Testing the Relationship between Turnover Intention and Human Resource Practices in a non-Western context of the Palestine
Mohammed I.F. Dawwas and Ibrahim Zahare
College of Graduate Studies (COGS), Universiti Tenage Nasional (UNITEN), Putrajaya Campus, 43000 Selangor, Malaysia
M.Dawwas@hotmail.com, ibrahimz@uniten.edu.my

ABSTRACT
The purpose of this study is to examine the influence of job characteristics, training, performance appraisal, career development and compensation on turnover intention. It was hypothesized that job characteristics, training, performance appraisal, career development and compensation will be negatively related to turnover intention. The data gathered from 504 nurses from 12 Palestinian Public Hospitals. Correlation and hierarchical regression analyses were used to examine the hypotheses of the study. This study showed that job characteristics, training, performance appraisal, career development and compensation play a significant role in influencing nurses’ level of turnover intention. The theoretical and practical implications of this study are discussed in the paper. Recommendations are provided to managers in Palestinian Public Hospitals to enhance human resource management practices in the workplace.

Keywords: HRM practice (job characteristics, training, performance appraisal, career development and compensation), and turnover intention.

1. Introduction

Human resource managers in hospitals have strongly focused on how organizations can reduce the turnover due to being a major problem and critical issues for management until today. Turnover can give many implications in financial and operation of the organization (Gomez-Mejia & Balkin, 1992). These issues lead to organization losses in their skilled and experienced employees, decreasing productivity, and increasing replacement costs can be characterized into several parts: advertising for replacement recruitment, vacant positions, decreased productivity, hiring procedures, termination costs, orientation and training of new employees. Finally, high nurse turnover can threaten an organization’s reputation in meeting patient needs and provide quality care (O’Brien-Pallas et al., 2006). Based on the data released by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, they estimate that nursing shortage will reach up to 36% by 2020. In the Palestinian context, the Head of the Nursing Federation in Palestine, Turkman (2006) affirmed on the increase of turnover rate which
leads to nursing shortage in Palestinian health sector as well as Almasri, (2006) stated that Palestinian Hospitals which is suffering from poor retention and high turnover. The shortage of nurses has always been the major symptom of high turnover in the health care industry (Global Health Workforce Alliance, 2008). Yet, little is known on why Palestine nurses leave.

Turnover and intention to leave are categorized as two distinguished concepts. turnover relates to the employee's action of actually leaving the organization or profession (Hinshaw & Atwood, 1984), meanwhile intention to leave is described as individual's perception towards leaving. Turnover has a positive relationship with the expectation to find another jobs and high intention to quit. Elangovan, (2001) said that the most important and immediate antecedent of turnover is the intention to leave which led the most researchers more focus on turnover intention rather than actual turnover. Therefore, intention to leave was used in this study as the indicator to determine the actual turnover.

In order to reduce turnover intention among employees, the researcher found that one of antecedents of turnover intention is human resource practice. Human resources management practices are important foci of management research. The concept of Human resource management practice is important for understanding and predicting organizational behavior (Stewart & Brown, 2009). Most previous studies on human resource management practice and its impact on work-related attitudes and behavior such as turnover intention have been conducted in western countries, and few studies were conducted in Middle Eastern contexts (Joarder, Sharit & Ahmmed, 2011; Juhdi, Pa’wan, & Othman, 2011), thus, the generalizability of the findings of western countries to other parts of the world is questionable. In addition, it should be a subject for in-depth investigations in non-western contexts (Joarder, Sharit & Ahmmed, 2011). As far as the Palestine is concerned, the library search revealed that there are no studies in this field.

