The Relationship between Servant Leadership, Organizational Citizenship Behaviour, and Dysfunctional Turnover

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Abstract

The purpose of this conceptual paper is to provide a framework to enhance the understanding of factors that influence the turnover rate among high performers in an organization. The focus of this proposed conceptual framework is the study of the relationship between leadership style, organizational citizenship behaviour, and dysfunctional turnover. Based on literature reviews, evidences reveal a negative relationship between servant leadership and dysfunctional turnover which is mediated by the variable of organizational citizenship behaviour. From a practical standpoint, this paper provides additional knowledge in the area of dysfunctional turnover which can assist the relevant stakeholders in an organization to reduce brain drain and enable HR practitioners to have a better understanding on how to reduce turnover rate among high performers; whilst at the same time, contributing to the existing number of valuable researches that provide the much-needed knowledge in understanding the turnover phenomenon. Hence, there is a need to conduct an empirical based study to validate the proposed conceptual framework and to ascertain the relationship among the various variables in this framework.

Keywords: dysfunctional turnover, servant leadership, organizational citizenship behaviour

Paper Type: Conceptual paper

1. Introduction

In this highly competitive business world today, for an organization to remain relevant and successful, it needs to focus on developing core competencies and creating competitive advantage. One of the most critical resources that an organization can exploit to achieve these goals is in the area of human resource. Organizations need to focus on maximizing the use of their employees' skill-set and knowledge but more importantly, recognize consistent high performing employees who contribute towards the organization's corporate and financial goals. Hence, in order to maintain high performance, organizations need to set as one of their main agendas, the identification of these high performers and the subsequent employment of strategies to reduce the rate of voluntary exit of these talents.

In recent years, human resource practitioners and scholars have identified the need to retain employees as the cost of turnover is very high (Chang, Wang, & Huang, 2013; Smith & Macko, 2014; Cho, Rutherford, Friend, Hamwi, & Park, 2017). The tangible cost is the cost of hiring and training new employees while the intangible costs include the loss of a bank of knowledge as the employee's knowledge and skillset will leave with him or her (Hom & Griffeth, 1995). Furthermore, the loss of employees also disrupts the organization's ongoing projects causing delay if one of the team members of the project resigns (O'Connor & Kung, 2007). Thus, it is crucial to ensure that the turnover in an organization is manageable in order to maintain cost effectiveness and organizational performance.

It should also be noted that the turnover of certain groups of employees affect an organization at a higher level of cost. Call, Nyberg, and Polyhart (2015) empirically concluded that the turnover of high-performance employees cost as much as 45% more to an organization compared to the turnover of mediocre or average employees. In this context, a high-performance employee is defined as an employee that consistently performs well and is critical to the success of the organization. In a worst-case scenario, this critical employee leaves the organization and joins a competitor. This will increase the competitor's competencies while affecting the former organization's performance and market share.

In their review of published literature on the relationship between leadership and organizational performance, Jing

and Avery (2008) noted that leadership was an important management component in ensuring that an organization achieved its financial and non-financial goals. In a similar vein, Chan (2010), and Pradhan and Pradhan (2015) argued that managers and their leadership styles determined the success rate of an organization in achieving its goals and objectives. These authors' views support the argument that leadership style is one of the better predictors of organizational success.

Another important indicator of an organization's success is its ability to reduce the rate of turnover among the employees (Ramlal, 2003). Recent studies conducted by Waldman, Carter, and Hom (2015), Caillier (2016), and Mittal (2016) concluded that leadership style influenced employees' decision to leave an organization. Their findings reveal that employee turnover can be predicted based on the type of leadership employed.

