LINKING EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT, EMPLOYEE JOB SATISFACTION, EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT WITH INTENTION TO QUIET AMONG SURVIVORS OF DOWNSIZING AND RESTRUCTURING

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to examine the effects of employee empowerment, employee job satisfaction and employee engagement – on Intention to quiet among survivors of downsizing.

***Design/methodology/approach** – The paper reports a quantitative study of 158 Middle level managers and employees in supervisory positions working in large multinational companies in Sudan.*

***Findings** – Results suggest that employee empowerment, employee job satisfaction, employee engagement are negatively related to intention to quiet.*

***Originality/value** – This study is one of the rare attempts to examine the inûuence of three HRM practices on intention to quiet. The study also contributes in terms of its context. With an increasing number of multinationals starting operations in Sudan, an understanding of employee motivation has become an important concern. It therefore, provides empirical data to support theoretical models for managing and mitigating survivors' intent to quit among survivors of organizational restructuring and downsizing. The implications of these findings, which suggest crucial roles for empowerment and job satisfaction and employee engagement are discussed.*

KEYWORDS:
Employee empowerment, Job satisfaction, Employee engagement, Intention to quiet, Sudan.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Many multinational organizations to be able to cope with the demand for competitive advantage and achieving high level of effectiveness and efficiency, they use the strategy of restructuring and downsizing. The success of this strategy, however, rely on, in part, on its effect on survivors' work behaviors and attitudes. Unfortunately, increased evidences from research on survivors' work-related attitudes and behaviors related to restructuring and downsizing have indicated evidence of feelings of job insecurity, intent to quit, decline in organizational commitment, among others (Maertz Jr, Wiley, LeRouge, & Campion, 2010; Mishra & Spreitzer, 1998; Petzall, Parker, & Stoeberl, 2000; Susskind, 2007; Ugboro, 2006; Weakland, 2001).Of these, intent to quit poses the most important threat to the success of the downsizing and restructuring strategy because if not given the appropriate intention, with appropriate organizational strategies, it leads to voluntary turnover of high performing survivors on whose long-term commitment, motivation and satisfaction, the success of downsizing and restructuring and rely on (Ongori, 2007). Furthermore, intent to quit is considered to be one of the most serious predictors of voluntary turnover (Allen, Weeks, & Moffitt, 2005). This means the need for a conscious and structured organizational policies and practices to the management of survivors' adverse reactions (intent to quit) to downsizing and restructuring.

To date, there are rare numbers of studies have been done to provide empirical support for the hypothesized relationships of employee empowerment, job satisfaction and employee engagement on intention to quiet in the context of organizational downsizing and restructuring.

1.2 EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT AND INTENTION TO QUIET

One of the famous definitions of employee empowerment is Conger and Kanungo (1988). They define empowerment as a process of improving feelings of self-efficacy among employess through the identification of conditions that foster powerlessness, and through their removal by both formal organizational practices and informal techniques of proving efficacy information.

According to Conger and Kanungo (1988), the effect of empowerment is the initiation and persistence of behavior by empowered employees to accomplish task objectives. Ongori (2007) stated empowerment of employees could help to enhance the continuity of employees in organizations.

Thomas and Velthouse (1990), however, stated that the concept of empowerment is a complex concept and could not be fully explained in a one dimensional construct such as

self-efficacy. Spreitzer (1995), drawing in part from Thomas and Velthouse (1990), conceptualized empowerment as a multidimensional construct consisting of four psychological states: impact, competence, meaningfulness and self-determination. Spreitzer (1995) argued that empowerment can best be conceptualized as a higher order construct which subsumes the four ûrst order dimensions and which explains and accounts for the associations among the four psychological states. Kim and Fernandez (2017) stated that employees with more favorable attitudes toward their job and work have stronger affective ties to their organization, feel a greater sense of belonging, and are therefore less likely to seek work elsewhere. Moreover, they indicated Such practice make work more fulfilling and promote interpersonal trust, thereby leading to positive affective responses to work and organizations.

Based on the above discussion the study put the following hypothesis:

H1: Employee empowerment will have negative effect on intention to quiet.

1.3 JOB SATISFACTION AND INTENTION TO QUIET

Job satisfaction is the extent to which employees like their work. Based on perceptions, an employee expected to like or dislike their job and environment. (Ellickson, M, 2002). The greater a person's work environment fulfills his or her expectation and needs, values or personal characteristics, the greater the degree of job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is defined as a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences (Locke & Henne, 1986). Voluntary turnover studies indicates that job satisfaction as a key antecedent of turnover intention, which leads to actually leaving the company, and stated that job satisfaction has consistently negative effects on turnover intention and actual turnover. Employee turnover as result to dissatisfaction with one's job (Firth, Mellor, Moore, & Loquet, 2004). That is, when employees experience unfavorable work situations and are dissatisfied with their job, they are likely to think of quitting, reduce their efforts, and seek employment elsewhere. Job satisfaction is considered an immediate antecedent to an employee's intention to leave, and empirical tests of turnover models also suggest that job satisfaction has a direct and negative effect on turnover intention (Tzeng, 2002). Based on the above discussion the study put the following hypothesis:

H2: Job satisfaction will have a negative effect on intention to quiet.