The term human resource management practice used in this study to denote on a philosophy, policy and practices that can influence individuals who work in an organization, including recruitment and selection, job definition, training, performance appraisal, compensation, career planning and encouraging employee participation in decision making (Daud, 2006). This paper used five practices of human resource management which are job characteristics, training, performance appraisal, career development and compensation to determine that influence of these practices on turnover intention. Therefore, this study attempts to narrow a significant gap in the non-western literature by empirically testing the direct relationship between job characteristics, training, performance appraisal, career development compensation, and turnover intention relationship which has been largely neglected in previous studies.

2. Theoretical Background and Hypotheses

2.1 Human Resource Management Practices

Human resource management practices refer to organizational activities directed at managing the pool of human resources and ensuring that the resources are employed towards the fulfillment of organizational goals (Schuler, 1984; Wright & Snell, 1991). HRM practices refer to the policies and practices involved in carrying out the human resource aspect of a management position including planning, job analysis, recruitment, selection, orientation, compensation, performance appraisal, training and development and labor relations,
teamwork, and employee security help improve firms’ business performance including employee’s productivity, product quality and firm’s flexibility (Lee & Lee, 2007). In this study, the five practices of human resource management which are job characteristics, training, performance appraisal, career development and compensation are represented the term of human resource management practices. Job characteristics is referred as the main five characteristics which effect employee’s behavior and attitudes for improving the employees performance, satisfactions, motivations and reduce turnover (Elanain, 2009). These characteristics are task variety, skill variety, task significance, feedback and autonomy (Hackman & Oldhman, 1976). Training is process which makes employees develop their skills, receive more information and practice their attributes as all these will help them become more effective and efficient in their work. Training helps the organization to fulfill its purposes and goals, while contributing to the overall development of workers. Performance appraisal is a system that sets work standards, assesses the employee’s actual performance based on these standards, and provides feedback to the employees with the purpose to motivate them to eliminate performance deficiencies and show more effort while working or continue to perform in their task (Dessler, 1997). Career development is defined as an organized, formalized, planned effort to balance an individual’s career needs and the organization’s workforce requirements (Leibowitz, Farren & Kaye, 1986). Career development is deemed to be a significant aspect of the human resource management practices to lead the employees towards career enrichment and meet the organization’s goal (Nadler & Nadler, 1989). Compensation is one of the important purposes of HRM. Dessler (2007) defined employee compensation as “all forms of pay or rewards going to employees and arising from their employment”. Stewart and Brown, (2009) stated that the employees tend to stay longer and will not leave an organization when they perceive these positive Human Resource practices.

2.2 Turnover Intention

The term of turnover intention is one's behavioral intention to quit the job. Tett and Meyer (1993) referred to turnover intentions as a conscious and deliberate willfulness to leave the organization. Cotton and Tuttle (1986) referred to turnover intentions as an individual’s perceived probability of staying or leaving an employing organization. Park and Kim, (2009) stated intent to turnover constitutes the final cognitive step in the decision making process in which employees actively considers quitting and searching for alternative employment. They added, employees’ intentions to leave an organization include mere thoughts of quitting the organization (thinking and quitting), and statements by the employee that he/ she actually wants to leave the organization (intent to leave). Elangovan, (2001) said that the most important and immediate antecedent of turnover is the intention to leave which led the most researchers more focus on turnover intention rather than actual turnover.

2.3 The Relationship between HR Practices and Turnover Intention

Most research on the relationship between human resource practices and work outcomes such as turnover intention has been conducted in a western context. Western literature has reported that human resource practice has a significant negative relationship with turnover intention (Bowling & Hammond 2008; Sung & Cho, 2010; Benson, 2006; Zimmerman & Darnold, 2009; Chang, Chou & Cheng, 2007; Abeyesekera, 2007). For example, Sung and Cho, (2010) identified the relationship of emergency department (ED) nurse's job characteristics, turnover intention. They found a significant negative correlation between job characteristics and turnover intention. Similarity Bowling and Hammond (2008) cited that job characteristics
have positive effect on job satisfaction and negative relation with turnover intention and absenteeism. Benson, (2006) found that training is positively related to organizational commitment and negatively related to intention to turnover. The results derived from a sample of 667 employees. Zimmerman and Darnold, (2009) examined the relationship between performance appraisal and turnover. They found that there is negative relationship between performance appraisal and their intention to quit. Chang, Chou and Cheng (2007) examined the relationship between career development and turnover intention, they stated that if hospital’s administrators can provide career development programs to satisfy career needs of nurses at different career stages, then nurses’ commitment to the hospital may increase and nurses turnover intention may decrease. Abeysekera (2007) investigated the impact of compensation on intention to leave in the Sri Lankan. The results indicated compensation was negatively and significantly correlated with intention to leave. In addition, their finding showed that compensation was one of strong predictors of intention to leave.

