

Employee Turnover in Non-Profit Sector: A Systematic Literature Review

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Employee Turnover in Non-Profit Sector: A Systematic Literature Review

ABSTRACT

High employee turnover within non-profit organizations (NPOs) constitutes a substantial expense, undermining the organization's effectiveness and posing sustainability challenges. The literature on employee turnover in the non-profit sector is expanding, yet lacks comprehensive and consolidated insights. This study conducts a systematic literature review (SLR) to consolidate existing research studies on employee turnover within the non-profit sector. The systematic literature review analyzes the results of 43 studies and presents them within an integrated framework. Our review uncovered that the existing body of literature could be categorized into four overarching research themes of factors influencing employee turnover in NPOs, namely, human resource policies and practices, organizational climate, job factors and individual attributes. This SLR suggests potential research directions for academics and provides valuable implications for both theoretical development and practical application.

Keywords

non-profit organizations, employee turnover, non-profit workforce, systematic literature review

Track: Human Resource Management

INTRODUCTION

Employee turnover, a persistent global challenge impacting organizational productivity, performance, and success, has been a concern for years (Andrus, 2021; Gebregziabher et al., 2020; Kakar et al., 2023). The concept involves workers' movement within the employee market, spanning transitions between different organizations, jobs, and states of employment and unemployment (Abbasi and Hollman, 2000). In 1977, Price offered a definition for "employee turnover", characterizing it as the ratio of total employees leaving during a designated timeframe to the average organizational employees for that same period. This concept functions as a key measure for assessing workforce dynamics and the stability of an organization, providing valuable insights into how employees depart from the workforce compared to the total number of employees. Employee turnover, as defined by Selden and Moynihan (2000), comprises voluntary turnover which involves employees resigning of their own choice; involuntary turnover, which occurs due to termination or layoff; and retirements, which happen after employees fulfill designated service requirements and choose to leave the workforce. Organizations face challenges when it comes to voluntary turnover (Selden and Sowa, 2015). Turnover rates above 20% are considered to damage an organization's human capital and overall effectiveness because the replacement cost of an employee can be substantial, ranging from 90% to 120% of their annual salary (Walker-Schmidt, Kaul and Crocker Papadakis, 2022). This issue is more concerning to non-profit organizations (NPOs) because nearly 45% of non-profit employees are expected to seek new career opportunities by 2025 (Strub, 2020). Non-profit organizations hold considerable societal importance as they play a pivotal role in determining the quality of social services and, consequently, the overall welfare of society (Cho and Song, 2017). Their efforts are primarily directed towards ensuring the sustainable delivery of various social services and fostering socio-economic development (Tan and Yeap, 2021). Recently, Non-profit organizations have experienced rapid growth due to changes in public service delivery, increased social activism, and a growing emphasis on corporate responsibilities (Casey, 2016; Philip and Arrowsmith, 2020). Employees within this sector play a substantial role in delivering human services (Modi and Sahi, 2017). While non-profit organizations heavily depend on regular employees to achieve their objectives, concerns persist about the ability to retain competent and satisfied regular employees (Knapp, Smith and Sprinkle, 2017; Light, 2000). Employee turnover remains a critical issue for several non-profit organizations (Selden and Sowa, 2015). Recent data indicates that 86% of non-profit organizations struggle with retaining their employees (Nonprofit HR, 2023). Non-profit organizations are profoundly affected by turnover, especially in employee-intensive contexts where human resources play a critical role (An, 2021; Pynes, 2008). For non-profits operating with limited employees, employee turnover could dramatically impact organizational operations (Selden and Sowa, 2015). Employee turnover incurs high costs, including recruiting and training new employees. Excess turnover erodes organizational social capital and poses a challenge to service quality, affecting beneficiaries' satisfaction levels (Andrews, 2017; Bittschi, Pennerstorfer and Schneider, 2017; Hayes et al., 2012; Leana and van Buren, 1999). Direct costs of turnover involve expenses such as advertising, the time invested by the human resources team, training for new employees, and overtime pay for existing employees. However, the actual turnover costs extend beyond immediate management issues. It also damages employee morale and compromises the quality of services, affecting beneficiaries' welfare (Kim and Lee, 2007). In recent years, non-profit organizations started adopting business strategies and sophisticated human resource management techniques to operate in this intensely challenging environment (Bartram, Cavanagh and Hoye, 2017; Dolnicar and Lazarevski, 2009; Hopkins and Dowell, 2021; Studer, 2016), so the

effectiveness of non-profit organizations has been a central point of attention in both theoretical discussion and practical consideration (Ebrahim and Rangan, 2010; Jun and Shiau, 2011; Lecy, Schmitz and Swedlund, 2011; Valeau, Willems and Parak, 2016; Willems, Boenigk and Jegers, 2014). The body of literature concerning employee turnover within the non-profit sector is expanding (AbouAssi, McGinnis Johnson and Holt, 2019; Kakar et al., 2023; Philip and Arrowsmith, 2020), but a comprehensive review of this research has yet to be undertaken. Scholarly understanding of this topic is fragmented, making it difficult to develop an integrated framework in explaining the phenomena comprehensively. To the best of our knowledge, a dearth of systematic literature reviews specifically addressing factors influencing employee turnover in non-profit organizations exists. This systematic review could offer valuable insights to both scholars and practitioners by developing an integrated framework. Scholars could use such a review to understand key factors in the literature and shape their future research accordingly, while practitioners could use the findings to identify crucial factors pertinent to develop appropriate strategies to address them. Given these considerations, there is a clear need to consolidate the existing literature on factors influencing employee turnover in non-profit organizations. Thus, this study aims to address this gap through a systematic literature review (SLR) by following the guidelines of the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) checklist (Moher et al., 2015) to answer the following research questions (RQs). These are

RQ1. What is the current research status and profile regarding timeline, geographical scope, source journals, research method, and theories?

