

A Study of Psychological Hardiness and Self-Efficacy on Turnover Intention

Geetanjali Soni^{1*}

ABSTRACT

Retaining talent in an organization is as crucial a task as attracting talent and leaders today need a more subjective perspective to identify what is it that contributes to employee turnover intentions. The aim of the present study is to understand the psychology behind turnover intention by examining employees' psychological hardiness and self-efficacy. Primary grounds of the study are established on the role of self-efficacy and hardiness in job effectiveness, performance, and self-worth. For this purpose, a quantitative approach is adopted to evaluate the responses received from 110 samples. The General Self-efficacy Scale (Schwarzer & Jerusalem 1995), Turnover Intention Scale (Wayne, Shore & Liden, 1997), and Psychological Hardiness Scale (Bartone, 2013), were administered for data collection followed by statistical analysis to establish correlation. It was concluded that there exists a weak negative relationship between Psychological Hardiness and Turnover Intention. Similarly, a moderate positive relation exists between Self-efficacy and Psychological Hardiness. However, there was no significant relationship found between Self-efficacy and Turnover Intention.

Keywords: *Psychological hardiness, Self-efficacy, Turnover Intention, and Managers*

Employees are the most important, valuable and productive asset of an organization and retaining them is one of the toughest challenges for the managers. According to a survey conducted by the Statistic Research Department (India) for the financial year 2018, it was reported that there exists an average of 13.1 per cent of voluntary turnover rate across 18 sectors that were under study. For a developing country like India, rising employee turnover has become a great concern over the past few years. Most of the employees working in Indian organizations are found looking for better opportunities available in the emerging markets since they are concerned with fairness of compensation and often lack confidence in current employers for achieving their career goals (Kashyap & Rangnekar, 2014). Organizations invest in employees, and turnover proves to be a big loss of time money, and efforts for them. Turnover intention is a subjective phenomenon that is influenced by numerous factors including demographics. This present research revolves around studying the psychology behind an employee's turnover intention as opposed to the pre-established organizational phenomena.

¹Master of Science, Department of Psychology, CHRIST (Deemed to be) University, Bangalore, India
**Corresponding Author*

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LITERATURE REVIEW

Psychological Hardiness

The concept of psychological hardiness emerges out of the field of positive psychology and was first proposed by Salvatore R. Maddi in 1979. It can be understood as a personality style or pattern associated with continued good health and performance under stress (Mund, 2016). According to Kobasa, hardy people are buffered against stressful life situations because they engage in certain affective, cognitive, and behavioral responses. It is characterized as being comprised of three components or the 3C's – commitment, control and challenge as cited by Mund (2016). Commitment can be understood as a tendency to involve oneself in the activities in life and having a genuine interest in and curiosity about the surrounding world. Control can be understood as the tendency to believe and act as if one can influence the events taking place around oneself through one's own effort. Challenge can be understood as the belief that change, rather than stability, as the normal mode of life and it constitutes motivating opportunities for personal growth rather than threats to security (Maddi, 1997).

Previously, it was discussed that hardiness was initially thought of something that is inborn. A study aimed to test this claim has concluded that the style of dealing with stressful circumstances reflects how hardy an individual is. These results prompted that hardiness is learned and evolves as we grow with experience in life. This led to the conceptualization of hardiness as the courage to deal with stressful life conditions. Hardy attitudes emphasize motivated mechanisms to deal with stress in a manner that enhance health and performance.

Researches conducted in the organizational context have found new areas where hardiness has a positive influence. Studies to understand the influence of psychological hardiness, social judgement and personality dimensions that make for a good leader established psychological hardiness as one of the strongest personality predictor of leader performance (Bartone, Eid, Helge Johnsen, Christian Laberg & Snook, 2009). It substantiates that an effective leader is one who is competent, committed, and confident in his abilities to manage events and influence outcomes. These findings emphasized that hardiness together with extroversion would be the best predictor of an effective leader.

Hardiness in relation to job demands, job control, and sickness absence was found as a protective factor against stress and a predictor of healthy functioning. (Hystad, Eid & Brevik, 2011). Psychological demands in the work environment are found to have a stronger negative impact on employees who score low on hardiness. Consequently, for employees with high hardiness scores under study, the number of absence spells did not increase in comparison to employees who had low hardiness scores.

Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy according to Bandura (1977) is, “self-concept reflects people's beliefs in their personal efficacy.” It can be understood as an individual's task-specific self-confidence. Self-efficacy has been studied separately with hardiness and turnover intention to determine a relationship between the variables.

Studies have explored the influence of psychological hardiness and self-efficacy with reference to career orientation. Psychological hardiness is said to have a significant impact upon the career orientation of students as did high level of self-efficacy (Kumar Kansal & Harpreet, 2016). It was established as a consequence that high hardy persons have a strong

A Study of Psychological Hardiness and Self-Efficacy on Turnover Intention

sense of work commitment and more openness. It was also found that subjects who scored high in self-efficacy had also scored high on psychological hardiness.

Self-efficacy is also found to have a positive impact on job performance and job satisfaction (Lai and Chen, 2012). Consequently, an employee who has a higher self-efficacy will be more effective on the job and will also experience greater job satisfaction as compared to someone with low self-efficacy. They may be more intrinsically motivated and hence possess superior abilities which enable them to perform better at work.

When studied together, self-efficacy and turnover intentions are found to have a significant negative relationship (Randhawa, 2004). This implies that higher the job specific self-efficacy, lower was the turnover intention. Consequently, organizations must pay attention to their employees' perceptions of themselves in order to ensure that they retain for longer periods of time.

Psychological hardiness and self-efficacy are also found to have a positive relationship owing to the commonality in the components that contribute to their nature and make up. It can be understood that hardy individuals perceive themselves as more efficacious (Ghalyanee, 2016) since they are more committed, have better control, and greater sense of challenge.

Turnover Intention

Turnover may be broadly understood under two categories: voluntary and involuntary. When employees decide to leave the organization by their own will, it is called voluntary turnover, whereas, when an organization removes an employee against his/her will it is called involuntary turnover (Kaur, Mohindru & Pankaj 2013). Involuntary turnover is often considered in organizational interest whereas voluntary turnover is detrimental to the organizations. Four primary contributors to turnover intention that have been identified include: job stress, organizational justice, job satisfaction and quality of work life. This indicates that turnover intention is a combination of psychological, demographic, economic, and job-related variables subjective to each individual (Kaur, Mohindru & Pankaj 2013). These factors are antecedents of turnover intention and are primarily influenced by organizations' policies and work.

Studies have indicated that job satisfaction has a direct impact on turnover intention and can lessen the intent to leave an organization (Shukla, Srinivasan and Chaurasia, 2013; Lai and Chen, 2012). This implies that, it is unlikely for an employee to stay in a dis-satisfying job. Organizational commitment is also found to have a weak effect on turnover intention indicating the important role of positive attitude towards job satisfaction to be a primary contributor in determining turnover intention of an employee.

The extent of the factors that determine an employees' intention to leave or stay can be attributed to one major influencer – stress. Numerous researches in the field have reiterated the relationship between job stress and job satisfaction. A study conducted to investigate the effect of age on occupational stress and job satisfaction enumerated that the two variables are negatively related (Chandraiah, Agrawal, Marimuthu, and Manoharan, 2003). Individuals who were found to be experiencing excessive stress found their jobs less satisfying. In addition to this, age was also found to be of importance in the findings because people of different age groups tended to experience varying levels of stress owing to subjective life experiences.

A Study of Psychological Hardiness and Self-Efficacy on Turnover Intention

In relation with psychological hardiness, a strong negative relationship is found to be existing (Banda, 2019). Hardiness, therefore, has a direct effect on turnover intention. In order to predict superior performance at work, psychological hardiness can be accredited as an essential attribute for employees to possess. Not just for superior performance, but in order to be able to put up with the constantly changing demands and dynamics at workplaces, hardy individuals are more likely to sustain and be less prone to turnover intention.

METHODOLOGY

In expanding the hardiness approach from individuals to organizations, it has been asserted that resiliency and effectiveness are what organizations need if they are to be successful in changing times (Maddi, 1997). The present study focuses to explore whether psychological hardiness can be used as a measure of determining turnover intention of employees in consideration with self-efficacy of employees. If yes, then to establish a relationship between psychological hardiness and turnover intention with the help of self-efficacy as a mediating variable.

Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1. There exists no relationship between hardiness and turnover intention of employees.

Hypothesis 2. There exists no relationship between self-efficacy and psychological hardiness.

Hypothesis 3. There exists no relationship between self-efficacy and turnover intention of employees.

Method

Participants. The target population for conducting this study was identified as mid-level managers in an organization. The total sample size was 110 respondents from companies geographically located in India.

The sample population included mid-level managers who are reporting to a superior and are also being reported to by a subordinate. This implies that employees who are working at posts such as project managers, assistant managers, etc. would be making it for the eligibility criteria.

Employees who are not directly reporting to a supervisor, are associated with any kinds of support functions or logistics and/or administration would not make it to the eligibility criteria.

Procedure. The study was based on data analysis and interpretation using questionnaire that was handed out to employees who fit in the inclusion criterion for the sample population. Participation in the study was voluntary and subjects were given the discretion to withdraw if desired. A consent form was given to each participant stating these terms. The consolidated questionnaire consisted of self-report scales on psychological hardiness, turnover intention and self-efficacy. This data was then interpreted for statistical analysis based on the responses.

Measures

Psychological Hardiness. The 15-item Short Hardiness Scale (Bartone, 2013) was used as a self-report measure of psychological hardiness. This scale includes positively as well as

A Study of Psychological Hardiness and Self-Efficacy on Turnover Intention

negatively keyed items covering the three conceptually important hardiness facets of Commitment, Control, and Challenge. It shows excellent psychometric properties, including Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from .70 to .77 for the facets, to .83 for the overall scale.

Self-efficacy. The General Self-efficacy scale (Schwarzer & Jerusalem 1995) was used as a self-report measure to assess the level of self-efficacy. Internal reliability for GSE is found out for Cronbach's alphas between .76 and .90. The General Self-Efficacy Scale is correlated to emotion, optimism, and work satisfaction. Negative coefficients were found for depression, stress, health complaints, burnout, and anxiety.

Turnover Intention. In order to measure the level of turnover intention, items of an existing Wayne, Shore and Liden (1997) questionnaire was used, resulting in 5 items testing the level of turnover intention – stated on the questionnaire as intentions to quit/leave the company (Rigter, 2017). A factor analysis showed a KMO score of 0.837 (indicating an adequate sampling). The reliability of the scale was examined and concluded to be excellent ($\alpha = 0.93$).

Operational definition

Psychological hardiness. Psychological hardiness can be understood as a personality style that enables an individual to function efficiently under stress and prevents from negative health consequences. In organizational context, the three components of psychological hardiness indicate an employee's working style and efficiency. Control would indicate an employee's view of success or failure. Commitment would indicate employees' involvement at work and interest in the job organization. Challenge would indicate an employee's take on difficult and challenging work.

Turnover intention. Turnover intention is the forethought of an employee regarding his decision to leave the current organization and/or work. Turnover intention relates to voluntary turnover as opposed to involuntary turnover.

Self-efficacy. Self-efficacy indicates an employee's belief in his or her capabilities and capacities. In the organizational context, self-efficacy of employees would indicate the extent to which employees perceive themselves competent to perform the job-related tasks effectively and efficiently.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Prior to testing the hypothesized model, sample characteristics were evaluated to determine the statistical nature of the data. Table 1 indicates the test results of normality using the Shapiro-Wilk test. The criterion for normality distribution met for self-efficacy ($p < .05$) but not for psychological hardiness and turnover intention ($p > .05$). Consequently, non-parametric statistics were found appropriate to analyze the relationship between the said variables.

Table 1: Normality assessment using Shapiro Wilk's test

Variable	Statistic	df	p
Psychological Hardiness	.972	110	.022
Turnover intention	.948	110	.000
Self-efficacy	.980	110	.089

A Study of Psychological Hardiness and Self-Efficacy on Turnover Intention

Hypothesis testing

Hypotheses were analyzed using the Spearman's rank order correlation and further inferences were drawn using the analysis.

Correlational Statistics

A series of spearman rank-order correlations were conducted to determine if there were any relation between psychological hardiness, turnover intention, and self-efficacy. Table 2 indicates the test results of correlational analysis between the three variables.

