TO STAY OR TO QUIT: THE CLIMATE MATTERS

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ABSTRACT

Successful organizations strive to solve the perennial problem of employee turnover drawing their focus on factors which are considered responsible for it. The present study aims to determine the perception of employee turnover intentions and its relationship with organizational climate. *The sample consisted of 509 respondents working in 10 large scale food processing companies of Punjab. The data was collected using a single structured questionnaire and was analysed using Pearson product–moment correlation and multiple regression analysis. The findings of the study have indicated a moderate level of employee turnover intentions prevailing in the large scale food processing companies of Punjab. A strong negative correlation has been observed between overall organizational climate and turnover intentions (r = -0.603, p<.01). Further, the result of multiple regression analysis has shown that the dimensions of organizational climate such as supervisory support, clarity of organizational goals, participation, welfare, training, pressure to produce, efficiency, integration, performance feedback and autonomy have significant impact in determining the employee turnover intentions.*

KEYWORDS: Organizational Climate, Turnover Intentions, Human Resource Management

INTRODUCTION

Employees make mistakes and so do companies. When employees make mistakes, companies demote or ask them to leave, but when companies make mistakes, the best employees are the first one to leave. Employees leave their organization for a variety of reasons, although the reality is that organizations simply fail to retain them. The management believes that the most important approach of retaining the services of employees is increasing their pay, however; it may not be the only reason for an employee to stay or to quit. There are a variety of other reasons which influence an employee's decision to either remain employed or to leave the organization. Consequently, these decisions affect the overall organizational success and it becomes a prime importance for an organization to have an efficient workforce and at the same time retain them for continual improvement. Management of an organization can achieve this

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through a proactive approach i.e. by identifying the factors which causes an employee to leave and take corrective actions in order to enhance retention and performance (Oluwafemi, 2013).

Over the years, turnover intentions have been preferred over the actual turnover as by analysing and understanding the reasons for intentions to leave the organization can proactively avert the actual turnover. The turnover intentions have being proven to be a good surrogate indicator of actual turnover (Radzi *et al.,* 2009; Price, 2001) since it is more useful to take remedial action before actual turnover occurs. Even if the employee does not leave the organization but a high level of employee's intentions to quit his or her present job was found to have an adverse affect on his or her performance (Schwab, 1991; Abbasi *et al.,* 2008). Moreover, the organizations usually spend a significant amount of money in attracting, training and retaining competent employee and the damage caused to the productivity by the new and inexperienced employees is far greater than the actual turnover cost (Lam *et al.,* 2002, Hinkin and Tracey, 2000). Therefore, it becomes crucial for organizations to identify the reasons due to which an employee will decides to leave an organization. It is essential because the quitting intention has great impact on employee's decision to continue with the present job or step in the outside world which in turn leads to actual turnover (Price, 2001). The justification of analysing turnover intentions and its causes is that it assists in tracking and proactively dealing with turnover and its related problems in an organization.

The literature is embedded with a number of important factors behind employee decision to leave an organization such as amount of stress and communication of changes and decisions, leadership, satisfaction, pay etc. However, these factors are important only if the internal working environment is perceived as favourable. If the working environment is perceived unfavourable by the employees, these factors appear to have no significant influence (*et al.,* 2012). The past research has confirmed that discouraging or unfavourable organizational climate may increase employee attrition rate (Schyns *et al.,* 2009; Rashid *et al.,* 2009; Khan et al., Suliman and Obaidli 2011). Therefore, better understanding of the potential antecedents of turnover intentions and how to control them will likely remain an important concern for the organizations, academicians and practitioners and it becomes strategic issues for the Indian food processing industry.