Gilbert and Benson (2004), and Liu, Siu, and Shi (2010) stated that immediate supervisors influenced employees' work lives either positively or negatively. This is due to the reason that supervisors have the greatest impact on their subordinates' work demands and social supports. Furthermore, Jaramillo, Grisaffe, Chonko, and Roberts (2009a) found that the current literatures on turnover suggested that turnover is associated with the quality of relationship between subordinates and supervisor. For example, Nonis, Sager, and Kumar (1996) concluded that employees were more likely to leave an organization when they were not satisfied with their supervisors. Hence, these arguments and findings provide the evidence that warrant a critical investigation on the relationship between immediate supervisor's leadership style and dysfunctional turnover in an organization.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Dysfunctional Turnover

Employee turnover is one of the most pressing problems faced by organizations on the global stage. It is not difficult to understand this situation as employee turnover has been linked to various negative consequences to an organization in terms of financial cost and organizational effectiveness (Mobley, 1982b). Hence, this area of research has gained the attention of scholars since the emergence of scientific based study on the art of management in the early part of the 20th century (Hom, Mitchell, Lee, & Griffeth, 2012). Researchers have conducted various studies from developing a turnover model to finding the antecedents and the consequences of turnover in an effort to gain a better understanding of this phenomenon.

The majority of these studies on employee voluntary turnover were based on the perspective that all turnover is considered a negative outcome for the organization (Johnson, Griffeth, & Griffin, 2000). Yet, there were multiple studies that showed that not all turnovers were bad as there were certain turnovers that were favorable to an organization. Mobley in 1982(b) raised this issue that not all turnovers were detrimental to a firm. The voluntary turnover of employees that did not perform up to the expectation of an organization were much desired by the firm. The voluntary separation of these workers benefitted the firm in terms of a reduction in HR cost and if replacement was needed, this development offered the opportunity for the firm to replace these underperforming workers with better performing ones.

Following this line of argument, in their seminal work, Dalton, Todor, and Krackhardt (1982) proposed that there were two types of employee turnover. Dysfunctional turnover refers to employee turnover that is detrimental to the organization while functional turnover refers to employee turnover that is beneficial to the organization. A study conducted by Dalton, Krackhardt, and Porter (1981) on a population derived from the workforce of Western bank branches found that forty-two percent of the actual employee turnover of the organization were beneficial to the firm. Their findings showed that functional turnover was sufficient large to be allocate a different identification. From an empirical viewpoint, dysfunctional turnover and functional turnover are distinct from each other and affects an organization differently and results in different outcomes.

Though there are limited studies on performance and voluntary turnover relationship (Heavey, Holwerda, & Hausknecht, 2013), the existing published research papers provided evidences that high performers and lower performers reacted differently toward an organization's action to influence employees attitude and behaviour. Nyberg (2010) found that promotion rate and pay growth influenced high performers to remain with the organization while these factors did not affect the lower performers. The explanation given to this phenomenon was that high performers embraced challenges and opportunities while lower performers were more focused on retaining their current position. An earlier work by Allen and Griffeth (2001) supported this conclusion that different employee groups based on their performance criterion had different needs and wants.

In sum, it is highly recommended that research strategies be developed to identify the potential unique causes and consequences of turnover for groups of employees with different levels of performance (Heavey et al., 2013). This will increase our understanding of the turnover phenomenon.

2.2 Servant Leadership

Currently, the most well recognized leadership style is transformational leadership which has been credited in helping organizations to achieve desirable outcomes (McCleskey, 2014). Studies have indicated that transformational leadership is positively correlated with financial performance (Idris & Ali, 2008), improved employee's performance (Walumba & Hartnell, 2011), and increased the level of employee work engagement (Salanova, Lorente, Chamber, & Martinez, 2011). Recently, another leadership emerged which is servant leadership (SL) and it has been identified to be beneficial to an organization as this leadership style proved to engage and develop employees (van Dierendonck, 2011). The foundation of SL is built on the main premise that a leader puts the followers' interest ahead of his own. It is also the responsibility of a SL leader to ensure that his followers achieve professional growth and in turn, enjoy career success (Smith, Montagno, & Kuzmenko, 2004). Hence, this leadership style is known as a people-oriented leadership and is able to enhance the quality of the work environment.

Another important element of SL is that it emphasizes the moral and ethical behavior of a leader (Jaramillo, Grisaffe, Chonko, & Roberts, 2009a; Liden, Wayne, Liao, & Meuser, 2014). Ehrhart (2004) asserted that one of the fundamental elements of SL is the leader's ethical behavior. As SL leaders are governed by a high standard of ethics, their positive behavior will guide an organization towards having a higher level of ethical behavior.

