A FRAMEWORK FOR REDUCING TURNOVER INTENTION AMONG POLICE
PERSONNEL IN ABU DHABI

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DEDICATION

With the grace of the Almighty ALLAH SWT,

I dedicate this thesis to

My country,

For the support, care, and encouragement

My late beloved father and mother

For your love, effort, and constant support.

My kind wife and lovely kids,

For your love, patient, support, and encouragement

My supervisor,

For your help, encouragement and guidance to ensure the success of this thesis.

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ABSTRACT

Turnover intention is a universal issue that faces countries and organizations. The rate of turnover is higher in United Arab Emirates (UAE) compared with regional countries and the global average. Moreover, prior literature focused on the turnover intention in the private sector in developed countries. In the UAE public sector, the rate of turnover intention is higher than in the private sector. Among the public sector, the highest percentage of turnover is among the police personnel. Accordingly, the purpose of this study is to propose a framework for turnover among police personnel. The literature was reviewed to understand the findings of previous studies and identify significant turnover predictors. Moreover, the leadership theories, social exchange theory and organizational justice were reviewed. Based on the review, this study proposed that leadership style and organizational justice will affect negatively the turnover intention. The study also proposed that the quality of working life will mediate the effect of leadership style and organizational justice on turnover intention. These causal relationships would be also moderated by trust in the supervisor. The population of this study is police personnel in Abu Dhabi. Using stratified sampling, the study collected the data from 388 police personnel using questionnaires. The data were analysed using both Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) and Structural Equation Modelling Partial Least Square (SEM-PLS). The findings indicated that the organizational justice and leadership style affected significantly the turnover intention. Quality of working life mediated the effect of leadership style on turnover intention while trust in supervisor moderated the relationship between leadership style and turnover intention. Having these variables satisfied will lead to high job satisfaction, motivation, happiness, job security, and organizational commitment which in turn will lead to turnover prevention and better productivity. In conclusion, decision-makers in Police Headquarter have to focus on the implications of organizational justice and leadership style as well as income equality and training and development for turnover intention prevention.

ABSTRAK

Niat pusing ganti merupakan salah satu isu utama yang dihadapi oleh sesebuah organisasi. Kadar niat pusing ganti organisasi di Emiriah Arab Bersatu (UAE) adalah lebih tinggi jika dibandingkan dengan negara-negara serantau yang lain dan di peringkat global. Tambahan pula, melalui kajian literatur mendapati banyak kajian mendapati niat pusing ganti berlaku dalam sesebuah organisasi swasta dan di negara maju. Namun begitu, ianya berbeza di UAE dimana kadar niat pusing ganti dalam organisasi sektor awam adalah lebih tinggi berbanding dengan organisasi sektor swasta. Diantara sektor awam, peratusan tertinggi niat pusing ganti berlaku adalah dikalangan anggota polis. Sehubungan dengan itu, kajian ini bertujuan untuk mencadangkan suatu kerangka niat pusing ganti dalam kalangan anggota polis. Kajian literatur dilakukan untuk memahami hasil kajian lepas dan mengenalpasti peramalan niat pusing ganti yang signifikan. Tambahan lagi, teori kepimpinan, teori pertukaran sosial dan keadilan organisasi turut dikaji. Berdasarkan hasil kajian literatur, penyelidikan ini mencadangkan gaya kepimpinan dan keadilan organisasi akan memberi kesan negatif terhadap niat pusing ganti. Kajian ini juga mencadangkan kualiti hidup bekerja akan memediasi kesan gaya kepimpinan dan keadilan organisasi terhadap niat pusing ganti. Hubungan kausal ini akan dimoderasi melalui kepercayaan terhadap penyelia. Responden kajian ini adalah terdiri daripada anggota polis yang berkhidmat di Abu Dhabi. Menggunakan persampelan berstrata, kajian ini mengumpulkan data melalui 388 anggota polis sebagai responden dengan pengedaran soal selidik. Data dianalisis dengan menggunakan *Statistical Package for Social Science* (SPSS) dan *Structural Equation Modelling Partial Least Square* (SEM-PLS). Hasil dapatan kajian menunjukkan keadilan organisasi dan gaya kepimpinan memberikan kesan signifikan terhadap niat pusing ganti. Kualiti hidup bekerja memediasi pengaruh gaya kepemimpinan terhadap niat pusing ganti sementara kepercayaan kepada penyelia memoderasi hubungan antara gaya kepemimpinan dan niat pusing ganti. Pembolehubah-pembolehubah tersebut mampu membawa kepada kepuasan kerja yang tinggi, motivasi, kebahagiaan, keselamatan pekerjaan, dan komitmen organisasi serta menyebabkan pencegahan niat pusing ganti dan produktiviti yang lebih baik. Kesimpulannya, pembuat keputusan di Ibu Pejabat Polis

harus memusatkan perhatian pada implikasi keadilan organisasi dan gaya kepemimpinan serta persamaan pendapatan dan latihan, dan pembangunan bagi pencegahan niat pusing ganti.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATION

