkage between empowerment and turnover intention (Harris, Wheeler, & Kacmar, 2009). In addition, Song (2013) revealed similar finding, where there is significant relationship between empowerment and turnover intention. In their study, the scholars measured empowerment as opportunity, information, support, and resources as well. Hence, it can be claimed that empowerment to employees could help to decrease the turnover intention. Similarly, Van Schalkwyk et al. (2010) revealed that there is significant relationship between empowerment and turnover intention.

Other than that, it was also found that there is significant relationship between the variables (Rajkumar & Bhuvanewari, 2015). Similar with previous studies, Kumar and Singh (2012) measured empowerment as unidimensional, and the scholars revealed that there is a significant relationship between empowerment and turnover intention. Followed by next study, Jeon and Yom (2014) measured empowerment in unidimensional as well. The scholar revealed that, empowerment had significant influence on reducing turnover intention among the respondents. This result consistent with another study which was conducted by Ali et al. (2017) as well as Kim and Fernandez (2017). Although most of the studies agreed on significant linkage between empowerment and turnover intention, another study which was conducted by Oyeleye et al. (2013) revealed that there is no significant relationship between the variables. The scholars mentioned that empowerment has no significant influence in reducing turnover intention among the employees. Contradictorily, De Klerk and Stander (2014), who measured empowerment in terms of emotional, cognitive, and physical, reported that empowerment to employees could significantly affect turnover intention. The finding was similar with another study which was conducted by Khalid et al. (2018) as well as Thurston and Glenton (2018), where the scholars mentioned that there is a significant relationship between the variables. To conclude, it can be clearly seen that the relationship between empowerment and turnover intention is remained uncertain due to the findings of relationships are inconsistent.

Conclusion

As a conclusion, this review paper summarized the linkage between empowerment and turnover intention by revealing the trend of linkage from 2008 to 2018. It is clear that the linkage between empowerment and turnover intention is remained ambiguous and inconsistent. Although there are scholars mentioned that there is significant relationship between the variables, there are scholars disagreed and found insignificant relationship between empowerment and turnover intention. The results differs from one context to another. In order to improve the inconsistency of findings, future studies are recommended to examine empowerment dimensions specifically. It is crucial to examine the differences among the dimensions of empowerment in organizations. Besides, it is recommended to conduct future studies in different industries in order to confirm the linkage between the variables. From the findings, it can be seen that most of the studies were conducted in cross-sectional design, hence calling for more future studies that can be conducted in longitudinal design to capture the trend of changes. It is suggested that the leaders in organizations should encourage the culture of empowerment, which in turn reducing employees' turnover intention. It should be cautioned that, continuous turnover could put organizations in danger due to the loss of potential employees.

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