In their effort to develop a SL scale, Liden, Wayne, Zhao, and Henderson (2008) identified seven dimensions for this construct. The seven dimensions are emotional healing, creating value for the community, conceptual skills, empowering, helping subordinates grow and succeed, putting subordinates first, and behaving ethically. These dimensions captured the essence of SL which is to prioritize subordinates' welfare and ethical behavior. These two core elements of SL differentiate itself from other popular theories such as transformational leadership which also places emphasis on the development of subordinates but is part of the effort in pursuit of the organization's objective and there is also a lack of clearly defined moral component in its construct (Walumba, Hartnell, & Oke, 2010).

In this current tough business environment tainted with major financial scandals in US such as Enron and Lehman Brothers scandals, it is observed that there has been a shift of thought of what type of leader is best for an organization. There is a growing demand for leaders that behave ethically and are people-oriented. SL can fulfill this need of having leaders that are concerned for the employees' well-being and have tendencies to behave ethically (Bobbio, van Dierendonck, & Manganelli, 2012). Jaramilo et al. (2009a) stated that SL represented the highest level of commitment of management to the workers which made this type of leadership one of the most employee-oriented leadership styles. Meanwhile, Searle and Barbuto (2011) stated that SL emphasized that its leaders must consistently display ethical and moral behavior both in the workplace and outside the workplace. Multiple academic studies conducted have found that SL to be beneficial to an organization as their findings concluded that SL influenced employees to engage in positive behavior such as organizational citizenship behaviour (Hu & Liden, 2011), helped organizations to achieve high performance (Melchar & Bosco, 2010), improved leadership integrity and organizational commitment (Bobbio, van Dierendonck, & Manganell, 2012), and enhanced customer service (Chen, Zhu, & Zhao, 2015).

Another important contribution of SL to the organization's high performance is that this leadership style reduces the rate of turnover of employees. Jaramillo et al. (2009a), and Babakus, Yavas, and Ashill (2010) found evidence that managers that displayed SL minimized the intention to leave among employees. This finding was supported by Liden, Wayne, Liao, and Meuser (2014) who made a similar conclusion in their published research paper.

2.3 Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB)

Nearly half a century ago, Katz (1964) proposed that for an organization to function, there were three basic behaviors which needed to be adhered to. These three types of behavior were: people must be induced to enter and remain within the system which basically relates to the recruitment and retention process, they must carry out specific role requirements in a dependable fashion which refers to the need for the employees of an organization to be consistently productive based on their job description and lastly, there must be innovative and spontaneous activity that goes beyond role prescription which refers to the employees' positive enhanced performance behaviors that are not stated in the job description.

With regards to the third category, Katz (1964) noted that "An organization which depends solely upon its blue-prints of prescribed behavior is a very fragile social system". This note made a powerful statement that for an organization to function effectively, it is insufficient to rely on the performance of the employees based on the job description as there is another important element to be considered which is the employees' extra-role behavior. This extra-role behavior consisted of co-operation between the employees, altruism, and other

non-compulsory positive work behavior such as willingness to accept temporary imposition and help avoid workplace problems by sharing important information with working colleagues. It is distinct from the contractual and enforceable behavior as this type of behavior which is known as citizenship behavior is not part of the job description. As it is beyond the formal required behavior, there is no possibility of reprimanding action being taken by the employers if the workers are not engaging in this behavior. Yet it is important to the organization as this behavior helps to create a work environment that produces better performance.

This development encouraged researchers to focus on this extra-role behavior. Leading the way was Organ and his colleagues who coined the term of Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) as a construct of this extra-role behavior (Bateman & Organ, 1983; Smith, Organ, & Near, 1983).