AVE	-	Average Variance Extracted
CA	-	Cronbach's Alpha
CR	-	Composite Reliability
DJ	-	Distributive Justice
FAHR	-	Federal Authority for Government Human Resources
FL	-	Factor Loading
GCC	-	Gulf Countries Council
N	-	Number
PJ	-	Procedural Justice
PLS	-	Partial Least Square
QWL	-	Quality of Working Life
SEM	-	Structural Equation Modeling
Sig	-	Significance
SPSS	-	Statistical Package of Social Science
Std	-	Standard Deviation
TFL	-	Transformational Leadership
TI	-	Turnover Intention
TIS	-	Trust in Supervisor
TL	-	Transactional Leadership
UAE	-	United Arab Emirates
US	-	United States

LIST OF APPENDIICES

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the introduction of this study. The background of research and the motivation behind conducting this research are discussed in this chapter. The problem statement of this study is elaborated in this chapter. The research problem is followed by the research questions and objectives, which determine the scope of the research. After that, the significance of this study is highlighted, and an overview of the research methodology is presented. Lastly, the overall structure of this thesis is described.

1.1 Background of Research

Turnover intention has been one of the most important topics in recent years. The increase in the importance of this topic was due to the increase in the rate of turnover among public and private sectors' employees. Turnover intention has critical negative effect on the organizational effectiveness and competitive advantage and it affects the overall organizational performance as well as the productivity of employees and the quality of service provided to customers (Alhashmi *et al.,* 2017; Kang, Busser & Choi, 2018; Kim *et al.,* 2017). Turnover intention is defined as "an employee's intention to voluntarily leave a job" (Griffeth & Hom, 1988). Turnover intention affects the profitability of companies. In United States, the cost of turnover in 2018 was $617 billion (Mahan *et al.*, 2019).

In United Arab Emirates (UAE), the turnover rate is higher than the world average and companies spend US$ 2.7 billion annually to cover the direct and indirect cost of turnover among employees (Khalife, 2016). The turnover intention is increasing among national UAE citizens. For example, a study reported that the

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percentage of nationals in banking sector decreased from 35% to 34% representing a 1% decrease in a period of three years (Alqubati *et al.*, 2019). The issue is more severe in public sector where the statistic showed that a 5% of the employees are leaving their jobs in 2014. Out of the 5%, 63.1% are from police personnel. This percentage is alarming since the police personnel has three main duties that are to enforce the law, maintain order, and provide service and the country rely on police personnel since its establishment in 1971 to promote itself as a hub for tourism and business (Jabeen *et al.*, 2020).

The turnover rate of 5% comes from a study conducted by the Federal Authority for Government Human Resources (FAHR) in 2014 which included 17 ministries and 18 federal entities with total employees of 53,961 showed that 2,343 of the employees left their jobs. This indicates that 5% of the workforce in public sectors has left their jobs. In 2012, the percentage of those who left their job was 3.6% and increased to 5% in 2014 indicating an increasing trend of job leavers among the nationals UAE. The report also indicated that voluntary turnover among police personnel was 50.4% in 2013 and it increased to 63.1% in 2014. The percentage of national citizens constitutes 59% of those who left their jobs in 2014. For this reason, this study is focusing on the national public servants and in particular, the police personnel.

Due to this alarming numbers of job leavers among police personnel, several previous studies suggested investigating the turnover intention among police personnel in UAE (Zeffane & Melhem, 2017). This is mainly due to the importance of this personnel in protecting the country (Alhashmi *et al.*, 2017; AlHashmi, Jabeen, & Papastathopoulos, 2019). Reports indicated that there is 17,291 police personnel are employed by the Abu Dhabi in 2014 (the capital city and the highest number of public servants employed by the state). This number has increased to 35,181 in 2017 and expected to reach 47,500 in 2021 (Al-Kuttab, 2017). Military and police jobs in UAE are second highest stressed jobs and the majority of the turnover comes from this group (63.1%) (AlHashmi *et al.*, 2019; Jabeen *et al.*, 2020).