RQ2. What are the key themes emerging from the review?

RQ3. What are the notable gaps identified in the research profile and themes providing scope for future research?

This systematic literature review has addressed RQ1 by presenting a profile of the studies reviewed. Among the 43 research studies included in this review, their publication spans from 1993 to 2023, indicating the ongoing relevance of the research topic within the recent literature on employee turnover in non-profit organizations. RQ2 is addressed through a detailed analysis of the content found in the reviewed studies. The response to RQ3 involves synthesizing the findings from these studies by contributing a comprehensive framework derived from its findings. The insights from this framework pave the way for future research agendas. The two key contributions of this study include (a) synthesizing existing literature on employee turnover in non-profit organizations and (b) offering a framework to guide researchers exploring this subject.

METHOD

We aimed to conduct an extensive review by synthesizing literature focusing on employee turnover in the non-profit sector. We used the systematic literature review method to accomplish the objectives of the study. In contrast to conventional methods, the systematic literature review approach offers various advantages, as it can transparently, systematically, and reproducibly synthesize the literature (Tranfield, Denyer and Smart, 2003). The literature search and screening process are outlined in Figure 1, following the guidelines of the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) checklist (Moher et al., 2015).

Initially, we chose Scopus and Web of Science (WoS) as databases because of their extensive inclusion of multiple research areas and subjects (Kaur et al., 2021). In the prior literature, researchers have used different terms as a synonym for non-profit, employee and turnover respectively. Hence, we used keywords (ngo* OR nongovernment* OR non-government* OR nonprofit* OR non-profit* OR “human service” * OR “third sector” * AND retention* OR turnover* OR quit* AND employee* OR staff* OR worker* OR labor*) into search strings using * and Boolean logic. Additionally, we utilized the connectors “OR” and “AND” within the search criteria, limiting the timeline to any date before August 31, 2023. Subsequently, we then executed the search strings on both databases to search for the title, abstract and keywords.

The initial search in Scopus and Web of Science, with the above keywords, generated 630 studies. These include Articles, Book chapters, Conference papers, Reviews and other types of documents in all languages and subject areas. To review the literature systematically, we used several inclusion and exclusion criteria to refine the studies. To begin with, other than research articles were excluded, and the remaining 513 articles were further excluded based on their subject area and language. Only English articles pertaining to subjects like social sciences, business and management, economics, psychology, arts and humanities, and multi-disciplinary were included. This inclusion and exclusion process led to 232 articles. Of the 232 studies taken forward, 12 articles already listed in Scopus, leading to their exclusion, resulted in a combined total of 210 articles. To ensure that only the articles that are pertinent to the focused area are selected, analysis of the article is conducted by a meticulous reading of the title and abstract. As a result, 103 articles were excluded for their irrelevance. The remaining 107 articles were taken forward for detailed analysis involving comprehensive reading of full articles. Seventy-six articles were further excluded for not being related to the topic taken, resulting in 31 articles being retained at this stage. In the last step, as followed by Chaudhary et al. (2021), we used Google Scholar search and citation chaining search for articles per our exclusion and inclusion criteria to ensure that all relevant studies were included. This resulted in an increase in the final selected studies to 43.

RESEARCH PROFILING

The research profile in this review includes descriptive statistics like, a timeline of year-wise publication (Fig. 2), geographical scope (Fig. 3), a list of source journals (Fig. 4), the research method (Fig. 5) and theories (Fig.6).

Timeline

As illustrated in Fig. 2, research on employee turnover in non-profit organizations began in 1993, with the most significant number of studies published in 2017 and 2020. Preceding 21st century only one publication was identified, after that, the research started gaining momentum in current 21st century with seven publications in first decade, 23 publications in second decade and nine publications in third decade so far (2021-2023). This trend indicates the research on non-profit organizations is gaining popularity, particularly concerning employee turnover. This increase may be due to changes in the non-profit sector, such as the upsurge in the number of non-profit organizations and intensified competition among them (Laurett, do Paço and do Rosario Leitão Dinis, 2019).

