Do I want to leave my organization? - My manager has all the Blame

Ana Moreira[1, 2, 3]*, Raquel Espadinha[1], Alexandra Ferreira[1], Mariana Polquinhas[1], Érica Marques[1] and Sofia Gomes[1]

[1]School of Psychology, ISPA-Instituto Universitário, Rua do Jardim do Tabaco 34, 1149-041 Lisboa, Portugal

[2]APPsyCI-Applied Psychology Research Center Capabilities & Inclusion, ISPA-Instituto Universitário, R. do Jardim do Tabaco 34, 1149-041 Lisbon, Portugal

[3]Faculdade de Ciências e Tecnologia, Universidade Europeia, Quinta do Bom Nome, Estr. da Correia 53, 1500-210 Lisboa, Portugal

*Corresponding author: Ana Moreira, School of Psychology, ISPA-Instituto Universitário, Rua do Jardim do Tabaco 34, 1149-041 Lisboa, Portugal.

Abstract

This study investigates whether direct management is why some employees intend to leave the organization where they work. This is a qualitative study. Interviews were used as the data collection method. Three individuals were interviewed, chosen at random from among passengers leaving a railway terminal in Lisbon, Portugal. The results show that only one does not want to leave the organization where he works. The reasons given by the two participants for wanting to leave the organization are lack of communication, authoritarian management, lack of empathy, and lack of respect, among others.

Keywords: Management; Turnover intentions; Commitment; Qualitative study

Introduction

This research paper aims to investigate and deduce how the type of leadership of the direct manager and the type of organizational commitment that workers have towards the organization where they work compromise their permanence. This work was based on a news report published by CNN in 2023, written by Joana Nabais Ferreira [1] with the title "80% of workers admit to leaving the company because of their direct bosses", which reports on the data from the study "What is the Quality of our Leadership? The Importance of Empathy", developed by Community in 2022. The study refers to the skills that its sample points out as most important in a leader, the evaluation of the type of leadership of direct managers, and the percentages of the population who, at some point in their career, have considered changing companies because of direct managers. To consolidate and complete the data obtained through this study, we turned to the study by Martins et al. [2] entitled "Leadership and Turnover Intentions in a Public Hospital: The Mediating Effect of Organisational Commitment and Moderating Effect by Activity Department", on the effect of leadership on turnover intentions and whether this relationship is mediated by organisational commitment and moderated by the activity department, in a sample collected at the Professor Fernando Pessoa Hospital (HFF) in Portugal. In addition, three statements were collected through interviews at Santa Apolónia station, addressing the direct influence of the interviewees' leadership on their intentions to leave the company where they are employed. They were also asked to offer suggestions for improving this relationship.

Literature Review

According to the study carried out by Sara Midões on a total of 268 employees working in Portugal in 2022, to understand how the quality of leadership is perceived in Portugal, measuring the impact of the relationship with leadership on a set of variables, as well as gauging individuals' perceptions of the positive and empathetic

attitudes and practices of their direct managers, it was concluded that around 80% of Portuguese workers have already considered changing jobs because of their direct manager, and around half even ended up resigning. On the positive side, 57% said they had stayed with the company because of their direct manager [1]. As for the possible origin of these results, the lack of empathy on the part of leaders stood out, considering that 75% of employees pointed out this trait as essential in a person who holds the position of boss and 96% fully agree with the idea that an empathetic leader is more effective, thus promoting a very positive change in teams and/or organizations. Thus, it is clear that empathy is identified as the skill most frequently mentioned as essential in a leader, followed by assertiveness (48%), goal orientation (47%), authenticity (44%) and positive energy (43%) [1].

Perceived Organizational Support (POS) a concept that refers to the overall opinions that employees form regarding the organization's appreciation of their services and contributions, as well as the employer's concern for the well-being of its employees [3], it was found that professionals in the 26-40 age group tended to be less demanding of their employer, while employees in the 41-55 age group showed more dissatisfaction with it. This study also concluded that, in the eyes of any employee, the role of the representative leader is very important, as they play a fundamental role in the well-being and progress of the company. Ideally, all leaders should be able to maintain a certain kind of closeness to their employees, taking an interest in their professional and personal lives [1]. The main objective of the study by Martins et al. [2] was to study the effect of leadership on turnover intentions and whether this relationship is mediated by organizational commitment, which is the psychological state that characterizes the relationship between employees and the organization and influences their decision to remain in the organization [4] and moderated by the department of activity. The two types of leadership addressed in this study were transformational and transactional. The former is a leadership style focused on inspiring, motivating and developing team members, characterized by a positive and proactive approach [5]. This leadership manifests through various behaviours, such as inspiring motivation, individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, and encouraging and promoting employee optimism [6]. The second is a form of leadership based on managing interactions between leaders and followers through rewards, punishments and incentives. The leader sets expectations and deadlines to be met, and followers receive appreciation or rewards only when they achieve these goals [7].