In 1988, Organ defined OCB as a discretionary behavior which is not linked directly to or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system. In the same year, Organ proposed a new OCB model with taxonomy of five dimensions which consisted of altruism, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, courtesy, and civic virtue. This framework became the most popular among the OCB scholars who adopted it as a research model in empirical studies due to one of the main reasons being that in 1990, Podsakoff, Mackenzie, Moorman, and Fetter developed a reliable measurement scale to capture the essence of the five dimensions of Organ's 1988 construct (Mackenzie, Podsakoff, & Fetter, 1991; Moorman, 1991; Tansky, 1993).

Podsakoff, Mackenzie, Paine, and Bachrach (2000) proposed that the evolution of causes of OCB can be studied from four perspectives based on the empirical researches in the search of OCB antecedents. The four perspectives are individual / employee characteristic, task characteristic, organization characteristic, and leader characteristic. The antecedents of OCB from the perspective of employee characteristic were job satisfaction, organization commitment, perception of fairness, and leader supportiveness (Organ & Konovsky, 1989; Williams & Anderson, 1991; Moorman, 1991; Tansky, 1993; Lambert, Hogan, & Griffin, 2008) while from the perspective of task characteristic, the type of tasks that influenced the level of engagement of OCB in the work place were task feedback, task routinization level, and intrinsically satisfying tasks ((Podsakoff et al., 2000; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Bommer, 1996a). Meanwhile, the relationship between organizational characteristic and OCB was attributed to these six dimensions of organizational characteristic which were organizational formalization, organizational inflexibility, group cohesiveness, level of advisor/staff support, rewards that are not controlled by the leader, and the degree of spatial distance between supervisors and subordinates (Podsakoff, Mackenzie, & Bommer, 1996b). The perspective of leader characteristic was considered the key component in enhancing the level OCB in the working environment. Leadership styles such as transformational leadership influenced the level of engagement of OCB among the subordinates (Wang, Law, Hackett, Wang, & Chen, 2005; Mackenzie, Podsakoff, & Rich, 2001). Other influential leadership styles that predicted the presence of OCB in the workplace were transactional leadership (Podsakoff, Mackenzie, Moorman, & Fetter, 1990), Leader-Member Exchange (Settoon, Bennett, & Liden, 1996), and servant leadership (Bobbio, van Dierendonck, & Manganelli, 2012).

A great number of published literature indicated that OCB had a positive influence on both individual and organizational outcomes. In individual outcomes, a high level of engagement of OCB enhanced job satisfaction among the workforce (Munyon, Hochwarter, Perrewe, & Ferris, 2010). OCB had also been empirically demonstrated to influence organizational outcomes such as enhancing organizational performance (Nielsen, Hrivnak, & Shaw, 2009; Mallick, Pradhan, Tewari, & Jena, 2014), improving organizational effectiveness (Podsakoff, Ahearne, & Mackenzie, 1997), and service quality (Hui, Lam, & Schaubroeck, 2001). Another important positive effect of OCB on organizational outcomes was the negative relationship between OCB and turnover intention. Chen, Hui, and Sego (1998) found that a high level of engagement of OCB among employees in a workplace lowered the employees' intention to leave. Recent empirical evidences by Paille and Grima (2011), and Lam, Loi, Chan, and Liu (2016) provided support on this finding.

3. Theoretical Framework and Hypothesis

3.1 Servant Leadership (SL) and Dysfunctional Turnover

Past and current researches in the area of voluntary turnover and its antecedents determined that one of the main factors that influenced employees' turnover behavior was the aspect of leadership (Waldman, Carter, & Hom, 2015). It was further proposed that the quality of relationship between a leader and his followers impacted the followers' intention to leave (Kim, Lee, & Carlson, 2010). Nonis, Sager, and Kumar (1996) found that employees were more likely to decide to leave an organization if they were dissatisfied with their immediate supervisors while Dicks and Ferrin (2002) concluded that employees that trusted their leaders showed a higher degree of job satisfaction which led to a lower level of turnover intention.

Transformational leadership is amongst one of the most employee-oriented based leadership styles (Jaramillo et al., 2009a). Multiple studies have indicated that transformational leadership reduced employees' intention to leave an organization. Recent studies conducted by academic scholars such as El Badawy and Bassiouny (2014), Tse, Huang, and Lam (2013), and Wells and Peachey (2011) who conducted their study in a United States sports industry provided the necessary empirical support for the above conclusion. These studies showed that employee-oriented types of leadership such as transformational leadership influenced employees' exit intentions.