Table 2: Spearman's rank order correlation that shows the relationship of Turnover Intention with Psychological Hardiness and Self-efficacy

Variables	Spearman's Correlation		
	Psychological hardiness	Turnover intention	Self-efficacy
Psychological hardiness	--	-.186*	.331**
Turnover intention	--	--	--
Self-efficacy	--	.060	--

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

**.. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Two-tailed test of significance indicated that there exists negative correlation between psychological hardiness and turnover intention $r_s(110) = -.186$, $p < .05$ Since the p-value of 0.051 is exactly at the significance level of 0.05, the null hypothesis (H1) is rejected and consequently there is sufficient evidence to say that the results are statistically significant. Correlation coefficient -0.186 indicates a weak relation between the two variables.

Similarly, a positive correlation was found between psychological hardiness and self-efficacy as $r_s(110) = .331$, $p < .05$ Since the p-value of 0.000 is less than the significance level of 0.05, the null hypothesis (H2) is rejected and consequently there is sufficient evidence to say that the results are statistically significant. Correlation coefficient .331 indicates a moderate to medium relation between the two variables.

With regards to self-efficacy and turnover intention, no significant relationship is found between the two variables as $r_s(110) = .060$, $p > .05$ Since the p-value of 0.533 is greater than the significance level of 0.05, the null hypothesis (H3) cannot be rejected and consequently there is sufficient evidence to say that the results are statistically significant. Correlation coefficient 0.60 indicates a trivial relation between the two variables.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

The statistical analysis for the independent variable – psychological hardiness and dependent variable – turnover intention reveals that since the value of correlation coefficient is significant at a .05 level, the null hypothesis is rejected. It can be concluded that there exists a negative correlation between psychological hardiness and turnover intention. Although the magnitude of the relation is weak, the direction confirms that with an increase in psychological hardiness there will be a decrease in turnover intention and vice versa. Hence, H1 is rejected. This implies that psychological hardiness might be able to influence an employees' sustainability in an organization. Additionally, the harder an employee, the more likely he/she is to continue working for an organization.

A Study of Psychological Hardiness and Self-Efficacy on Turnover Intention

In reference of psychological hardiness and self-efficacy correlation coefficient, the value was found to be significant at a .05 level indicating that the null hypothesis is rejected. It can be concluded that there is a positive correlation between psychological hardiness and self-efficacy. Although the magnitude of the relation is moderate, the direction confirms that with an increase in psychological hardiness there will be an increase in self-efficacy and vice versa. Hence, H2 is rejected. This implies that the higher an employees' self-efficacy, the harder he/she is.

Between self-efficacy and turnover, however, the correlational coefficient was greater than the .05 level of significance indicating that the null hypothesis cannot be rejected and consequently there is sufficient evidence to say that the results are statistically significant. It can be concluded that there is no significant relation between the two variables. Hence H3 is accepted. This implies that there is a negligible correlation between self-efficacy and turnover intention and the two have little to no impact on each other.

Consequently, psychological hardiness cannot predict a change in turnover intention owing to its weak relation which is validated by the correlation scores. In this scenario it is also not possible to determine the impact of the sub-variables of psychological hardiness upon turnover. However, it is established that there exists a negative relation between the two variables implying that a change in psychological hardiness will lead to a change in turnover intention in the opposite direction. But the extent to which this change may occur is subject to the external variables such as age, gender, organizational culture, etc.

Self-efficacy on the other hand, is found to be unrelated to either of the variables in a meaningful manner. However, it was observed that there is a positive relation between self-efficacy and turnover intention which is opposed to the proposed hypothesis. This points out to the fact that when an individual possesses high self-efficacy, he/she is more likely to incline towards turnover intention. The impact of this change again is questionable, nevertheless, the presence of self-efficacy can influence the presence of turnover intention if not significantly.

Thus, the impact of psychological hardiness and self-efficacy upon employee turnover intention has been determined as moderate. This is deduced in light of numerous subjective factors that impact an employee's life cycle within an organization. These factors can range from age, gender, and other demographics to organizational factors such as equity culture, environment and so on. The presence of psychological hardiness is not found to be highly compelling in determining the turnover intention of an employee. The presence of self-efficacy however is found to be moderately influential when determining turnover intention.

