

Perceived Occupational Hazard and Turnover Intention: Moderating role of Self-efficacy

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Abstract

This study investigated the moderating role of self-efficacy on the relationship between perceived occupational hazard and turnover intentions among staff of Power Holding Company of Nigeria PLC (PHCN) in Enugu state, Nigeria. Two hundred and eighty eight (288) staff consisting of 184 males and 104 females was sampled from the company. Their ages ranged between 20 and 50 years (Mean age = 35 years). A 3-item Perceived Occupational Hazard Scale was used to measure perceived occupational hazard. A 3-item Turnover Intention Scale was used to measure turnover intention; and a 10-item Self-efficacy Scale was used to measure self-efficacy. Result of multiple regression analysis showed that self-efficacy and perceived occupational hazard were predictors of turnover intentions with an explanation of 46% variance and 46% variance in turnover intentions, respectively. Self-efficacy was found to be a significant moderator on the relationship between perceived occupational hazard and turnover intention. It was suggested that organisational policies against turnover of workers should consider capability beliefs and device means of reducing occupational hazards.

Keywords: Self-efficacy, occupational hazard, organisational policy, turnover intention, workers' welfare.

Intentions are the most immediate determinant of actual behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). This is particularly important as they predict an individual's perception and judgments (Mobley, Griffeth, Hand, & Meglino, 1979). The perceived desirability of termination of employee-employer relation is known as turnover intention. Hence, turnover intention may be defined as the individual's intention to voluntarily quit the organization or profession. Extant studies (e.g., Korunka, Hoonakker, & Carayon, 2008; Sjoberg & Sverke, 2000) recognized turnover intention of employees as precursor of actual turnover behaviour. Increasing interest in turnover intention research arose from the fact that it is shown to be a good surrogate indicator of actual turnover (Ajzen 1991; Grieth, Hom, & Geartner, 2000; Price, 2001; Radzi, Ramley, Salehuddin, & Jalis, 2009). Therefore, early detection of employee job dissatisfaction through turnover intention measure would be more useful than taking remedial action after actual turnover had occurred.

High level of turnover intention among employees, prior to, or even when it does not result in actual turnover, was found to have adverse consequences on contextual performance, work withdrawal among employees, and overall organizational performance (Abbasi, Hollman, & Hayes, 2008; Oluwafemi, 2010). Turnover intention comprises of a sequence of processes such as thinking of quitting, intentions to search, and intention to quit (Mobley, 1982; Mobley, Horner, & Hollingsworth, 1978). Based on the negative organizational outcomes associated with turnover intentions, this research sought to investigate the link between perceived occupational hazard and turnover intentions.

All over the world, work has widely been identified as a most significant source of stress because of heavy workloads, accidents, uncertain job expectations, and long hours (American Psychological Association, 2007). Certain risks always exist but the perception of risk differs among people (DeJoy, 1989). A wide array of workplace hazards present risks to the health and safety of people at work. These include but are not limited to, chemicals, biological agents, physical factors, adverse ergonomic conditions, allergens, a complex network of safety risks, and a broad range of psychosocial risk factors. Perceived occupational hazard is a

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subjective estimation of the probability and the consequences of a negative occupational outcome (Sjöberg, Moen, & Rundmo, 2004). Extant literature had reported that occupational hazard was positively associated with turnover intentions (Liyanagea, Madhumini, & Galhena, 2014, Ali, 2013). Similarly, a strong relationship between stress symptoms and intentions to quit, as well as actual turnover, had been reported in previous studies (e.g., Saks & Ashforth, 1997; Noor & Maad, 2008; Layne, 2001; Ciftcioglu, 2001). In the present study, it is hypothesized that there will be a significant relationship between perceived occupational hazard and turnover intentions among employees (H_1).

Taking a new approach, this study draws from both positive psychology and the emerging study of positive organizational behaviour to investigate whether the core construct of self-efficacy may be a key factor in better understanding not only how employees perceive occupational hazard but also, their reactions to it (Luthans, Avolio, Avey, & Norman, 2007; Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2007). Self-efficacy is the ability to fulfill the essential procedures for persons to perform an act and their judgments of ability to organize such acts (Bandura, 1986). The individuals who have a high level of self-efficacy can be more confident and efficient when they come across difficult problems and are least likely to perceive the situation as threat. However, individuals whose level of self-efficacy is low, have a tendency to perceive the problems to be harder. Furthermore, these individuals with low self-efficacy level have an increased anxiety and stress. Therefore, they commit more effort than they should in order to solve any problem. As a result, the belief in self-efficacy affects the success level of individuals very strongly.