Jaramillo et al. (2009a) argued that another type of employee-oriented leadership, SL was a better construct in minimizing employees' intention to exit. Even though both SL and transformational leadership focused on the employees' well-being, there was a difference between SL and transformational leadership in the form of desired outcomes. SL focuses on employees' well-being in order for the followers to achieve personal objectives such as professional growth while transformational leadership focuses on the employees' well-being in order to motivate them to achieve the organization's objectives (Smith, Montagno, & Kuzmenko, 2004). This important characteristic of SL qualified this leadership style as representing the highest management's commitment to employee. According to Brashear, Bellenger, Boles, and Barksdale (2006), managers that took the role of a mentor with the focus on ensuring subordinates' professional growth will reduce the level of intention to leave among these employees. Jaramillo and his colleagues (2009a) through their findings, confirmed the belief that SL had a positive influence on the level of employee's intention to leave. Liden, Wayne, Liao, and Meuser (2014) provided an empirical study that indicated the direct link between SL and turnover intention which provided support to the earlier work of Jaramillo et al. (2009a)

There are limited studies that focus on the dysfunctional turnover phenomenon. Studies that were available provided an indirect relationship between this type of turnover and leadership. Nyberg (2010) empirically demonstrated that both pay growth and promotion rate affected to a greater degree the negative relationship between high performers and their turnover rate compared to mediocre and low performers. This finding lent support to the argument that high performers will thrive in a supportive working environment that provides career advancement, and SL which is built on the foundation of focusing on the followers' professional growth and development (Smith, Montagno, & Kuzmenko, 2004) will be able to offer this kind of working environment. Drawing from this argument and earlier findings on the relationship between SL and turnover cognitive, this researcher predicts that:

H1: There is a negative relationship between servant leadership and dysfunctional turnover.

3.2 Servant Leadership and Organization Citizenship Behavior

Various studies indicated that leadership styles influenced the level of employees' OCB engagement in a workplace. Omar, Zainal, Omar, and Khairuddin (2009) discovered that the existence of OCB in a working environment was influenced by leadership behaviour. These researchers concluded that transformational leadership was significantly positive correlated to the level of OCB engagement among employees in a workplace with sample data collected from a population derived from multinational manufacturing firms in Malaysia. Similar findings by Wang, Law, Hackett, Wang, and Chen (2005), and Mackenzie, Podsakoff, and Rich (2001) reinforced the validity of the results of Omar et al. (2009).

Hu and Liden (2011) in their empirical study with a China sample, found a significant positive correlation with a value of .59 between SL and OCB. Jaramillo, Grisaffe, Chonko, and Roberts (2009b) with their sample derived from salesforce in US reported that SL had a positive correlation with OCB with a value of .24 while Neuber, Kacmar, Carlson, Chonko, and Roberts (2008) with the participants from various industries in US, found that SL was correlated with OCB elements of helping, and creative behavior with a value of .24. These findings provided empirical evidence that SL is a potential cause of OCB. In a more recent development, Bakar and McCann (2016) concluded that SL enhanced the level of OCB in the workplace as their finding demonstrated that SL had a positive relationship with OCB which was mediated by leader-member dyadic communication style. With these findings, this researcher expects that:

H2: There is a positive relationship between servant leadership and OCB

3.3 Organizational Citizenship Behavior and Dysfunctional Turnover

According to Paille and Grima (2011), one of the earliest studies of the effects of organizational citizenship behavior on employees' intention to leave the organization was conducted by Chen, Hui, and Sego (1998) whose findings showed that there was a negative relationship between these two dimensions. This relationship can be explained by examining the core component of organization citizenship behavior which is discretionary behavior. When employees are dissatisfied with the organization but due to various reasons, such as difficulty in finding

another position deterring them from leaving the organization, these employees will reduce their OCB as it is less of a risk compared to reducing the level of their work performance (Chen, Hui, & Sego, 1998). Since OCB is not an official duty or responsibility, the reduction in the level of OCB will not affect these employees' performance in the eyes of the managers. Hence, if any of the employees exhibit symptoms of withdrawn OCB, it may be that these employees are unhappy and are thinking of leaving the organization (Paille & Grima, 2011).