1.4 EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND INTENTION TO QUIET

Schaufeli and Bakker's (2003) deûne the engagement, as a positive, fulûlling work-related state of mind that is characterised by vigour, dedication and absorption. The consensus from the employee engagement literature is that employers can beneû t from an engaged workforce. Although the relationship between employee engagement and turnover intentions has been researched in recent years (May, Gilson, & Harter, 2004), the prediction of turnover intentions using employee engagement among survivors of downsizing and restructuring is a new earea of reseach.Sibiya, Buitendach, Kanengoni, and Bobat (2014) stated engagement triggers the simultaneous employment and expression of individual's in task behaviours that promote connections to work and others. Engagement thus focuses on how the psychological

experiences of work and the work contexts shape the process of people presenting and absenting themselves from task performance (Kahn, 1990). Work engagement thus consists of an employee's intellectual connection with the company, which includes factors such as his support of and belief in the organization's objectives, having a sense of belonging and pride in working for the company, acting in ways that support the success of the organization, a willingness to stay with the company despite other opportunities and frequently going above and beyond normal expectations to help the company succeed (Sibiya et al., 2014). Accordingly discussion the study put the following hypothesis:

H3: Employee engagement will have a negative effect on intention to quiet.

1.5 METHOD

Survivors of middle level managers and employees in supervisory positions were selected to participate in the study in multinational companies that experienced downsizing and restructuring. Participants included 158 managers. The average age was 36; 35 percent were female. Participants had been in their current job for an average of five years, and in their organization an average of eight years. They had on average 12 years of work experience.

1.6 MEASURES

Intention to Quit was measured by Colarelli's (1984) three-item scale. A sample item is, "I am planning to search for a new job during the next twelve months" (0.82). Participants responded to all items for the above scales using a ûve-point Likert-type scale with anchors (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree.

Employee Empowerment Spreitzer's (1995) 12-item scale was used to measure psychological empowerment. The scale consists of four dimensions, each containing three items: meaning (0.87),self-determination (0.81), competence (0.81), and impact (0.88). An example meaning item is: "The work I do is meaningful to me". Responses were rated on a ûve-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree).

Job Satisfaction was measured by Cammann et al. (1983) three-item scale. A sample items is, "All in all, I am satisûed with my job" (0.84). Participants responded to all items for the above scales using a ûve-point Likert-type scale with anchors (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree.

Employee Engagement was measured by the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) based on the definition of employee engagement as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication and absorption. In this study, vigour was assessed by six items that refer to high levels of energy and resilience, the willingness to invest effort, not being easily fatigued and persistence in the face of difficulties (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003). Dedication was assessed by five items that refer to deriving a sense of significance from one's work, feeling enthusiastic and proud about one's job, and feeling inspired and challenged by the job. Lastly, absorption was measured by six items that refer to being totally and happily immersed in one's work and having difficulties detaching oneself from work, so that time passes quickly and one forgets everything else that is around. Participants responded to all items for the above scales using a ûve-point Likert-type scale with anchors (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree.

1.7 RESULTS

Means, standard deviations, bivariate correlations, and Cronbach's alpha reliabilities, for all variables included in the measurement model are reported in Table I & Table II. , All correlations were at moderate level and none of them is considered high (0.90 or above) (Hair, Black., Babin, & Anderson, 2010). Hence, multicollinearity was not an issue in this research.

Table I

Constructs	Mean	Std. Deviation
Employee empowerment	4.10	0.69
Job satisfaction	3.90	0.78
Employee Engagement	3.04	0.99
Intention to quiet	2.73	1.07

Table II

	EE	JS	EN	IQ
Employee empowerment	1			
Job satisfaction	0.26**	1		
Employee Engagement	0.36**	0.34**	1	
Intention to quiet	-0.30**	-0.31**	-0.25**	1

As predicted, employee empowerment was negatively correlated to intention to quiet (r= -0.30, n=158, p< 0.01), furthermore job satisfaction is negatively correlated to intention to quiet (r= -0.31, n=158, p< 0.01), and employee engagement and intention to quiet (r= -0.25, n=158, p< 0.01). All correlations were at moderate level and none of them is considered high (0.90 or above) (Hair et al., 2010). Hence, multicollinearity was not an issue in this research.

The results indicate that the predictors variables explained significant amount of the variance in intention to quiet (R^2 =0.42 p<0.001). With respect to study hypotheses, employee empowerment (-0.21, p<0.001), job satisfaction (-0.19, p<0.001) and employee engagement (-0.16, p<0.01). These results provide support for H1, H2, H3.

1.8 DISCUSSION

This study addresses an important problem among survivors of organizational restructuring and downsizing (intent to quit), thus this paper contributes to this emerging stream of research on this understudied area of the survivor literature as indicated by Ugboro (2006) fewer studies in the survivors' literature have focused on survivors in nonmanagement position than those in management and supervisory positions. The need to focus on managers and supervisors has emerged in recent years for two reasons. First, earlier waves of lay offs targeted employees in non- managerial positions. In recent years, however, the focus has shifted to middle level managers and supervisors as organizations are delayered in an effort to reduce bureaucracy and administrative costs. As a result, they are now more vulnerable to restructuring and downsizing than those in nonmanagement positions. The results both extend and corroborate many previous ûndings in an expanded and theoretically grounded context The results of this paper give managers some guidance on how empowerment and job satisfaction strategies can be applied to the problem of intent to quit and voluntary turnover among survivors whose engagement, commitment and loyalty are need to achieve the company's objectives of downsizing. By increasing survivors' sense of empowerment, satisfaction and employee engagement as suggested by this paper, managers can use both as organizational strategies enhance the performance survivors. In this essence, managers are, therefore, encouraged to formulate and implement empowerment and satisfaction strategies that allow and encourage employees to respond the problems and to provide them the resources and power to do so within supportive environment. Recent research indicate that the failure of most organizations to get the potential and expected benefits of downsizing, partly, to the lack of effective empowerment and satisfaction strategies to mitigate their organizational and personal consequences, while organizations are usually prepared to meet the needs of those being dismissed, they are often unprepared for the strong emotions, lengthy adjustment period for the survivors.

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