Self-efficacy plays an important role by leading people to adopt a control over circumstances mindset. Self-efficacy makes a difference not only to how people feel and act, but also to how they actively shape the meaning ascribed to situational characteristics (Bandura, 2000). This proactive role of self-efficacy may trigger the cognitive representation of the situation, increases the perceptions of situational opportunities and decreases the perceptions of situational threats and intentions to quit one's job (Mohammed & Billings, 2002). Bandura (1986) identifies three dimensions of self-efficacy. These dimensions are magnitude, generality, and strength. The magnitude of self-efficacy beliefs refers to the difficulty of the task that an individual is willing to undertake, namely, simple task demands, moderately difficult demands, and taxing performance demands. The second dimension – generality - refers to the degree to which an individual feels capable of responding to challenges in a variety of situations. Specific self-efficacy as opposed to general self-efficacy suggests having a sense of competence to tackle a specific task (Luszczynska, Gutiérrez-Doña, & Schwarzer, 2005). The strength dimension of self-efficacy refers to whether the self-efficacy beliefs that exist are weak or strong (Bandura, 1986).

Furthermore, strong self-efficacy beliefs have several positive consequences for individuals. These beliefs tend to influence the choices individuals make. Those who have a strong sense of self-efficacy normally have realistic aspirations, are committed to their goals, select tasks in which they feel they will succeed, and recover quickly should they fail in a task (Pajares, 2004). These individuals will also tend to put more effort into tasks. Performance, as a result of perseverance through difficult tasks, enhances these individuals' psychological well being (Pajares, 2004). The amount of self-efficacy an individual possesses determines how he or she perceives and reacts to such apparent hazards. It is hypothesized therefore that Self-efficacy will have moderating effect on the relationship between perceived occupational hazard and turnover intentions among employees (H_2).

Method

Participants

Participants for this study were workers of Power Holding Company of Nigeria Plc (PHCN) Enugu State. Two hundred and eighty eight (288) participants consisting of 184 male and 104 female workers of varied

ages, grades, tenure, marital status and educational qualifications were sampled from the company. Their ages ranged between 20 and 50 years (Mean = 35 years). In selecting the participants, researchers adopted stratified sampling procedure based on the grade levels of the staff: grade 1-7 = 115; 8-13 = 100; 14 and above = 73 participants.

Instruments

A questionnaire comprising three scales was employed in this study. The assessment scales were Perceived Occupational Hazard Scale (POHS), Turnover Intention Scale (TIS), and Self-Efficacy Scale (SES). Data for demographic information such as age, gender, tenure in the current organization, and years of work experience were obtained from the information provided by the participants in the appropriate spaces in the questionnaire.

Perceived Occupational Hazard Scale (POHS)

POHS was developed by Snyder (2004). It comprises 3 items that assesses an individual's perceived occupational hazard, which has some added value given the perceptual emphasis of the present study. The scale was designed to establish useful measures of perceived occupational hazard and has a 5-point Likert scale response format ranging from not likely (scored 1) to most likely (scored 5). Higher score on this scale implies that a respondent measured high on perceived occupational hazard. Both factor and reliability analysis indicated that combining the three questions into a single variable was reasonable (Dunteman, 1989). Snyder (2004) reported a Cronbach's alpha of .73. However, for the purpose of this study, a revalidation of the scale was carried out with 80 participants (workers) drawn from the Arab Construction Company (ACC) in Enugu State, Nigeria. A Cronbach's alpha of .85, showing its utility in measuring perceived occupational hazard in Nigerian context was realized.

Turnover Intention Scale

The Turnover Intention Sale was developed by Mobley, Horner and Hollingsworth (1978). It consists of 3 items designed to measure withdrawal cognitions resulting from diverse occupational variables. It has a 6-point Likert scale response format ranging from strongly disagree (scored 1) to strongly agree (scored 6); a score above average on this scale implies that a respondent measured high on turnover intention. Mobley et al. (1978) reported a reliability coefficient of 0.87. Authors of current research reported a Cronbach's alpha reliability of .70 in a sample of 80 Nigeria participants (workers) drawn from the Arab Construction Company (ACC) in Enugu State, Nigeria showing its utility in measuring Turnover Intention in Nigerian context.