In 2007, Coyne and Ong conducted a research study on the relationship between OCB and intention to leave across culture. With the data collected from samples that were derived from the manufacturing industry of three countries namely Malaysia, Germany, and England, these researchers found that OCB had a significant negative relationship with intention to leave among the employees in these three countries. In a more recent study on the relationship between OCB and the turnover phenomenon, Paille and Grima (2011) concluded that OCB was able to predict the intention to leave among employees in the business industry in France. These studies provided evidence that over a 20 years period, OCB continued to be a strong predictor of intention to leave among employees. This reinforced the argument that OCB has a strong and consistent negative relationship with this turnover cognition. Intention to leave was recognized as the best predictor of actual turnover compared to other predictors (Griffeth, Hom, & Gaertner, 2000; Allen & Griffeth, 2001). Fugate, Prussia, and Kinichi (2012) reiterated this conclusion as these authors provided empirical evidence that intention to leave subsequently led to turnover among the employees. Thus, this provides support to the argument that OCB reduces turnover rate in an organization.

The link between OCB and performance-turnover can be indirectly determined as the studies on the effects of OCB in dysfunctional turnover phenomenon are very limited. According to Lee, Kim, and Kim (2013), a working environment that is infused with the element of OCB increased job satisfaction among employees while Nyberg (2010) found that job satisfaction had a negative relationship with performance-turnover. These findings support the argument that employees' engagement in OCB in a workplace will reduce the rate of dysfunctional turnover in an organization. Thus, based on this argument and various findings reporting the negative relationship between OCB and intention to leave, this researcher hypothesizes that:

H3: There is a negative relationship between OCB and Dysfunctional Turnover.

3.4 The Mediating Role of Organizational Citizenship Behavior

Though there are limited studies with OCB as a mediator variable in the research framework, the existing published works showed that OCB did play a role in mediating the relationship between a predictor variable and the criterion variable of intention to leave. Pare and Treamblay (2007) with the sample of 394 respondents from the IT industry located in Quebec concluded that OCB mediated the relationship between high-involvement HR practices and employee intention to leave. Pare and his colleague proposed that when an employee had the intention to leave, he will reduce his level of engagement of OCB in the workplace. Meanwhile, Paille (2013) with the sample of 651 respondents derived from the alumni list of a Canadian university found that perceived job alternatives were positively correlated with intention to search. This positive relationship was mediated by OCB.

In their recent study, Lau, McLean, Lien, and Hsu (2016) conceptualized a research model with OCB mediating the relationship between affective commitment and employee exit intention. From a sample of respondents drawn from various industries located in Malaysia, Lau and her colleagues found that self-rating OCB partially mediated the relationship of the predictor of the study which was the construct of affective commitment and the criterion which was the intention to leave. Meanwhile, Lam, Loi, Chan, and Liu (2016) empirically demonstrated that OCB is related to leadership style and employees' intention to exit an organization. These academic authors concluded that ethical leadership had a negative relationship with exit intention which was mediated by OCB in this relationship. SL scholars such as van Dierendonck (2011) through his review of SL academic researches and studies stated that SL has all the characteristics of an ethical leadership. Hence, this showed that SL will affect employees' turnover intention and its influence on these employees' attitudinals will be mediated by employees' OCB. The result of the studies conducted by Pare and Treamblay (2007), Paille (2013), Lau et al. (2016), and Lam et al. (2016) supported the conclusion that OCB is valid as a mediator variable and also has a strong relationship with intention to leave.