The turnover intention among police personnel could be attributed to the organizational justice and leadership style in the police department. Organizational justice is an important predictor of turnover intention and studies in UAE showed that due to issues of justice such as overload of work and unjust compensation and reward system, the turnover intention is increasing (Kashmoola *et al*., 2017). Previous studies also highlighted that poor leadership is one of the main reasons for turnover intention (Kim, 2002; Park & Rainey, 2008; Puni, Agyemang, & Asamoah, 2016). Most prevalent leadership styles are autocratic and directorate while other styles such as transformational and transactional are not widely investigated in UAE (Bhargavi & Shehhi, 2016). Transformational and transactional leaderships can help in explaining turnover intention (Sulamuthu & Yuso, 2018; Alhammadi, Tham, & Azam, 2020; Gharama, Khalifa, & Al-Shibami, 2020).

Previous studies reported that one of the main reasons for the high turnover rate in UAE is due to the imbalance between work and life, which increases the stress and the complaining about the job and ultimately affect the job attitude (Nair, 2017; Jabeen *et al*., 2020). However, previous studies did not focus on the potential role of quality of working life and its effect as a mediating variable (Rathi & Lee, 2017). Trust in the context of management and business research is still in its infancy (Wang *et al.,* 2014). Trust was investigated by few studies in the context of turnover intention (Zeffane & Melhem, 2017) and the role of trust as a moderating variable could potentially help in explaining the variation in the organizational outcome (Alaarj, Mohamed, & Bustamam, 2017).

Consequently, the purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of leadership style and organizational justice on the turnover intention among police personnel in Abu Dhabi. The study also aims to test the mediating role of quality of working life and the moderating effect of trust in the supervisor. Ultimately, the study aims to develop a framework that can be used as a reference by decision-makers in Abu Dhabi to reduce the turnover intention.

1.2   Problem Statement

Employee turnover is a universal problem and is proving costly for companies. The trend is particularly prevalent in the UAE and the rest of the Gulf Countries Council (GCC). Employment laws in the host countries are making it relatively easy for employees to change jobs (Maceda, 2017). UAE continues to experience high rates of employee turnover and the country has above average turnover intention compared with the world average. In 2014, FAHR (2014) reported that 5% of the public sector employees have left the job. The Hays GCC 2016 Salary & Employment Report shows that 31% of employees based in the UAE changing employers in 2015, with 57% intending to do so in 2016 at a much higher rate than the global one (Nair, 2017). High turnover in the country are costly. Reports showed that one of the major consequences of high turnover is the need to find, recruit, select, hire, and train new employees, which annually costing the organization in UAE almost US$2.7 billion (Khalife, 2016).

Despite the difficulty in finding a job, there is increasing intention among UAE employees to leave their jobs and find another job with different employers. Several reasons contribute to this intention and these include the balance between work and life which referred to as quality of working life as well as the differences in the level of income between organizations. In addition, factors such as employee satisfaction, trust, engagement, and leadership styles were related to turnover intention (Khalife, 2016; Nair, 2017; Maceda, 2017). The turnover intention in UAE is high. However, the academic studies that examined this issue are limited (Zeffane & Melhem, 2017). A local study in UAE examined the role of trust, satisfaction, and organizational commitment on turnover intention and found significant relationships between these variables (Abu Elanian, 2010).

A study investigated the effect of variables such as justice, reward, decision making, and chances of innovating on the turnover among employees of Islamic banks in UAE (Suliman & Al Obaidli, 2011). The study deployed SPSS to find the correlation between the variables. The findings indicated that variables of decision making, justice and chance to innovate are negatively related and correlated with the turnover intention of employees in UAE Islamic banks. Other correlational studies that have been conducted by Cherian, Alkhatib and Aggarwal (2018). The study aimed to identify the correlation between variables such as organizational commitment, job

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satisfaction, and turnover intention among nurses working in UAE's hospitals. The findings indicated that there is a negative correlation between satisfaction and organizational commitment to turnover intention.

Other studies that were conducted in UAE are conceptual. For example, a study conducted by Harhara *et al.* (2015) aimed to understand the predictors of turnover intention in oil and gas companies in UAE. A set of hypotheses were developed and it was proposed that the turnover intention is affected by individual, organizational and environmental factors. A study of turnover intention was conducted by Behery *et al.* (2016). The study aimed to examine the impact of relational psychological contracts on turnover intention. This relationship was expected to be mediated by satisfaction and organizational commitment in private and public organizations in UAT. The findings showed that there is a significant relationship between the variables.