Employing over 3.1 million people, India's food processing industry contributes 6.3 per cent to the GDP and 16 per cent to exports and 6 per cent of total industrial investment. At present, the food processing segment holds a 32 per cent share of India's booming food industry (Mukherjee *et al.,* 2013). With the fast paced growth of Indian food processing sector and popularity among the global and national investors as well consumers, a great deal of interest has been developed in investigating the psychological, financial and marketing perspective of the industry (Kumbhar, 2008). According to a report of FICCI (2014) on food processing sector, food and food products is the highest consumption category in India. Indian food industry, which is the second largest production house after China, is not free from the challenges that other industries face. Due to

changing lifestyle of the consumers of India, the demand of new varieties of processed food is increasing with every passing day in India. This change is posing a number of challenges to the current manufacturers and the new entrants. Being a labor intensive industry, the challenges the companies face are as diverse as products they produce. These challenges include increased investment in new product development, compete with substitute products, and implement new marketing strategies as well as increased attrition rate, job hopping, increased demand of training and skilled staff, better working conditions, changing labour laws, etc (Kumbhar, 2008; Power, 2014).

Punjab, one of the states in India, has the highest number of food processing companies as well as it is also the largest state in terms of food production and consumption. Therefore, food processing industry of Punjab is considered to be the springboard of upon which the state as well as India as a whole, hope to become self sufficient in food sector. Being a hub of food processing companies, employees have a lot of job opportunities but at the same time there are opportunities for job hopping which is hampering the overall growth of the industry. To survive in such a turbulent environment and to successfully cope with these challenges, the food processing industry has to focus on sources of sustainable competitive advantage such as focusing on reaping positive organizational climate and retaining their efficient workforce for long term success. The organizations have now started focussing on their internal environment in which the individuals work and pour their effort (Brown and Leigh, 1996) and try to make it more favourable for the employees.

The lack of scholarly research on the food processing industry in Punjab or elsewhere specifically devoted to its internal environment and turnover intentions linkages, argue convincingly for the value of this study. The present study is a step forward in this direction and its underlined objectives are:

1. To determine the status of turnover intentions in the food processing industry of Punjab.

2. To explore the correlation between organizational climate and turnover intentions of employees.

3. To examine the influence of dimensions of organizational climate on turnover intentions of employees.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Employee Turnover intentions: The study of Hwang and Chang (2009) highlighted that high level of employee turnover in an organisation does not only associate with increased recruitment and training costs but its detrimental effects are far beyond that. Turnover of employees disturbs

the continuing projects, increases costs and reduces production (Mustapha & Mourad, 2007) and creates significant problematic issues at workplace. Therefore, it becomes vital for organizations to prepare beforehand and determine the reason as to why an employee will possibly leave the organization. This will assist in taking remedial measures to reduce the actual turnover, as turnover intention are reported to be significantly correlated with the actual employee turnover (Griffeth et al., 2000; Price, 2001).

Turnover intentions, quitting intentions or intent to leave is the individual's probability of leaving or staying in an organization. It is an employee's susceptibility to quit the employing organization in the near future (Hom and Griffeth, 1995). Mobley et al., (1982) defines turnover intention as "the subjective estimation of an individual regarding the probability that she/he will be leaving the organization she/he works for in the near future" i.e. it as a 'conscious and deliberate desire' of an employee to leave an organization within the near future. This conscious and deliberate desire to leave the organization is due to number of precursors such as availability of employment opportunities in the outside world, conflict at workplace, lack of interest in present job and lower engagement levels, organisational policies, job stability, communication patterns and so on. These turnover intentions further influence the employee's level of job satisfaction, involvement, commitment and engagement in counter-productive behaviours (Price, 1989; Patterson et al., 2004; Moynihan & Pandey, 2008; Johnston & Spinks, 2013).

Empirically, there are two kinds of measuring instruments used to determine employee turnover intention. First are one-item measures that exhibit whether the employee has or does not have an intention to quit, and second are multiple-item measures which are commonly used and they further explore some degree of insight about such intention. One of the most acceptable scale in literature is a 4-item turnover intention scale developed by Kelloway et al. (1999). The study was a six-month longitudinal study, comprising a sample of 236 respondents. The internal reliability of the scale was found to be .87 and the results of the confirmatory factor analysis suggested the appropriateness of the scale.