Employee Turnover in Non-Profit Sector: A Systematic Literature Review

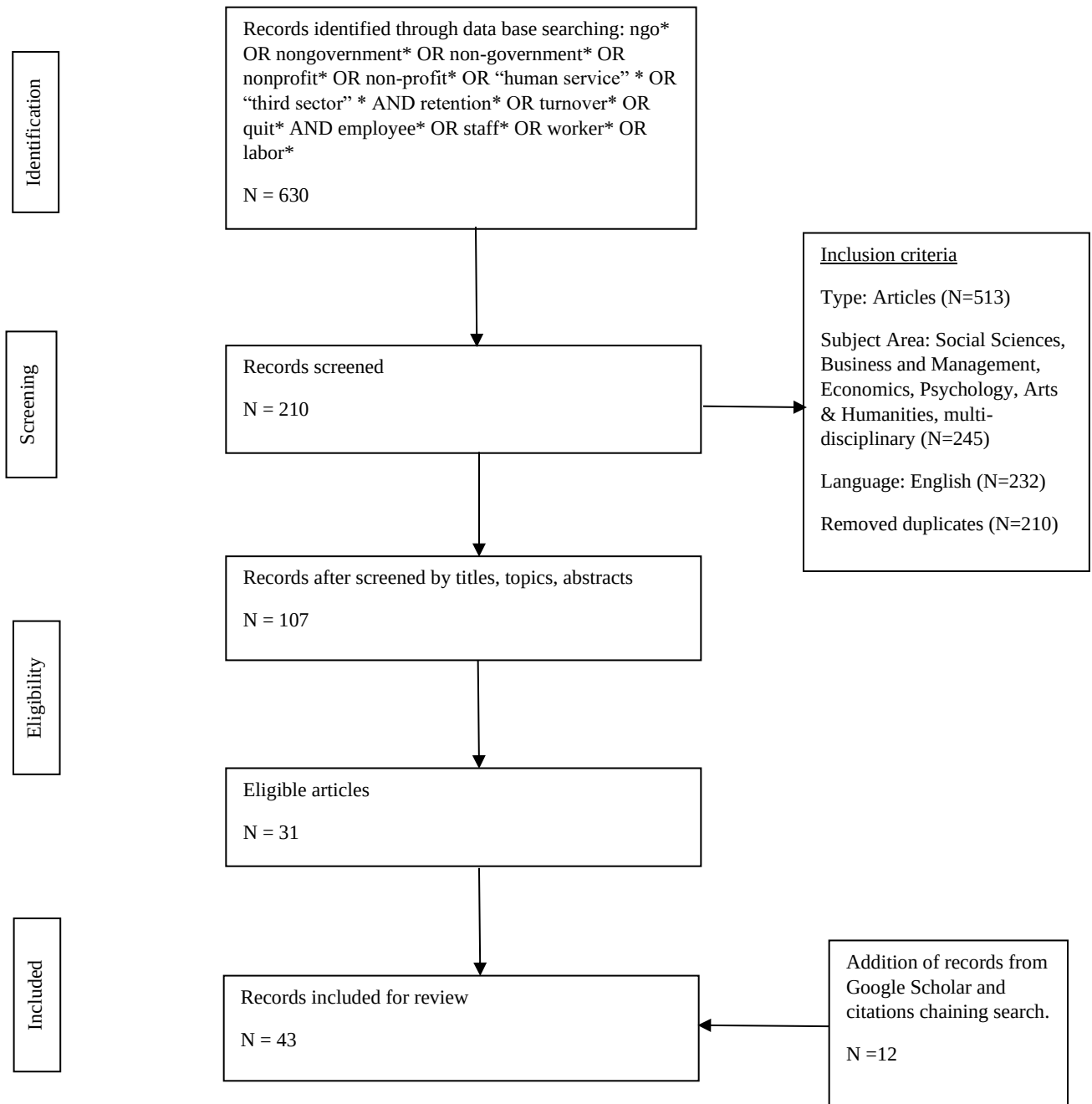


Figure 1. The literature search and inclusion process flow diagram is based on the PRISMA framework (Moher et al., 2015).

Geographic Scope

The geographic scope of the reviewed studies is presented in Fig 3. The figure represents countries with more than one research publication only. Countries with a single research publication are included in others. The majority of the research studies were carried out in the United States (n = 18), followed by China and Canada with four and three studies, respectively.

Employee Turnover in Non-Profit Sector: A Systematic Literature Review

Most of the studies are from western countries, and very few are from developing countries where the role of non-profit organizations is more critical for development (Rohman, 2020).

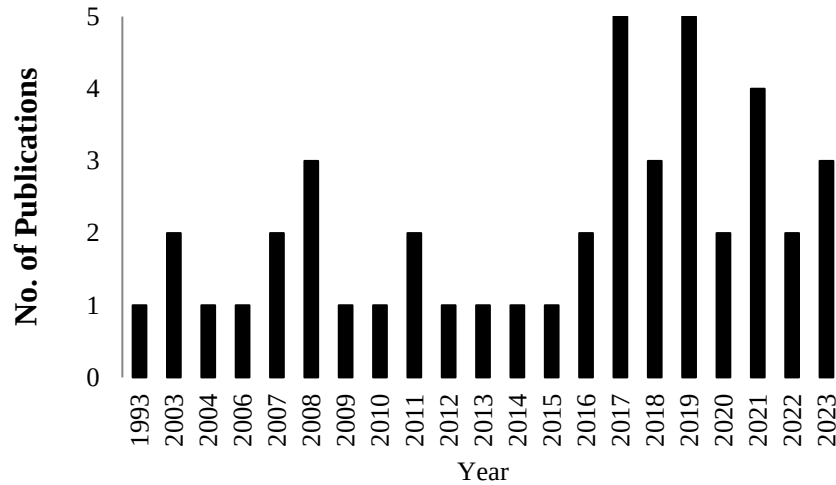


FIGURE 2. Year-wise publications

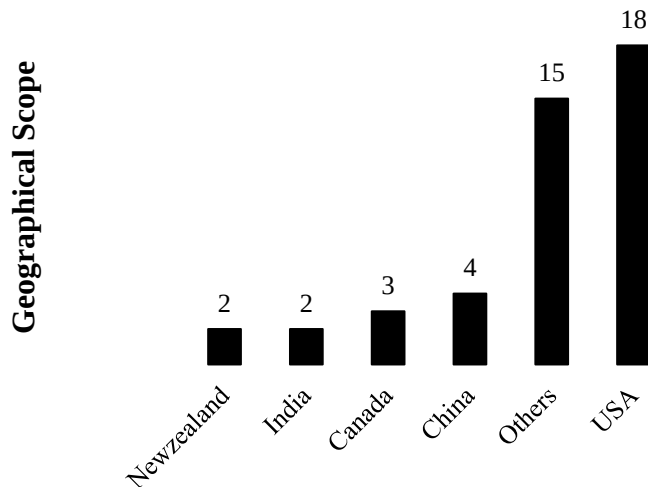


FIGURE 3. The geographical scope of studies

Source Journals

The SLR revealed that studies mostly are from Review of Public Personnel Administration (n=7), Nonprofit Management and Leadership (n=5), Children and Youth Services Review (n=3), Human Service Organizations: Management, Leadership & Governance (n=3), Frontiers in

Psychology (n=2), Journal of Social Service Research (n=2), Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly (n=2), Public Personnel Management (n=2).