However, a few studies have been conducted in a non-Western context (Juhdi, Pa’wan & Othman, 2011). Juhdi, Pa’wan and Othman, (2011) examined the impact of four HR practices on organizational commitment and turnover intention. They found that the all of four HR practices were significantly related to organizational commitment and negatively related to turnover intention. Another study by Hemdi and Nasurdin, (2006) showed that hotel employees’ perception of HRM practices, particularly those relating to career advancement, training and development, and performance appraisal had significant and positive effects on their trust in organization and subsequently to reduce turnover intentions. Joarder, Sharif and Ahmmed, (2011) examined the compensation and turnover intention. They found that the compensation was highly significant and negatively related to turnover intention. Elanain, (2009) examined that relationship between job characteristics and turnover intention, found that job characteristics a negative correlation with turnover intention. All these studies revealed that HR practices play a significant role in influencing employees’ turnover intention. In view of the above, it is hypothesized that:

H1: Job Characteristics negatively influence Turnover Intention.

H2: Training negatively influences Turnover Intention.

H3: Performance Appraisal negatively influences Turnover Intention.

H4: Career Development negatively influences Turnover Intention.

H5: Compensation negatively influences Turnover Intention.

3. Method

3.1 Sample

The sample for this study was drawn from 12 public hospitals in Palestine, Gaza. Using a self-administered questionnaire, a convenience sampling method was used in data collection, and a total of 504 employees working in Palestine Public Hospitals in order to examine the study hypotheses. The participants were nurses. The scales were translated to Arabic from the English language. The Arabic version was also back translated to English and the two versions were compared by an independent linguist to ensure equivalence.

3.2 Measures
The questionnaire used seven-point Likert-type scales (ranging from 1 strongly disagree to 7 strongly agree) to measure the items of the following constructs:

**Job characteristics.** This construct was measured by nine-items adopted from the Job Diagnostic Survey (JDS) (Hackman & Oldham, 1975) (i.e this job provides me the chance to completely finish the pieces of work I begin”).

**Training.** This construct was measured by nine-items adapted from (Snell & Dean, 1992; Boselie et al. 2001; Singh, 2004; Laka, 2004; Qureshi et al., 2007) (i.e. “Our hospital conducts extensive training programs for employees”).

**Performance Appraisal.** This construct was measured by ten-items adapted from (Snell & Dean, 1992; Boselie et al., 2001; Singh, 2004; Laka, 2004; Qureshi et al., 2007) (i.e. “Performance is measured on the basis of objectives and quantifiable results”).

**Career Development.** This construct was measured by five-items adapted from previous studies (Delery & Doty, 1996; Patterson et al., 1997; Matzler et al, 2004; Rainlall, 2004; Singh, 2004; Sun et al, 2007) (i.e “Individual and hospital growth needs are matched in this hospital”).

**Compensation.** This construct was measured by four-items adapted from previous studies (Truss, 2001; Guest, 2002; Gelade & Ivery, 2003; Matzler et al, 2004; Rainlall, 2004) (i.e “My pay is fair compared with others doing a similar job in other hospitals”).

**Turnover Intention.** This construct was measured by six-items adapted from (Tei & Yamazaki, 2003) (i.e “I am fed up with my current hospital job and am earnestly gathering information to find a new job”).