Zeffane & Melhem (2017) directed the attention to the limited number of studies regarding the turnover intention in UAE and to the fact that there is limited attention to the role of trust as an influential factor in the context of turnover intention. For this reason, the study included variables such as trust, commitment and job satisfaction as well as the demographic information of respondents to be predictors variables of turnover intention in UAE. In addition, a moderator effect was proposed based on the type of sector. The findings showed that employees of the public sector are more trusting and satisfied compared with the private sector. In addition, a predictor of turnover intention in the private sector is mainly driven by trust and satisfaction.

Nevertheless, the findings of the study of Yousef (2017) are in total disagreement with the findings of Zeffane & Melhem (2017) who conducted a study to understand the effect of satisfaction and commitment of public sector employees. The satisfaction is varied. High satisfaction was observed in terms of work conditions, supervision and co-workers. On the other hand, low satisfaction was recorded in term of pay and salary. The employees indicated that they are working just because they have to work but not because they are committed or they like their works.

Jabeen *et al.* (2018) conducted a study limited to women in UAE public sector and found that quality of working life affected positively job satisfaction and negatively turnover intention of women in UAE. Job satisfaction mediated the effect of quality of working life on turnover intention. Few of the studies conducted on police personnel, for example, in the study of AlHashmi *et al.* (2019), examined the effect of

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leader-member exchange (LMX) and organizational support on turnover intention among police personnel, the findings indicated that LMX affect negatively the turnover intention while organizational support has insignificant effect. The study also found that psychological stress has a mediating effect between the variables. In the study of Jabeen *et al.* (2020), examined the effect of work-family conflict and job autonomy on the turnover intention of police personnel in UAE. The findings indicated that work-family conflict and job autonomy has insignificant effect on turnover intention while perceived organizational support has insignificant effect.

Based on the above discussion, it can be seen that the challenge of turnover intention in UAE is comparatively higher than regional and international level. Nevertheless, the academic studies in the country are few and they focused mainly on business organizations. In addition, several limitations were observed in previous studies that are related to the design and nature of the studies. Previous studies were conceptual and correlational mainly aim to describe the level of the variables rather than findings the cause and effect.

1.3   Research Questions

Based on the research problem, the research is intended to answer the following key research questions.

  (i)   What are the effects of leadership style on turnover intention among police personnel in Abu Dhabi?

 (ii)   What are the effect of organizational justice on turnover intention among police personnel in Abu Dhabi?

(iii)   Does the quality of working life mediates the effect of leadership style and organizational justice on turnover intention of police personnel in Abu Dhabi?

(iv)   Does trust in the supervisor moderate the effect of leadership style and organizational justice on turnover intention of police personnel in Abu Dhabi?

1.4   Research Aim and Objectives

The aim of the research is to develop an appropriate turnover intention framework for Abu Dhabi police personnel aiming to help the decision-makers in reducing the turnover intention among this group. The specific objectives of the research are:

(i)   To identify the effects of leadership style on turnover intention among police personnel in Abu Dhabi.

(ii)   To determine the effects of organizational justice on turnover intention among police personnel in Abu Dhabi.

(iii)   To examine the mediating role of quality of working life between leadership style and organizational justice on turnover intention of police personnel in Abu Dhabi.

(iv)   To determine the moderating effect of trust in the supervisor between leadership style and organizational justice on turnover intention of police personnel in Abu Dhabi.

1.5   Scope of the Research

This study investigates the turnover intention among public sector employees in UAE. Particularly, the study focuses on police personnel in Abu Dhabi, the capital state of UAE. This is because the state include the majority of police personnel where the population is accounted to 35,181 in 2017 and expected to grow to 47,500 in 2021 (Al-Kuttab, 2017). Accordingly, data is collected from Abu Dhabi only and does not include all the other six emirates (states) of the UAE due to the permission issue and difficulty of collecting the data by a single researcher in a short period of time. Therefore, since police personnel in Abu Dhabi are citizens from UAE and come from all other states, the sample can represent the population of police personnel in UAE.

The study focusses on public sector employees' turnover intention. Other sectors such as private sectors are not included in this study. The study also focuses on police personnel, other public sector employees are not included in this study. The focus of this study on factors that leads to the prevention of the turnover intention among police personnel. The study deploys mainly theories such as the theory of

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