Research Methods

Studies included in the review have employed a variety of research methodologies to explore the factors influencing employee turnover in non-profit organizations empirically. Following McLeod, Payne and Evert (2016) categorizing empirical papers into qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods, the current systematic literature review adheres to a similar classification. Out of 43 articles, 32 were quantitative, seven were qualitative, and four studies utilized a mixed-method approach.

Theories

Prior studies have utilized several theories to examine the various factors influencing employee turnover in the non-profit sector. The most used theoretical frameworks were the job demand-resource model (Abukhalifa, Kamil and Yong, 2023; Deng et al., 2021; Geisler, Berthelsen and Muhonen, 2019) and the social exchange theory (Kakar et al., 2023; Modi and Sahi, 2017). Additionally, the conservation of resource theory, equity theory, two-factor hygiene-motivation theory, and person-organization fit theory have also been employed. The review suggests that most of these theoretical frameworks were utilized for studying factors underlying employee turnover in NPOs.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The selected articles for this systematic literature review were thematically analyzed to identify the factors underlying employee turnover in non-profit sectors. The existing literature suggests 19 independent variables and four mediating variables influencing employee turnover in non-profit sectors. All these variables were classified into four themes: Human Resource (HR) Policies and practices, organizational climate, Job factors and individual attributes.

Theme 1: HR Policies and Practices

Pay and Benefits

Monetary external rewards significantly impact turnover within the non-profit sector (McGinnis Johnson and Ng, 2016). According to Gursoy, Maier and Chi (2013) and Van de Walle, Steijn and Jilke (2015), employees expect pay and benefits to be crucial aspects of their efforts in their workplace. McGinnis Johnson and Ng (2016) emphasize that millennial non-profit managers are inclined to change sectors due to pay and benefits issues. Ryan and Deci (2000) assert that the nature of intrinsic/extrinsic motivation is very complex. Despite valuing personal job satisfaction over higher pay or formal acknowledgements, non-profit workers expect more from their organizations (Akingbola and van den Berg, 2016; Quarter et al., 2001). Non-profit employees often prioritize intrinsic rewards over competitive wages due to the nature of their roles (Akingbola and van den Berg, 2016; Frank, 1996; Light, 2002; Rose-Ackerman, 1996). Creating suitable incentive structures, drawing from agency and stewardship theories, can aid in recruiting and retaining non-profit employees (Van Puyvelde et al., 2013). However, little evidence supports the

Employee Turnover in Non-Profit Sector: A Systematic Literature Review

idea that pay increases lead to prolonged employment in non-profits, explaining that pay is not a primary expectation in non-profit organizations (McGinnis Johnson and Ng, 2016). Despite their