Organizational Climate: Organizational climate is one of the most researched topics in organizational behaviour studies due to its relationship to a variety of individual and organisational variables (Cooil et al. 2009; Brown & Leigh 1996). The roots of the evolution of the concept of organizational climate lie in the work of Lewin, Lippit and White in the late 1930s, in which the concept of psychological climate was initially addressed. Subsequent to this study, several authors attempted to build on the climate theory in an effort to understand the concept of climate in organizations. According to Moran and Volkwein (1992) "Organizational climate is a prevailing characteristic of an organization which discriminate it from other organizations: (a) 'embodies members collective perceptions about their organization with respect to such dimensions as autonomy, trust, cohesiveness, support, recognition, innovation and fairness, (b) is produced by members interaction, (c) serves as a basis for interpreting the situation, (d) reflects the prevalent norms, values and attitudes of the organizations culture, and

(e) acts as a source of influence for shaping behaviour". Davidson *et al.* (2001) defined organisational climate as a "product of 'here and now' employee interactions". Empirically, organizational climate is a measure of the function of aggregated perceptions of its members about the workplace environment (Davidson *et al.* 2001; Glisson & James 2002).

Because of its multidimensional nature, various researchers have tried to explore the dimensions of organizational climate such as Litwin and Stringer (1968), Schneider and Bartlett (1968), Payne and Mansfield (1978), Jones and James (1979), and so on. These studies provide varying number of dimensions with differing names due to their focus on different objectives as well as various kinds of organizations where these studies has been conducted. Meanwhile, in 2004, Patterson and his associates conducted a vast study including a wide range of organizations (55 manufacturing units) and an extensively large sample size of 6,756 employees and explored 17 dimensions of organizational climate. These dimensions were widely accepted as they covered almost every aspect of organizational climate and industry.

Relationship between turnover intentions and organizational climate: Employees and the organization work interdependently and quitting of some of the employees affects the efficiency of the remaining employees as well as the organization (Riley, 2006). Though gone are the days where employees just leave the organization for more pay packages. As far as the employee turnover is concerned, there are various organizational factors that play a crucial role in determining the employee decision to stay or to quit. According to McGee (1971), the job changing decision of individuals was largely influenced by intrinsic factors. Shim (2010) and Nyce (2012) emphasized the environment within a workplace is one of the most critical factors for employees to leave. Similarly, the studies of James et al. (1990), Parker et al. (2003) summarise that it is the immediate work environment of an individual which acts as a primary factor of numerous of individual-level outcomes, such as turnover intentions. The meta-analysis conducted by Boxall *et al.* (2003) reported that job security, autonomy and responsibility, appreciation and care from employers, all contribute to employees' intention to quit. However, the lack of growth opportunities and poor communication with management has been associated with higher intent to leave (Simons and Jankowski, 2007). Employees spend most of their time on job and research has shown that the perception of employees regarding their organizational climate based on their day-to-day experiences, significantly affects their turnover intentions (Subramanian and Shin, 2013; Glisson *et al.,* 2008). Although actual leaving the organization may not prove feasible at times, due to the lack of suitable external opportunities or other restrictions, psychologically, an employee may still intend to leave an organization and do it when suitable opportunities arise (Hom *et al.,* 1992). Recent researches have also confirmed that unfavourable or discouraging organizational climate may increase employee attrition rate (Stone et al., 2006; Schyns et al., 2009; Rashid et al., 2009).

The review of the literature located no studies that have addressed themselves specifically to the relationship between organizational climate and employee turnover intentions in the food

processing sector. The previous research only focused on a few factors of organizational climate which affected an employee's quitting intentions although none of them so far have conducted a research which addresses a wide range of factors. In the light of this, we intend to examine whether the linkage between organizational climate and employee turnover intentions may be found in the food processing sector and whether the various factors of organizational climate have any influence on an employee's decision to quit their job or to stay employed. In regards to the above literature discussed, the following hypotheses have been framed:

H_{01}: There is no significant relationship between organizational climate and turnover intentions of employees of the food processing industry of Punjab.