### 4. Results

The SPSS version 20 was used to analyze data and examine hypotheses. Table I presents the distribution of study sample according to the demographic such as (name of the hospitals, age, gender, education, years of experience, and years of experience in current hospital. As shown in Table I, the majority of respondents were males, educated nurse from Bachelor, and the majority of respondents from age group 20-25 years old as well as from 1-3 years’ work experience in the current hospitals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Categories</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hospitals name</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nasar</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagar</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emirati</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nasser</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eyon</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shafa</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>26.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dura</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bithanon</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialty</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table II presents means, standard deviations and correlations for the study variables. Results of the correlation analysis provide support for the discriminant validity of the study; no correlation coefficient is above 0.90. This means that all the constructs are different or distinct.

Table II. Means, standard deviation and correlations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Latent Variables</th>
<th>Mean (M)</th>
<th>Std. Deviation (S.D)</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job characteristics</td>
<td>4.28</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>.421**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance appraisal</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>.423**</td>
<td>.525**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career development</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>1.51</td>
<td>.448**</td>
<td>.518**</td>
<td>.585**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensation</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>.367**</td>
<td>.390**</td>
<td>.383**</td>
<td>.360**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turnover intention</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>-.463**</td>
<td>-.558**</td>
<td>-.652**</td>
<td>-.590**</td>
<td>-.523**</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Hierarchical regression and correlation analyses were employed to test hypotheses. In table III presents the hierarchical regression results of the influence of control variables and the five dimensions of human resource practices on turnover intention. The control variables were regressed, and then the five HR practices. The table III indicated that the one variable of demographic which is education has negative relationship with turnover intention. In
addition, table III indicated that the five HR practices successfully predicted turnover intention. Job characteristics, training, career development, and compensation explained an average of 58 percent of the variance in turnover intention \((R^2 = 0.59; F\text{-change} = 137.12, p < 0.01)\). The five HR practice, in the form of job characteristics \((\beta = -0.13, p < 0.01)\), training \((\beta = -0.16, p < 0.01)\), performance appraisal \((\beta = -0.33, p < 0.01)\), career development \((\beta = -0.19, p < 0.01)\), and compensation \((\beta = -0.23, p < 0.01)\) were found to be significantly and negatively related to turnover intention. Thus, H1, H2, H3, H4, and H5 were fully supported.

Table III. Hierarchical regression results of the influence of control variables and job characteristics followed by training, performance appraisal, career development, and compensation on turnover intention.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step1</td>
<td>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>-.11*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>years of experience</td>
<td>-.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>years of experience in current hospital</td>
<td>-.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjust R2</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(\Delta R2)</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F-Change</td>
<td>4.236*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job characteristics</td>
<td>-.13**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>-.16**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance Appraisal</td>
<td>-.33**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career development</td>
<td>-.19**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensation</td>
<td>-.23**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2</td>
<td>.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjust R2</td>
<td>.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(\Delta R2)</td>
<td>.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F-Change</td>
<td>137.12**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>504</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: *\(p < 0.05\), * *\(p < 0.001\)

5. Discussion

The major goal of this study was to examine the five HR practices (job characteristics, training, performance appraisal, career development, compensation), and turnover intention in a non-western context of Palestine. This study advances the literature pertaining to human resource management by empirically demonstrating the importance of the five HR practices for developing positive work outcomes in a non-western context. The study reaffirms the
view of the job characteristics, training, performance appraisal, career development, and compensation have functional effects on work outcomes. The findings indicated that nurses who tend to show positive feelings towards job characteristics, training, performance appraisal, career development, and compensation are likely to report lower levels of turnover intention.

