

Role of Cognitive Flexibility and Employee Engagement in Determining Turnover Intentions of Employees

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Abstract : The present study attempted to understand the role of cognitive flexibility and employee engagement in predicting employees' turnover intentions. Employee turnover is a significant problem that many organizations are facing these days. Employee turnover is not only extremely expensive for the employer but also results in poor production levels. In developing countries like India, organizations once believed to have most stable employees, are facing major turnover problems. One such organization is banking organizations. Due to globalization, banks are now changing their work scenarios under which the employees have many different roles to perform. Cognitive flexibility which refers to an individual's ability to shift cognitive sets and to adapt to one's changing environment, thus seems to be an important factor that are responsible for the employee turnover in organizations. It is hypothesized that those with higher cognitive flexibility would be more able to adapt to the changing work demands of the organizations and thus would show less turnover intentions. Another factor that seems to be important in predicting turnover is employee engagement. Kahn referred to engagement in terms of the harnessing of organization members' selves to their work roles [by which they] employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances. Studies have shown a strong relationship between employee engagement and turnover intentions. Those with higher engagement with their jobs have found to show low turnover intentions. This study thus hypothesizes that employees with higher engagement will show lower levels of turnover intentions. A total of 150 bank employees (75 from private and 75 from public) participated in this study. They were administered Cognitive Flexibility Scale, Gallup Questionnaire and Intention to Stay Questionnaire along with another questionnaire asking for their demographic details. Results of the study revealed that employees with higher levels of cognitive flexibility and employee engagement show lower levels of turnover intentions. However, the effect is more prominent in case of employees of private banks. Demographic characteristics such as level of the employee and years of engagement in the current job have also been found to be influencing the relationship between cognitive flexibility, employee engagement and turnover intentions. Results of the study are interpreted in accordance to the prevalent literature and theoretical positions.

Keywords : cognitive flexibility, employee engagement, organization, turnover intentions

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