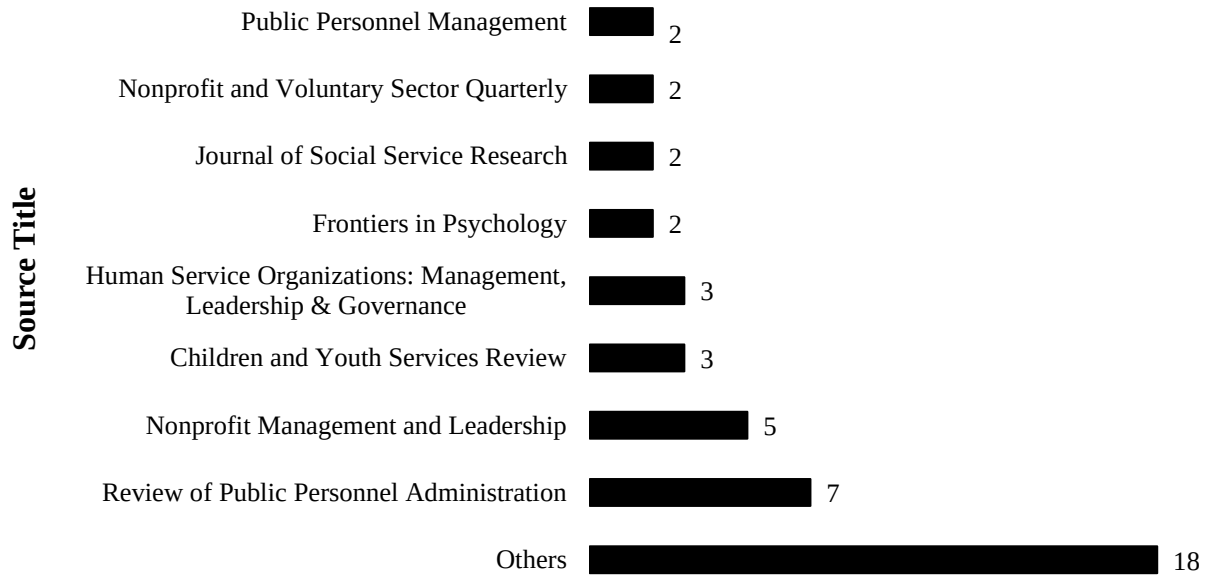


FIGURE 4. Publication source title

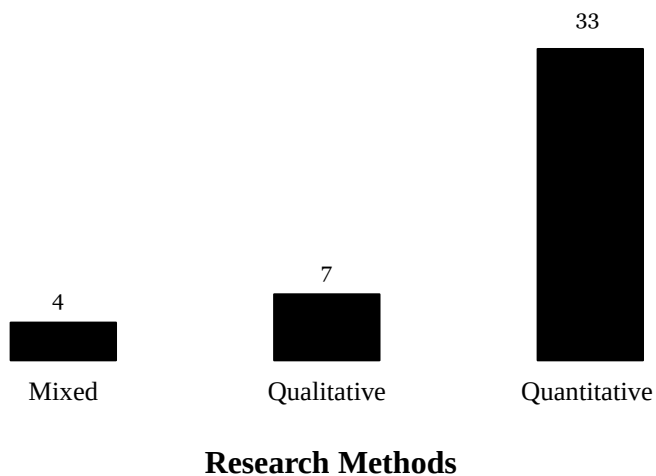


FIGURE 5. Research Methods

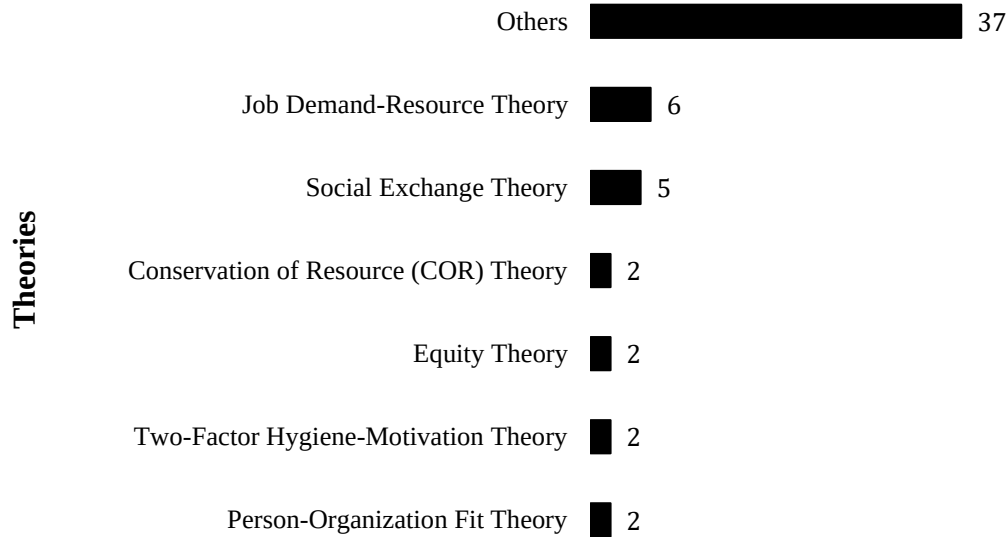


FIGURE 6. Prominent theories employed by studies

lesser significance on turnover, rewards and recognition still influences employees' sense of connection to the organization (Akingbola and van den Berg, 2016), and they have a strong correlation to turnover intention (Kim and Lee, 2007). From the review, it is understood that the literature is contradictory regarding the significance of pay and benefits in non-profit employee turnover.

Career Development

Promotion and career advancement are key factors, with employees feeling stagnated in their career growth and more likely to leave the organization (Cahalane and sites, 2008; Strand and Dore, 2009; Zlotnik et al., 2005). The fairness built into organizational policies concerning promotion selection and employee compensation holds significance for employees (Augsberger et al., 2012; Mor Barak, Nissly and Levin, 2001). However, the need for more promotional opportunities continues to challenge non-profit organizations to attract and retain top employees (Akoijam, 2019). These organizations also recognize the need for internal promotion to retain their skilled employees (Akoijam, 2019).

Performance Management

The performance appraisal system holds significant importance in retaining talented employees (Akoijam, 2019). However, the study conducted by Selden and Sowa (2015) revealed that performance appraisals were not key predictors of turnover. The research also noted an initial surge in employee turnover upon the implementation of performance management (Becker, Antuar and Everett, 2011).

Recruitment and Selection

Recruitment and selection practices are essential to the development and success of non-profit organizations (Abrokwah and Ge, 2017). Recent studies have underscored that HR components, specifically recruitment and selection, significantly influence the performance objectives of non-profit organizations (Lauwo and Otusanya, 2014). When the recruitment process fails to bring in individuals who align well with the required skills for the role or with the organizational team, it can lead to increased staff turnover and conflicts (Philip and Arrowsmith, 2020).

Training and Dispute Resolution Mechanisms

Training provided by employers is associated with increased turnover rates, whereas internal employee markets and formal dispute resolution mechanism measures are associated with decreased turnover rates (Haines, Jalette and Larose, 2010).

Theme 2: Organizational Climate

Organizational Support

Organizational support is crucial among non-profit workers, as dissatisfaction with the organization is often an important reason for quitting (Brown and Yoshioka, 2003). The primary sources of support identified in the workplace include top managers (or administrators), immediate supervisors, and coworkers (Karasek and Theorell, 1990). There is a negative association between turnover intentions and organizational support, as indicated by research conducted by Kim and Stoner (2008) and Knapp et al. (2017). Research consistently demonstrates that organizational support reliably and strongly predicts turnover intentions (Knapp et al., 2017). A qualitative study by Johnco et al. (2014) highlighted that a supportive environment emerged as a predominant theme concerning turnover. Notably, adequate support has the potential to increase employee retention. (Smith, 2005).