Furthermore, according to Baron and Kenny (1986), for an element to be considered as a mediating variable, it must fulfill the requirement of a strong relation with both the predictor and the criterion of the study. From the review of the relationship among OCB, SL, and intention to leave, it is established without doubt that OCB is significantly related to both SL (van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011; Bakar & McCann, 2016), and intention to leave (Paille & Grima, 2011; McClean, Burris, & Detert, 2013). Based on the literature reviews and arguments,

this researcher predicts that:

H4: OCB mediates the relationship between servant leadership and dysfunctional turnover

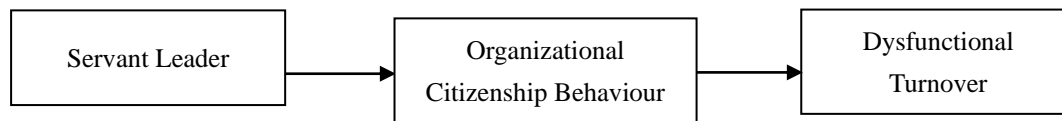Therefore, the proposed conceptual framework is shown in figure 1.0

Figure 1. the proposed conceptual framework

4. Implications

The main aim of this study is to provide a better understanding on the turnover behavior of high performers in an organizational setting. Thus, the finding of this study will be able to enhance the body of knowledge from both the perspective of a managerial and academic domain.

4.1 Managerial implications.

    i.   Reduce the turnover rate among the high performers of an organization which will improve organizational effectiveness.

    ii.   Improve the engagement level of OCB in the workplace which will create a more conducive working environment.

    iii.   Provide direction in allocating organizational resources for human resource's strategies.

4.2 Academic implication

    i.   Increase the number of published academic research paper on dysfunctional turnover which will increase the understanding on the turnover phenomenon.

    ii.   Serve as a foundation for future dysfunctional turnover study in the area of leadership and employees' behavior in the working environment.

5. Conclusion

Dalton et al. published their seminal paper in 1982 in which these authors identified two groups of employee turnover in an organization which were labeled dysfunctional turnover and functional turnover. Dysfunctional turnover referred to the exit of high performance and hard-to-replace employees while functional turnover referred to the exit of poor performers (Hom, Mitchell, Lee, & Griffeth, 2012).

Though the importance of this concept from both an academic and managerial perspective was well recognized (Mobley, 1982b; Hom & Griffeth, 1995), there was a lack of study conducted on this phenomenon. Mobley (1982a) argued that it is essential that future researches on turnover differentiate between high quality leavers and poor-quality leavers to have a better understanding of the turnover phenomenon. Yet thirty years later, in 2013, Heavey, Holwerda, and Hausknecht conducted a meta-analytic review on the subject of employee turnover causes and consequences, concluded that this argument was largely unheeded. Most of their studies that they reviewed and also current turnover literatures, the turnover rates theoretically included all form of leavers including high, marginal, and poor performers (Furtado, Batista, & Silva, 2011; Maertz & Kmitta, 2012; Hancock, Allen, Bosco, McDaniel, & Pierce, 2011; Waldman, Carter, & Hom, 2015; Babalola, Stouten, & Euwema, 2016). There was not much attention given to a specific group of employees. Hence, this proposed conceptual framework will have rectified this shortcoming.

Another important gap of knowledge was that there was very limited published academic paper that focused on the influence of leadership on the turnover of high performers. The study of leadership influences on turnover are well researched (Jaramillo et al., 2009b; Gul, Ahmad, Rehman, Shabir, & Razzaq, 2012; Waldman, Carter, & Hom, 2015), but none of these studies focus on a specific group of employees. This framework with its focus on SL influence on high performers' turnover behavior will contribute to the body of knowledge in the aspect of turnover phenomenon. Thus, it is recommended that further empirical study be undertaken to validate this conceptual framework which will prove to be valuable in adding to the body of knowledge at this critical point of time.

6. Limitations

The main limitation of this study is the difficulty in gaining access to a large pool of respondents. According to Ramayah, Cheah, Chuah, Ting, and Memon (2018), in organizational studies, the actual respondents are difficult to get and have access to. Oppong (2013) stated that if a sample size is not adequate, it might cause sampling error. Thus, this limitation needs to be address to ensure the creditability of this study's undertakings and findings (Oppong, 2013).

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