H_{02}: There is no significant impact of organizational climate factors in determining the turnover intentions of employees of the food processing industry of Punjab.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For the understanding of purpose of the study and to check the hypothesis quantitative research using a survey method has been used as it provides a clear idea on the current situation. The population consisted of 75 large scale food processing companies in Punjab employing 26,200 employees. For the purpose of sampling, these 75 companies were divided into three stratas based on the data of fixed investment available from Department of Industries and Commerce, Chandigarh. A sample of 10 companies has been selected from the strata using proportionate random sampling. The total number of employees working in selected 10 companies was found to be 2672 and approximately 20% of employees from each company were being considered for the collection of data. A total of 600 questionnaires were distributed as per the plan of the study. However, only 522 returned the questionnaires and only 509 questionnaires have confirmed as completed, representing an 85% response rate. Thus, analysis of the data is based on 509 questionnaires. The average age of respondents lies between 31 to 40 years. The number of male participants (n=418) was higher than that of females (n=91). The majority of respondents have 6-15 years of experience.

Measuring Instrument: A well-structured, non-disguised questionnaire has been designed in order to fulfil the objectives of the study. The instruments used for the present study and their reliability statistics have been presented below:

Organizational Climate Measure: To evaluate the organizational climate of the food processing industry Patterson et al. (2004) "Organizational Climate Measure" has been used. The scale consisted of 17 subscales with a total of 82 items. The 17 subscales known as dimensions of organizational climate were labelled as – autonomy, clarity of organizational goals, formalization, effort, efficiency, innovation and flexibility, integration, outward focus, participation, performance feedback, pressure to produce, quality, reflexivity, supervisory

support, tradition, training, and welfare. The statements were based on climate characteristics of an organization concerning perception and observations about the organization in which they have been working. The respondents were asked to select the appropriate score on a four-point continuum. The scoring weights assigned were: 1 = definitely false, 2 = mostly false, 3 = mostly true and 4 = definitely true. Thirty two statements were negatively worded; so the scores of these items were reversed. The organizational climate measure was found to be fairly reliable (Cronbach's alpha = .864)

Turnover Intentions Scale: The respondents' intentions to leave the organization have been determined by 4-item 'Turnover Intention Scale' developed by Kelloway et al. (1999). The turnover intention statements have been quantified on a five point scale using the Likert type technique (from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). The 4-item have produced an acceptable reliability level (Cronbach's alpha = 0.963).

MAIN FINDINGS

Overall turnover intentions

The turnover intentions in the large scale food processing industry in Punjab has been measured by using a 4-item turnover intention scale with each item ranging from 1 to 5. The total score ranges from a low value of 4 to a high value of 20. The score has been divided into three categories. A score between 4 and 9 is considered as a low turnover intention, between 10 and 15 is moderate turnover intention while between 16 and 20 is considered as high turnover intention. A lower score means lower intentions of an employee to leave an organization. The results are presented in table 1.

Table 1: Turnover intentions statistics

S. No.	Parameter	Mean	S.D.	Category	Frequency	Percent
1	Turnover Intentions	11.598	4.194	Low	185	36.3
				Moderate	226	44.4
				High	98	19.3

The results for turnover intentions statistics have indicated that a moderate level of turnover intentions prevails in the large scale food processing industry (mean = 11.598, S.D. = 4.194). Out of the 509 respondents, 226 respondents have indicated a moderate level of intention to leave their organization which accounts for 44.4 percent of the employees. 185 respondents have shown a lower level of intention to leave but 98 respondents have indicated a higher level of intention to leave and is a matter of concern for the industry.

Correlation between organizational climate and turnover intentions

The correlation between organizational climate and turnover intentions is determined by Pearson's correlation coefficient. The results are presented in table 2.

Table 2: Correlation between organizational climate and turnover intentions

S. No.	Parameter	R	S. No.	Parameter	r
1	Autonomy	-.119**	10	Performance feedback	-.334**
2	Clarity of organizational goals	-.434**	11	Pressure to produce	.325**
3	Formalization	-.308**	12	Quality	-.272**
4	Effort	0.087	13	Reflexivity	-.237**
5	Efficiency	-0.017	14	Supervisory support	-.404**
6	Innovation and flexibility	-.192**	15	Tradition	0.023
7	Integration	-.281**	16	Training	-.257**
8	Outward focus	-.151**	17	Welfare	-.365**
9	Participation	-.494**	18	**Overall organizational climate**	-.603**