Organizational Commitment

NPOs need to be aware of the ideal level of expected commitment, as highlighted by Rutowski, Guiler and Schimmel (2009). Commitment has a direct and indirect relationship with an employee's intention to quit and actual turnover, as found in the study by Akingbola and van den Berg (2016). By benchmarking organizational commitment, management gains insights to adapt practices for enhanced employee retention. This retention reduces training costs and guarantees the ongoing provision of services (Rutowski, Guiler and Schimmel, 2009).

Person-Organization (P-O) Fit

Person-organization fit, particularly regarding value congruence and mission attachment, is crucial in influencing turnover intention (Brown and Yoshioka, 2003; Moynihan and Pandey, 2007). Employees who perceive a strong P-O fit regarding alignment in values are more likely to exhibit an enduring commitment to the organization (Moynihan and Pandey, 2007). Similarly, employees who encounter conflict between their values and organization's values are more inclined to resign (Vandenberghe, 1999; Zeitlin et al., 2014). These factors exert a more significant

impact on employee behavior. A deeper connection is observed between non-profit employees and the organization's mission than with their specific job roles (Akingbola and van den Berg, 2016). Research indicates that individuals experiencing a high person-organization (P-O) fit are less likely to leave their job (Moynihan and Pandey, 2007), and mission attachment is positively linked to intentions to remain with the organization (Brown and Yoshioka, 2003).

Collective Psychological Ownership

Collective psychological ownership is a construct rooted in shared values. In other words, when a group of people shares common values, it fosters a collective feeling of ownership within the group (Ng and Su, 2018). Recent research, including studies by Ng and Su (2018) and Su (2020), indicates that collective psychological ownership could play a role in influencing workers' turnover intentions. Research by Su, Liang and Wong, 2021 (2021) also discovered a negative association between collective psychological ownership and turnover intention among NPO employees.

Theme 3: Job Factors

Job Autonomy:

Job autonomy is linked to employee turnover intention (Kim and Stoner, 2008). Spector's (1986) meta-analysis, examining the impact of perceived autonomy, found that increased perceptions of autonomy were associated with a reduced probability of employees quitting their jobs. It has also been found that a lack of autonomy in a job increases turnover intentions among employees, irrespective of other factors in the workplace (Kim and Stoner, 2008).

Role Stress

Many studies reveal that role stress is positively related to the intention to quit and actual turnover (Scannapieco and Connell, 2007; Strand and Dore, 2009; Williams et al., 2011). Employees in NPOs facing increased role stress are more prone to experiencing burnout, which in turn raises the intention to quit the organization (Kim and Stoner, 2008).

Alternative Job

Availability of alternative job opportunities influences the decision of employees to quit an organization (March and Simon, 1958). This depends upon the existence of job opportunities to which the employee can transition. The higher the number of job alternatives in the market, the stronger the ease of movement from a current job (Kim and Lee, 2007).

Shock

In addition to the above-discussed factors, Shock (Wu and Chen, 2021) is other important factor for an employee leaving the organization. Shocks may occur due to personal or interpersonal incidents that are within and outside the organization, including non-work, such as unexpected dispute with coworker, unexpected offers, spouse movement to different location and calamities (Wordsworth and Nilakant, 2021).

Theme 4: Personal Attributes

Values

Non-profit organizations rely on individual values as a source of motivation, as indicated by Macy (2006). While values encompass various dimensions, the three perspectives of humanist, individual, and collective values (Macy, 2006) are particularly relevant to individuals' willingness to stay in the non-profit sector (Hayden, 2008). In aggregate, these three value perspectives are significantly relevant to both the job satisfaction of the employees and the willingness to continue in the non-profit sector (Hayden, 2008).

Tenure, Education, Sector Experience

The factors identified as significant predictors of turnover include length of service and previous experience (work and internship), all exhibiting a negative relationship with turnover. On the other hand, a positive correlation was found between education and turnover. Notably, experience, particularly in the form of an internship, and level of education emerge as the most influential characteristics in determining the likelihood of turnover. Employees with higher levels of educational qualifications and less experience in the sector are more prone to turnover (Balfour and Neff, 1993).