Self-Efficacy Scale (SES)

SES was developed by Schwarzer and Jerusalem (1995). It is a 10 – items psychometric scale designed to assess optimistic self-belief to cope with a variety of difficult demands in life. The scale has a 4-point likert scale ranging from not true (scored 1) to exactly true (scored 4); a high score above the mean indicates high self-efficacy. Ike (2007) reported a reliability coefficient of .74 with a Nigerian sample of 83. A concurrent validity index of .57 was obtained by Ike (2007), indicating that the scale is useful in measuring self-efficacy in Nigerian context.

Procedure

For the present study, 288 participants were drawn from different grade levels at the Power Holding Company of Nigeria PLC (PHCN) Enugu. Participants were required to complete a survey questionnaire anonymously and return it through appointed representatives. Out of the 300 questionnaires issued, 288 were

correctly filled and returned, representing 96% of the total questionnaire given out.

Design/Statistics

This is a cross-sectional research. Hierarchical multiple regression was used to analyze the data using SPSS version 17.0.

Results

Table 1: Correlations of demographic factors, Perceived Occupational Hazard (POH), Turnover Intention (TI), Self-Efficacy (SE), Grade Level (GLEV), and Years of Work Experience (YOWE)

	1	2	3	4	5
TI	-				
POH	.46***	-			
SE	-.49***	-.11*			
GLEV	-.19**	-.29***	.35***	-	
YOWE	-.37***	-.38***	.36***	.75***	-

*** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$.

Table 1 showed that TI was significantly and positively correlated with POH ($r = .46$; $p < .001$) but negatively correlated with a SE ($r = -.49$; $p < .001$), Grade Level ($r = -.188$; $p < .01$) and YOWE ($r = -.37$; $p < .001$). POH was found to be positively correlated with TI ($r = .46$; $p < .001$) but negatively correlated with SE ($r = -.11$; $p < .05$), Grade Level ($r = -.29$; $p < .001$) and YOWE ($r = -.38$; $p < .001$). SE was negatively correlated with TI ($r = -.49$; $p < .001$) but positively correlated with Grade Level ($r = .35$; $p < .001$) and YOWE ($r = .36$; $p < .001$). Grade Level was positively correlated YOWE ($r = .75$; $p < .001$).

Table 2: Hierarchical multiple regression predicting turnover intention by Perceived Occupational Hazard (POH), and Self-Efficacy (SE)

Measure	R	R ²	Δ R ²	Δ F	df	β
POH	.69	.46	.46	80.47	3, 284	.55***
SE						-.29***
POH x SE						-.06***
GLEV	.70	.49	.03	8.17	2, 282	-1.99*
YOWE						-1.16*

Perceived Occupational Hazard (POH), Self-Efficacy (SE), Turnover Intention (TI), Grade Level (GLEV), Years of Work Experience (YOWE)

The result in Table 2 showed that the variance in turnover intention accounted for by Perceive Occupational Hazard (POH) and (Self-efficacy SE) was .459 (46%). This was found to be significant, $F(3, 284) = 80.468$, $p < .001$. From the standardized regression coefficient, Perceived Occupational Hazard was found to be a positive predictor of turnover intention ($\beta = .55$, $p < .001$) while self-efficacy was found to be a negative predictor of turnover intention ($\beta = -.29$, $p < .001$).

In model 2, the control variables (grade level and years of work experience) were entered (this was done to control for their effect) into the regression equation, and the change in R^2 (ΔR^2) showed a value of .03 (3%). Therefore, the control variables added predictive power to the model. At this point 49% of variability in turnover intention was explained by the control variables, self-efficacy and perceive occupational hazard together.

On testing for the moderating effect of self-efficacy on the relationship between perceived occupational hazard and turnover intention, a significant moderation was found. In this case, B for the interaction of POH x SE = -.06. Most importantly the table shows that this value earns statistical significance ($p < .001$). Thus, self-efficacy moderated the association between perceived occupational hazard and turnover intention. The negative weight of this interaction means that an increase in the interaction effect leads to a decrease in the dependent variable. When SE score is low and POH score is high TI increases. Conversely, when SE is high and POH is held constant, TI decreases.

Discussion

In the current Perceived Occupational Hazard was a positive predictor of Turnover Intention. The finding supported the hypothesis that there will be a significant relationship between perceived occupational hazard and turnover intentions among employees (H_1). This therefore indicates that when faced with occupational hazards (e.g., extreme stress), an employee is likely to engage in cognitive and behavioral measures aimed at avoiding the source of the hazard. For example, in a high-stress environment, employees do not experience homeostasis in terms of normal levels of experienced stress. Hence, when symptoms are strongest, employees would be expected to attempt to relieve the disconnection between current levels of stress and desired levels of stress and the result of this is quitting the job.