*p<.05, **p<.01

From table 2, it can be inferred that the organizational climate has significant negative relationship with the turnover intentions ($r = -.603$, $p < .01$) i.e. the more employees perceive the organizational climate to be favourable the lower their intention to leave an organization. The dimensions of organizational climate which has shown significant negative correlation with turnover intentions are participation ($r = -.494$, $p < .01$), clarity of organizational goals ($r = -.434$, $p < .01$) and supervisory support ($r = -.404$, $p < .01$). The other dimensions which have shown a relatively lower though significant negative correlation are welfare ($r = -.365$, $p < .01$), performance feedback ($r = -.334$, $p < .01$), pressure to produce ($r = .325$, $p < .01$), formalization ($r = -.308$, $p < .01$), integration ($r = -.281$, $p < .01$), quality ($r = -.272$, $p < .01$) and training ($r = -.257$, $p < .01$). The other dimensions of the organizational climate have been considered to be weakly correlated with the turnover intentions. The three dimensions namely effort, efficiency and tradition have not shown any correlation with the turnover intentions.

From the findings we conclude that there is a significantly negative relationship between organizational climate and the turnover intentions. Therefore, we reject our null hypothesis (H_{01}). After analysing the correlation between organizational climate and turnover

intentions, the impact of dimensions of organizational climate on turnover intentions has been examined by applying multiple regression analysis.

Impact of organizational climate dimensions on turnover intentions

Multiple regression analysis has been applied by taking dimensions of organizational climate as independent variables and turnover intentions as dependent variable. The results of multiple regression analysis have been presented in table 3.

Table 3: Multiple regression coefficients (taking turnover intentions as dependent variable and dimensions of organizational climate as predictor variables)

R Square	.457		
Adjusted R Square	.439		
F (df = 17,491)	24.346, p < .000.		
Model	**B**	**Std. Error**	**Sig.**
(Constant)	45.287	2.461	.000
1 Autonomy	-.110	.051	.030
2 Clarity of organizational goals	-.241	.052	.000
3 Formalization	-.109	.066	.097
4 Effort	-.092	.053	.085
5 Efficiency	-.186	.065	.004
6 Innovation and flexibility	-.016	.050	.753
7 Integration	-.175	.061	.004
8 Outward focus	.117	.062	.061
9 Participation	-.238	.058	.000
10 Performance feedback	-.167	.065	.011
11 Pressure to produce	.212	.065	.001
12 Quality	-.181	.098	.066
13 Reflexivity	-.044	.072	.538
14 Supervisory support	-.286	.051	.000
15 Tradition	-.119	.093	.198
16 Training	-.227	.068	.001
17 Welfare	-.228	.075	.002

The value of R Square has indicated that the dimensions of organizational climate explains 45.7 per cent of variance in turnover intentions and the value of Adjusted R Square (.439) has demonstrated no significant alteration due to the presence of many independent variables. The F-value indicates that the dimensions of organizational climate have significantly predicted the turnover intentions $F(17,491) = 24.346$, $p < .000$.

The results presented in table 3 have indicated that out of seventeen dimensions of organizational climate, ten dimensions have shown a significant relationship with the turnover intentions. The most significant influence has been demonstrated by supervisory support (B = -.286, p = .000) followed by clarity of organizational goals (B = -.241, p = .000), participation (B = -.238, p = .000), welfare (B = -.228, p = .000), training (B = -.227, p = .001) and pressure to produce (B = .212, p = .001). The dimensions of efficiency (B = -.186, p = .004), integration (B = -.175, p = .004), performance feedback (B = -.167, p = .011) and autonomy (B = -.110, p = .030) have also shown significant impact on the turnover intentions. The other dimensions of the organizational climate have not significantly predicted the turnover intentions.

Therefore we can say that the study has also rejected the second hypothesis H_{02} and conclude that the dimensions of organization play a significant role in determining the extent of an employee's turnover intentions.

