Engagement, Perceived Leadership Effectiveness, and Performance as Predictors of Voluntary and Involuntary Turnover Among Nurses

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Abstract

The purpose of the research project is to examine predictors of voluntary and involuntary turnover among nurses. Hypotheses are that engagement and positive perceptions of leadership will be negatively related to voluntary turnover and stronger predictors of voluntary than involuntary turnover. Additionally, performance rating will be negatively related to involuntary turnover and a stronger predictor of involuntary than voluntary turnover. Data will be collected from several thousand nurses at geographically dispersed hospitals owned by a healthcare investment company. Data were collected during the company's employee survey, performance appraisal process, and turnover recordkeeping process. The hypotheses will be tested with logistic regression. The findings of this study will contribute to the scientific understanding of antecedents of turnover, particularly among nurses. Practitioners can use this to inform their employee retention strategy.

Introduction

- Turnover is costly to organizations due to lost productivity and employee replacement expenses (Mitchell et al., 2001). Nurses have particularly high voluntary turnover rates.
- Job performance is more influential for involuntary than voluntary turnover decisions (Chhinzer, 2021). Performance ratings tend to be worse for employees who are terminated from their positions compared to employees who voluntarily leave their positions (Wells & Muchinsky, 1985).
- Studies have demonstrated negative relationships between engagement and both turnover and turnover intention (Harter et al., 2002; Saks, 2006).
- Nei, Snyder, and Litwiller (2015) conducted a meta-analysis examining predictors of turnover among nurses and found that supportive and communicative leadership was a strong predictor of turnover.

Hypotheses

H1: Engagement ratings will be negatively related to voluntary turnover rate.
H2: Engagement ratings will be more correlated with voluntary turnover rate than involuntary turnover rate.

H3: Perceived supervisor effectiveness ratings will be negatively related to voluntary turnover rate.
H4: Perceived supervisor effectiveness ratings will be more correlated with voluntary turnover rate than involuntary turnover rate.

H5: Perceived company leadership effectiveness ratings will be negatively related to voluntary turnover rate.
H6: Perceived company leadership effectiveness ratings will be more correlated with voluntary turnover rate than involuntary turnover rate.

H7: Performance ratings will be negatively related to involuntary turnover.
H8: Performance ratings will be more correlated with involuntary turnover than voluntary turnover.

Method

Data Collection

- Participants will be several thousand nurses that work for a healthcare investment company in hospitals across the United States.
- The data will be collected from the company's human resource records. All identifying information will be removed from the data before analysis to maintain confidentiality.
- Measures of employee engagement and perceptions of leadership will be collected from 2019 employee survey data. Employees' perceptions of their direct supervisor and the leaders in their facility will be analyzed separately. There are five to six items for each construct. Data will be captured at the team level to maintain survey confidentiality. Consequently, turnover will be measured as team turnover rate.
- Performance will be measured at the individual level in relation to individual turnover. Performance rating data were recorded in 2019. Ratings for competencies with high importance for the job, as determined by ratings from nurses serving as subject matter experts, will be averaged to create a single performance score.

Data Analysis

- Data will be analyzed with logistic regression analyses. There will be separate analyses with combinations of engagement, perceived supervisor effectiveness, perceived company leadership effectiveness, and performance ratings with voluntary and involuntary turnover.
- Statistical analyses will be conducted to determine whether there are significant differences in relationships of each of the variables with voluntary and involuntary turnover.

Anticipated Relationships
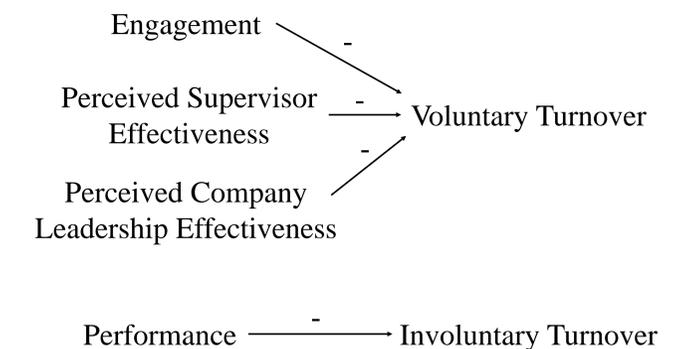
Discussion

Implications
Findings will contribute to the scientific literature about predictors of turnover. Strengths of the proposed research are that it examines turnover rather than turnover intention and the data for the predictor and criterion variables will be measured approximately two years apart, allowing time for the turnover process to occur. Practitioners could use the findings to inform their efforts to predict and reduce organizational turnover, particularly among nurses.

Limitations
External validity. Participants will not be randomly sampled because the data are archival data from one company. This limits the ability to generalize the findings to broader populations.
Level of analysis. Survey data was aggregated at the team level. It may be more appropriate to analyze the data in relation to turnover at the individual level.

Future Directions
Future research could examine other predictors of voluntary and involuntary turnover, investigate moderators and mediators of the proposed relationships, and test the proposed relationships in a non-nursing sample.