MEDIATORS

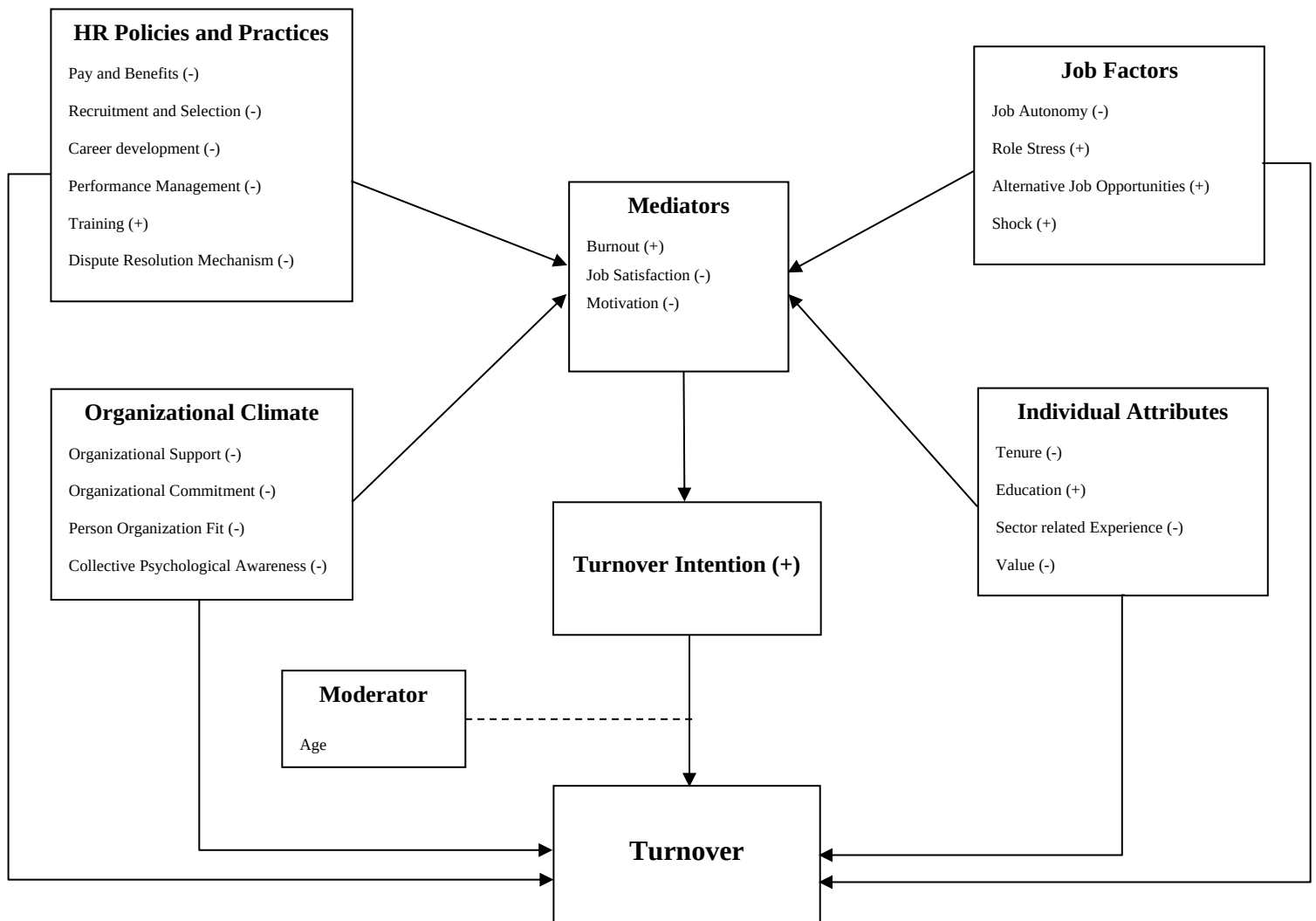
Three mediators, namely job satisfaction, burnout and motivation, were identified without a specified sequence (refer to Figure 7). These mediators can function simultaneously, as they are not exclusive to the dimension of identified themes.

Job satisfaction is a sense of contentment from fulfilling job expectations (Bacharach, Bamberger and Conley, 1991). It consistently correlates negatively with turnover intention and turnover (Brown and Yoshioka, 2003; Liu, Wong and Liu, 2022; Schudrich et al., 2012).

Burnout is a psychological syndrome in response to enduring workplace stressors, particularly chronic interpersonal ones. The three main facets characterizing this syndrome include an intense sense of exhaustion, cynicism and detachment from one's job, and a perception of ineffectiveness and lack of accomplishment (Maslach and Jackson, 1986). In multiple studies, NPO employees' turnover intention has been empirically established as a key result of burnout (Kim, Solomon and Jang, 2012; Kim and Stoner, 2008).

Generally, individuals are driven by various motives and needs (Finkelstein, 2009). An individual might use a combination of motives, which could evolve gradually (Grönlund et al., 2011). These motivations are considered personal and subjective, reflecting a preparedness to respond to specific stimulating factors (Wilson, 2012). Regarding NPO jobs, the most significant impact comes from intrinsic rather than extrinsic motivation (Borzaga and Tortia, 2006).

Employee Turnover in Non-Profit Sector: A Systematic Literature Review



Control Variables: Age, Gender, Region, Marital Status, Family Economic Status. (+) positively related to turnover, (-) negatively related to turnover.

FIGURE 7. Integrated Framework

Key Mediator: Turnover Intention

The concept of turnover intention is defined as a deliberate and conscious readiness to quit the organization (Tett and Meyer, 1993). Turnover intention, being the final step in a series of withdrawal cognitions, stands out as the most robust cognitive precursor to the actual act of

turnover (O'Reilly and Caldwell, 1981). Employees' willingness to leave their organization is manifested in turnover intentions, which are acknowledged as reliable indicators of actual turnover (Griffeth, Hom and Gaertner, 2000; Steel and Ovalle, 1984).

INTEGRATED FRAMEWORK

Based on the findings of the systematic literature review, an integrated framework (fig. 7) encompassing four identified themes has been formulated. This framework proposes association among various variables.

DISCUSSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The SLR provides a profile of the reviewed studies for RQ1. RQ2 is addressed through a detailed content analysis. In response to RQ3, findings are synthesized to create a comprehensive framework, paving the way for future research agendas. This study contributes by synthesizing NPO turnover literature and offering a research framework.