DISCUSSION

A significant percentage of employees of large scale food processing industry of Punjab have perceived a moderate to high turnover intention which is alarming and should be taken into consideration as soon as possible prior to their actually leaving the organization. Past research has indicated that the employees who have intentions to quit their current organization are always in search of better opportunities (in the form of pay, promotion etc.) in other organizations and actually quit when they become successful (Olusegun, 2013). The intent of quitting a job is a serious issue as the intention of quitting is proxy to actual turnover (Emberland and Rundmo, 2010). Further, a significant number of employees having intentions to quit their present job, also found to have adverse consequences on overall performance, and efficiency of the employees as well as the on organization (Hui et al., 2007; Luna-Arocas and Camps, 2007).

The present study has also reported a negative correlation between organizational climate and turnover intentions i.e. positive or favourable organizational climate leads to lower intentions to quit a job. Significant negative correlation between organizational climate and turnover intentions is also highlighted by Hong and Kaur (2008) and Suliman and Al Obaidli (2011). The results of correlation and multiple regression analysis has indicated that the dimension of organizational climate such as supervisory support, clarity of organizational goals, participation, welfare, training and pressure to produce have significant

impact on employees turnover intentions. Significant negative relationship between the dimensions of organizational climate and turnover intentions has also been reported in previous researches of Mei Teh (2014), Saungweme and Gwandure (2011) and, Subramanian and Shin (2013).

The finding of the study also revealed that the various dimensions of organizational climate have a significant impact on the turnover intentions. The supervisor support has indicated a strong influence on employee's turnover intentions and a higher level of support from the supervisor results in the lowering of an employee's intentions to quit a job. The leader-member exchange (LMX) theory also examines that the care and support given by a supervisor is perceived as the care provided by an organization and in turn the employees assist in meeting job responsibilities (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). When this supervision is turn to be abusive and destructive it results in high turnover and deviant behaviours (Schyns & Schilling, 2013).

Consequently, clear organizational goals and participation, in terms of strong information sharing also assist in reducing the employee's quitting intentions. It gives an idea about the importance of job goals as well as makes them feel more important as an achiever. The previous research studies conducted by Cottini et al. (2011), Jung and Kim (2012) and Ghosh et al. (2013) emphasises the importance of clear organizational goals and participation, as it reduces the dilemma and conflict at workplace and eliminates the negative effect of physical hazards on quitting behaviour.

The study has also highlighted the relationship between welfare facilities and turnover intentions which has been supported by Perryer et al. (2010). Dickey et al. (2011) explanation of the importance of training and its influence on turnover intentions, also form a stronger basis of our results by linking it with a negative relationship between the two constructs i.e. better the training facilities resulted in lowering the quitting intention. Conversely, high pressure to produce has been considered as bad by employees and likely result in grave consequences for employee's intentions to leave the organization and is supported by the study of Qureshi et al. (2013) and Wefald et al. (2008).

Additional drivers of turnover intentions are also been found in present study such as efficiency, integration, performance feedback and autonomy and these results are consistent with what is suggested by various sources in the literature (Spector, 1986; Jawahar & Hemmasi, 2006; Galletta et al., 2011).

CONCLUDING REMARKS AND IMPLICATIONS

The present explanatory research draws attention to three important points. Firstly, the level of turnover intentions is found high in the food processing industry of Punjab alarming the industry

to take immediate corrective action. Secondly, the climate of an organization has a significant negative relationship with the turnover intentions denoting that the more the favourable climate is, the lower the employee's intentions to leave will be. Thirdly, the dimensions of organizational climate such as supervisory support, clarity of organizational goals, participation, welfare, training, pressure to produce, efficiency, integration, performance feedback and autonomy have a significant impact on the turnover intentions. Management can stabilize the turnover intentions by cultivating a favourable organizational climate. They should intervene in probable causes of turnover intention and should make an effort to proactively nip the problem of turnover in the bud before it aggravates. Many organizations, however, struggle to build the climate that retains their highly efficient employees though the working organizations can gradually take steps to build a more positive and employee-centred climate through better supervisory support, deducing the dilemma among the employees by clarifying goals through increased participation, providing better training and welfare facilities and by giving them some autonomy in decision making as well as reducing excessive workloads.

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