Limitations

The circumstances under which the study was conducted were not so conducive to the initial plan. Owing to the outbreak of the pandemic, essential and crucial elements of the study had to be translated into a virtual online format (data collection) which posed a challenge to approach the right sample. The shift in working practices also caused certain external variables such as work from home policies which could have led to a skew in the results so obtained. Since the data collection was carried out in the initial phase of the pandemic, it is possible to attribute work from home practices led to a reduction in turnover intention amongst employees which can explain the muted impact of psychological hardiness upon turnover intention. This also impacted the sample size so collected because the responses had to be filtered and audited carefully to narrow down to the right target population. A

A Study of Psychological Hardiness and Self-Efficacy on Turnover Intention

small sample is often not the best in order to carry out regression studies which was a major limitation during statistical analysis.

Recommendations

Since psychometric data is the basis of such research studies, it is unrealistic to expect a normally distributed data. Researchers must incorporate qualitative aspects to get a broader perspective into understanding the value and impact of the variables of psychological hardiness and self-efficacy. Owing to the limited number of studies on psychological hardiness, it is difficult to establish relationship with various other organizational factors. Therefore, more studies must be conducted to further deepen the understanding of the subject matter and lead it to a point where it can be put to practical use in organizations.

Future Directions

This study is presented in the motive to be a valuable part in the area of organizational psychology. This study must nudge researchers into the direction of studies correlating various organizational psychology concepts and strengthen the area of study. Furthermore, this study can be conducted in various geographical locations and at a larger sample size to understand the universal perspective of the highlighted concepts.

CONCLUSION

The current study was aimed at understanding the effect of psychological hardiness and self-efficacy on turnover intention among mid-level managers. By understanding this psychological phenomenon in relation with turnover intention, the study's focus was to determine what leads employees to stay or leave an organization. Turnover intention was studied as a dependent variable using psychological hardiness and self-efficacy as independent variable.

The statistical findings indicate that although there is a negative relationship between psychological hardiness and turnover intention, psychological hardiness is not a very good indicator of the latter. This implies that, it is established that individuals who are more likely to engage in turnover may have low psychological hardiness but the presence of that alone cannot determine turnover. Previous research studies have suggested that individuals who have high levels of hardiness also had a higher job control (Hystad, Eid & Brevik, 2011). This coincides with the findings of this study as higher hardiness is found to be associated with a lower chance of employee turnover. So, a hardier individual would have more perceived job control and consequently lesser intent to leave the organization/job. Another such research pointed out that hardiness is a strong predictor of leader performance (Bartone, Eid, Helge Johnsen, Christian Laberg & Snook, 2009) which strengthens the findings by validating that presence of hardiness has the potential to greater engagement at the workplace.

Additionally, the relationship between psychological hardiness and self-efficacy was found to be moderately positive. This indicates that individuals who possess a high level of psychological hardiness, tend to have a high degree of self-efficacy as well. This can be explained by the fact that hardiness is one's ability to resist challenging situations and overcome them whereas self-efficacy is one's belief in own abilities. Therefore, if an individual possesses good resilience, it can be concluded that he/she also has good faith and confidence in his/her own efficiency. Related studies indicated a strong correlation between hardiness and self-efficacy indicating that hardy individuals have a greater sense of work commitment and openness (Kumar Kansal & Harpreet, 2016). This confirms the study's

A Study of Psychological Hardiness and Self-Efficacy on Turnover Intention

findings and emphasizes the positive relation between the two variables. There is evidence that either of them has a considerable influence on each other as well.

When considering turnover intention, neither of the two variables show a strong relationship. The weak correlation between psychological hardiness and turnover intention, negates the possibility of either of three sub components of hardiness having an impact on turnover intention. Self-efficacy, however, was found to have a positive relationship with turnover implying that individuals who have greater faith in their own abilities are more likely to take a risk and leave their existing job looking for better opportunities.

Previous studies have successfully established external phenomenon such as job satisfaction, occupational stress, organizational commitment and so on (Shukla, Srinivasan and Chaurasia, 2013; Chandraiah, Agrawal, Marimuthu and Manoharan, 2003). The study therefore fails to establish a direct relationship between hardiness and turnover intention. Clearly it cannot be the sole predictor of turnover intention amongst employees of an organization.

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A Study of Psychological Hardiness and Self-Efficacy on Turnover Intention

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Conflict of Interest

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