The data for this study was collected after the COVID-19 pandemic, when society recognized the efforts and dedication of health professionals. According to the answers given to the questionnaires by the 477 employees of the Professor Fernando Pessoa Hospital from various departments, it can be concluded that the levels of turnover intention were above average, alerting us to the fact that most of the participants in the study have great intentions of leaving the hospital soon. The type of organisational commitment varied according to the department. However, the department to which the professional belongs did not moderate the relationship between leadership and turnover intentions. Regarding the impact of leadership styles on the other variables under study, it was possible to verify the existence of a negative and significant effect of transformational leadership on turnover intentions, contradicting the perspectives of the literature [2,3]. This occurs when a leader motivates employees to play a critical role in decisions, guiding them to focus beyond short-term objectives, influencing them to raise levels of maturity and ideals, as well as encouraging self-actualisation concerns in each employee [2,7], which results in a desire to remain in the organisation. In addition, this leadership style positively and significantly impacts the levels of affective and normative commitment, referring to emotional attachment, involvement with the organisation and the feeling of belonging [3]. The feeling of obligation to remain in the organisation due to the duty of loyalty to it [8], respectively, since a transformational leader, by stimulating and motivating employees, creates affective and moral ties with the organisation.

This confirmed the negative and significant effect of affective and normative commitment on turnover intentions, results that are in line with several authors, including Meyer et al. [9], who argue that organisational commitment reduces turnover intentions. However, calculated commitment, a concept referring to the cost of leaving the organisation perceived by the employee, which makes them stay because they need to, showed a positive and significant effect on turnover intentions, contradicting the existing literature. Transactional leadership style was shown to positively affect turnover intentions and negatively affect the three components of organisational commitment. These results lead us to conclude that organisations should be concerned with fostering leaders who assume a more transformational than transactional leadership style, since transformational leadership has an impact on increasing the affective and normative commitments of professional employees (Fiaz et al. cited by Martins et al. [2] as well as on reducing turnover intentions, 2023), as well as reducing their turnover intentions [2], Studies such as that by Community (2022, cited by Midões, 2023) and Martins et al. [2], which study concepts such as turnover intention and the variables that influence it, are very important for understanding the factors that influence the functioning of a company or organisation, since according to Oliveira et al., the concept of turnover or turnover intention refers to employees who are "disconnected" from their employer, and is of great importance since, in addition to all its adverse effects on the company's productivity, it also leads to reflection on the part of the "connected" employees about what is happening in the company. One of the reasons given by the authors for this turnover intention is dissatisfaction with working conditions. In order to understand what the turnover intention depends on, a study by Brannick pointed to the poor relationship between the employee and the employer, lack of training and incentives as reasons. Siqueira and Gomide added problems such as lack of career progression, type of manager, policies, conditions, and personal motivation.

According to Asrar-ul-Haq & Kuchinke [10], the organisational

level is just as important as the financial level for the smooth running of a company. In addition, the existing management style directly impacts employee productivity and organisation, which also affects the company as a whole. Saari and Judge [10] believe that transformational management can result in employee satisfaction [10]. To validate this perspective, Asrar-ul-Haq & Kuchinke [10] conducted a study at a bank in Pakistan in which they evaluated various leadership styles. Their findings corroborated the observations in the literature, indicating that the relationship between the transactional and transformational styles is associated with the company's effectiveness, satisfaction, productivity and success. In contrast, the "let it happen" style, characterised by a set of avoidance attitudes when it comes to making decisions, resulting in no relationship between bosses and their employees, proved to be detrimental in terms of effectiveness and employee satisfaction [10]. Thus, this study reveals that effective leaders incorporate both transactional and transformational styles simultaneously, thus ensuring maximum effectiveness on the part of their employees. In contrast, passive and less influential leaders have an extremely negative impact on their companies and employees [10].

Method

Data collection and participants

This is a qualitative study whose participants' responses were obtained through an interview. The interviews were carried out on the street in Lisbon, Portugal. The participants were chosen randomly from the people leaving a railway terminal. Several individuals were approached, but only three agreed to answer the questions posed by the researchers. One of the participants works in sales, another in catering, and another in maintenance, technical and cleaning work.