This finding is consistent with many western studies (Bowling & Hammond 2008; Sung & Cho, 2010; Benson, 2006; Zimmerman & Darnold, 2009; Chang, Chou & Cheng, 2007; Abeysekera, 2007). For example, Bowling and Hammond (2008) cited that job characteristics have positive effect on job satisfaction and negative relation with turnover intention and absenteeism. Sung and Cho, (2010) found a significant negative correlation was found between job characteristics and turnover intention. Benson, (2006) found that training is negatively related to intention to turnover. Zimmerman and Darnold, (2009) found a negative relationship between performance appraisal and their intention to quit. Chang, Chou and Cheng (2007) stated that if hospital’s administrators can provide career development programs to satisfy career needs of nurses at different career stages, then nurses’ commitment to the hospital may increase and nurses turnover intention may decrease. Abeysekera (2007) found that compensation was negatively and significantly correlated with intention to leave. Thus, when organization provide employees with motivational and supportive job in term of i) giving employees the freedom and the choice in carrying out their job, ii) creating awareness among the employees on the importance and significance of their job in the organization, iii) providing extensive training to enhance employees’ skills and provide them more information in order to help its employees to become more effective and efficient in their work, iv) providing timely feedback on their job, v) giving employees opportunity to invest on their personal growth in the future planning, and finally providing them good compensation package in term of salaries, incentives as bonuses, and benefit such as health insurance, vacation, retirement benefits, they reciprocate by being willing to stay.

As with any research, this study has a number of limitations. First, our research design was cross-sectional, which prevents making inferences of causality among variables. Future research using a longitudinal design could address this limitation. Second, the study investigated turnover intention but not the actual turnover of employees. Third, the study focused on only five practices of human resource management which did not explore the effects of others practices of human resource management. These limitations are balanced by certain strengths of the study. First, the study was the first study in the Palestine to examine the relationship between HR practices and turnover intention. This enhances our understanding of the HR Practices effects on turnover intention across the region.

In term of future research, there are several areas for possible. Frist, this study suggests future replications and extensions in different parts of the region to generalize the findings of this study. These replications will make more general conclusions about the nature of HR practices-turnover intention relationships and will help in making cross cultural comparisons. Second, future research needs to include others practices of human resource management in examining the relationship between human resource management and turnover intention.
6. Research Implications

This study draws managers’ attention to the influence of job characteristics, training, performance appraisal, career development, and compensation on turnover intention. This recognition would presumably enhance managers’ ability to develop appropriate strategies to enhance the impact of job characteristics, training, performance appraisal, career development, and compensation on work outcomes. The study demonstrates that the five HR practices (job characteristics, training, performance appraisal, career development, and compensation) are important predictors of turnover intention. According to the current study’s results, managers in the Palestinian Public Hospitals should give great attention to the means used to determine the amounts of compensation that employees receive in order to reduce their intention to leave. The significant relationship reported between job characteristics, training, performance appraisal, career development, compensation, and turnover intention also suggests that managers should take appropriate action to ensure provision of sufficient training, performance appraisal, job characteristics, career development, and compensation when managing nurses. This will help in examining HR practices from employees’ point-of-view in order to reduce the perception gap between management and employees. Moreover, managers should convey clear messages to nurse that the organization feels responsible for, and values its employees.

7. Conclusion

This study tried to fill a significant gap in the non-western literature by empirically testing the direct relationship between job characteristics, training, performance appraisal, career development, compensation, and turnover intention relationship which has been largely neglected in previous studies, especially in Palestine context, which there are few studies reported to establish further on the effectiveness practices of human resource management which is under-studied in academia. This study provided researcher and practitioners with an empirical evidence on the predictive effects of job characteristics, training, performance appraisal, career development, and compensation on turnover intention which provide support for the hypothesized and examined relationships by showing that job characteristics, training, performance appraisal, career development, and compensation were negatively significant to turnover intention, and the results of this study showed that the performance appraisal as the strongest predictor of turnover intention. The implications of this study for both managers and researchers are also discussed in the paper.
References