This finding is consistent with extant literature which reported that occupational hazard was positively associated with turnover intentions (Ali, 2013; Ciftcioglu, 2001; Liyanagea, Madhumini, & Galhena, 2014, Layne, 2001; Noor & Maad, 2008; Saks & Ashforth, 1997) which reported a strong relationship between stress symptoms and intentions to quit, as well as actual turnover, The finding equally supports Social Amplification of Risk Theory (Kasperson, 1988) that signals about hazard are processed by individual and social amplification stations, including the scientist who communicates the risk assessment, the news media, cultural groups, interpersonal networks and others. Developing a good stress management and retention programs within industries by human resource managers will help in addressing problems of occupational hazards which lead to poor/low turnover intentions.

Self-efficacy was found to be a significant negative predictor of turnover intention. Thus, those with high self-efficacy were predicted to have less turnover intentions than those with low self-efficacy. This finding is consistent with previous findings (e.g., Bono & Locke 2000; Mellon, Gold, Janisse, Cichon, Tainsky, & Simon, 2008; Lazarus & Folkman 1984; Matsui & Onglatco 1992; Siu, Lu., & Spector, 2007; Williams, Tarp, vanEngelsdorp, Chauzat, Cox-Foster, Delaplane, Neumann, Pettis, Rogers, & Shutler, 2010) which reported that perceptions of work overload to be affected by perceived self-efficacy was related to turnover intentions. Low self-efficacy tends to enlarge personal flaws and magnify the risk of the situation at hand, and it is not necessarily the job demands themselves that generate psychological strain, but rather how they are appraised.

The current study provided empirical support on the assertion that self efficacy plays a moderating role in a relationship between perceived organizational hazard and turnover intention. This finding is in line with Siu et al.'s (2010) study which found that self-efficacy moderates the relationship between perceived organizational hazard and turnover intention. The finding supports the third hypothesis (H_3) that self-efficacy will have moderating effect on the relationship between perceived occupational hazard and turnover intention. Job demands (which constitute hazards) are less overwhelming for individuals with high self-efficacy considering that they strongly believe in their ability to cope with stressful events and therefore are more likely

to perceive their work environment as unthreatening and easier to deal with. The finding supports Bandura's (1986, 1997) social-cognitive theory which states that self-efficacy alludes to an individual's beliefs in his/her capabilities to meet task-specific demands and to successfully carry out a particular course of action. According to Shelton (1990), the concept of self-efficacy provides an important conceptual tool for viewing healthy functioning. Thus, being able to recognize and measure the strength of self-efficacy can aid a person's progress towards greater achievement at work. Therefore, individuals with high self-efficacy expectations are more likely to try new experiences and pursue them.

The study has some practical implications to both public and private organizations. Perceived occupational hazard is found to be a significant predictor of turnover intentions. The practical implication of this is that, for an organization to be stable and maximize its potential aims; all forms of occupational hazards must be avoided. Employees with the best expertise looks for organizations where their safety at all forms are secured. Therefore, both public and private organizations should provide hazard free working environment to avoid untimely decline and death. Self efficacy is a negative predictor of turnover intention. The implication of this finding is that when employees see work as what they must do to get paid not finding any pleasure in it, their contributions to the organization will be ineffective. On the significant moderation effect of self-efficacy on the relationship between perceive occupational hazard and turnover intention, the practical implication is that for an organization that is yet to achieve hazard free working environment, boosting employees' self efficacy through orientations/workshops is important.

This study is not without some limitations. Apart from the small number of participants involved in this study as well as using only one organization which limits the generalizability of the findings, the study failed to explain clearly what different organizations see as hazards. Future researchers interested in this study may consider using a larger sample size as well as making it a longitudinal study. Also, alternative variables such as perceived organizational justice, personality characteristics, organizational trust and social support may be included to see their contributions.

Conclusion

In every organization, turnover is an issue of concern to both employers and employees. Whenever employees choose to leave their working organization(s), there are usually multiple direct and indirect costs and other consequences on organizational efficiency. Greater understanding of turnover intention, its causes and implications, will help employers to manage their organizations in order to maximize potentials from their employees. This study in line with other studies which has shown that occupational hazards increases turnover of employees. Self-efficacy counteracts turnover intention and limits their interpretations of some situations as hazards. Therefore, the findings of this study is important to all employers of labor and intending owners in order to achieve organizational set goals.

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