Questionnaire

Before starting the interview, the interviewers made the following presentation: We are students at ISPA-IU, and we are carrying out work on the well-being of workers in their companies and the impact of direct management on this. We would like to know if you would be willing to give us a testimonial by answering a few questions. The questionnaire consisted of the following questions:

1. Good afternoon: first of all, we'd like to know what role you play in your company.

2. Have you ever thought about quitting your job because of your direct boss?

3. What makes you want to stay with your company?

4. What measures can a boss take to ensure the well-being and satisfaction of his employees?

5. Result

Only one of the interviewees isn't considering resigning because of his boss.

Figure 1

The participants then described the situations that led them to this thinking.

The participant was not considering leaving because his line manager mentioned the monthly salary and benefits. The participants who were considering leaving because of their line manager mentioned the lack of communication, lack of respect, lack of empathy, the authoritarian style of the manager, shouting, lack of agreement and individualism. As measures to remain in the organisation, they mentioned, among others, improved communication, and a better work-life balance.

The most frequently mentioned words are shown below:

Figure 2

Conclusion

After analyzing the news report and the rest of the literature, it can be seen that there is a great deal of concern about the type of leadership adopted by direct managers and, consequently, what comes from it, with workers showing that they prefer a kind and positive approach, characteristic of a transformational leader who shows an interest in stimulating and motivating their employees, making them feel more emotionally attached to their organization. Also, according to the results of the report and the data presented in the articles above, it can be seen that when a leader encourages their employees to play a more critical role in decision-making and when they can encourage the concerns of each employee, it makes them want to stay longer in the organization where they work - reducing the intention of turnover. After collecting the testimonies, it became even more apparent that most Portuguese workers are unhappy in their work due to the attitudes of their direct bosses, such as lack of empathy, consideration for the employee's opinion or authoritarian attitudes. In addition to adopting a more empathetic and flexible attitude, one of the interviewees said that it was essential and motivating to adopt measures to apply salary bonuses. Having said this, and as Torres (2013, cited by Cote, 2017) points out, it is possible to say that what defines a great leader of the 21st century is the ability to maintain a particular advantage in the global economy, invest in technology, invest in diversity, promote ethics and personal and company values and maintain relationships with those who show an interest in the company, while anticipating opportunities, looking to the future and being prepared for anything, having to leave their comfort zone and not be afraid to take the next step.

Conflict of Interest

No conflict of interest.

Acknowledgement

References

1. Ferreira JN (2023) 80% of workers admit to leaving the company because of their direct bosses. CNN Portugal.

2. Martins P, Nascimento G, Moreira A (2023) Leadership and Turnover Intentions in a Public Hospital: The Mediating Effect of Organisational Commitment and Moderating Effect by Activity Department. Administrative Sciences 13(1): 18.

3. Macário CA, Ribeiro C, Pereira P (2020) The contribution of organizational commitment and psychological empowerment to positive organizations. Management and Development (28): 29-55.

4. Allen NJ, Meyer JP (1991) A Three-Component Conceptualization of Organizational Commitment. Human Resource Management Review 1: 61-89.

5. Burns JM (1978) Leadership. New York: Harper & Row.

6. Tepper BJ, Dimotakis N, Lambert LS, Koopman J, Matta FK, et al. (2018) Examining follower responses to transformational leadership from a dynamic, person-environment fit perspective. Academy of Management Journal, 61(4): 1343-1368.

7. Bass BM (1997) Does the transactional-transformational leadership paradigm transcend organizational and national boundaries? American Psychologist 52(2): 130-139.

8. Böhrt Raúl, Larrea Patricia (2018) Relationship between normative commitment and perceived organizational support in office employees. Ajayu Scientific Dissemination Body of the Department of Psychology UCBSP 16(2): 220-251.

9. Meyer John P, David J Stanley, Lynne Herscovitch, Laryssa Topolnytsky (2002) Affective, continuance, and normative commitment to the organization: A meta-analysis of antecedents, correlates, and consequences. Journal of Vocational Behaviour 61: 20-52.

10. Asrar-ul-Haq M, Kuchinke KP (2016) Impact of leadership styles on employees' attitude towards their leader and performance: Empirical evidence from Pakistani banks. Future Business Journal 2(1): 54-64.

To Submit Your Article Click Here: **Submit Article**
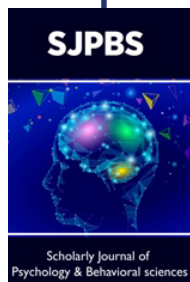
Scholarly Journal of Psychology and Behavioral Sciences

Assets of Publishing with us

- Global archiving of articles
- Immediate, unrestricted online access
- Rigorous Peer Review Process
- Authors Retain Copyrights
- Unique DOI for all articles