Being the first comprehensive review on the topic, this study presents four noteworthy implications for theory. First, this study presents a research profile on the studies concerning employee turnover in NPOs. This research profile contains details on the chronological publication timeline, geographic coverage, a compilation of source journals, the employed research methodology, and the prevalent theories found in the studies. Second, the present study has identified four themes that hold the potential for delivering value. Our review of the literature indicated that the contexts can be synthesized into four broad themes: HR policies and practices, organizational climate, job factors and individual attributes. The dimensions of four themes are, pay and benefits, recruitment and selection, career development, performance management, training and dispute resolution mechanism (HR policies and practices); organizational support, organizational commitment, person organization fit, collective psychological awareness (organizational climate); job autonomy, role stress, alternative job opportunities, shock (job factors); tenure, education, sector related experience, value (individual attributes). Thematic identification and its dimensions, structured through a review of existing literature, is designed to stimulate future research across diverse domains of study. Third, this study puts forth a comprehensive framework outlining the pivotal factors influencing employee turnover in non-profit organizations. Fourth, it addresses gaps in the current literature and presents a practical research agenda to guide future studies addressing turnover in non-profit organizations.

The current systematic literature review also has several practical implications. The study offers valuable insights into factors influencing turnover in non-profit organizations. This understanding can assist employers and policymakers in better comprehending the dynamics of employee in nonprofit sectors. The study's findings can also guide in developing effective retention strategies by identifying key factors for employee turnover. The study's insights can inform the development and implementation of policies and practices that foster a positive work environment, promote employee well-being, and address factors contributing to turnover.

RESEARCH GAPS

The review recognizes and incorporates limitations identified in previous studies. Similar to other disciplines within the social sciences, it highlights a significant awareness of

methodological constraints in research related to non-profit organizations. The identified gaps were used to outline future prospective areas of research, which are further elaborated in the subsequent subsections. Prior studies have acknowledged challenges associated with the selection of research methodology as a notable limitation. The first issue reported was the use of cross-sectional surveys (AbouAssi, McGinnis Johnson and Holt, 2019; Bittschi, Pennerstorfer and Schneider, 2017; Geisler, Berthelsen and Muhonen, 2019; Kakar et al., 2023; Kim and Stoner, 2008; Liu, Wong and Liu, 2022; McGinnis Johnson and Ng, 2016; Rutowski, Guiler and Schimmel, 2009; Su, Liang and Wong, 2021), which draw inferences about respondents' behavior based on a specific time moment rather than considering a more extensive time span. Drawing such inferences creates challenges in establishing causal and temporal connections among the variables under examination (Kakar et al., 2023; Su, Liang and Wong, 2021). Second, some researchers used small sample sizes (Ban, Drahnak-Faller and Towers, 2003; Johnco et al., 2014; Juaneda-Ayensa, Clavel San Emeterio and González-Menorca, 2017; Kim and Stoner, 2008; McGinnis Johnson and Ng, 2016; Rutowski, Guiler and Schimmel, 2009; Stater and Stater, 2018;) and focused on narrow geographic area (Abrokwah et al., 2018; Kim, Solomon and Jang, 2012; Selden and Sowa, 2015; Tan and Yeap, 2021) which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Very few studies focused on developing countries with a greater need for non-profit organizations. Third, a few researchers used qualitative research methods (Akingbola, 2004 Ban, Drahnak-Faller and Towers, 2003; Becker, Antuar and Everett, 2011; Johnco et al., 2014; Nickson et al., 2007; Philip and Arrowsmith, 2020; Wu and Chen, 2021;), which may potentially introduce subjective bias (Dhillon and Smith, 2019). Additionally, some studies acknowledge using self-reported questionnaires, which may introduce common method bias (Abukhalifa, Kamil and Yong, 2023; Li, Huang and Chen, 2020). Furthermore, there is a lack of research investigating the moderating effects of socio-demographic variables, including gender, region, and family economic status.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Potential avenues for addressing the methodological constraints in future research include the adoption of longitudinal studies and mixed-method studies. Additionally, employing larger and more representative samples could enhance the depth of results. Researchers are encouraged to validate existing findings in diverse geographical regions, especially in developing countries with greater demand for non-profit organizations. Subsequent studies might investigate the moderating impact of socio-demographic variables such as gender, region, and family economic status on employee turnover. In future, researchers can use actual turnover rates instead of using on turnover intention. Future research can also focus on the distinction between functional and dysfunctional turnover, which holds the potential to enhance our understanding of employee turnover dynamics. Exploring the comparison between volunteers and paid employees can provide valuable perspectives on managing the workforce. Future researchers should also focus on employee turnover, particularly among employees working on projects that end soon, to identify key variables at play. Furthermore, investigating generational differences in non-profit work, particularly among the millennial generation, could provide a more profound understanding of the factors influencing their decisions to leave an organization.

LIMITATIONS

Firstly, our review process leans predominantly towards a qualitative nature, introducing the possibility of subjective evaluations and judgments that may introduce bias into the study

findings. Future research could adopt a quantitative approach, such as meta-analysis, to enhance the precision of the review. Secondly, our study centers primarily on non-profit organizations engaged in human welfare services, leaving room for future research to explore non-profit organizations operating in domains beyond human welfare services. Thirdly, like any other systematic literature review, our study encountered challenges related to the extensive search and screening process and complexities in synthesizing and presenting findings to diverse readers. Human error during these processes might have led to the inadvertent omission of information. Additionally, the vast scope of the non-profit could have resulted in the exclusion of certain keywords, even though our approach to identifying keywords was systematic. In future, researchers can build upon the work by incorporating keywords such as "foundations," "trust," "community-based organization," "civil society organization," and "mission-driven organization". Furthermore, the scope of the study excludes book chapters, thesis, and magazines. Journal articles that were not in English and conference papers were not considered. Lastly, studies inaccessible in Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar were not reviewed unless identified through forward and backward searches. Future researchers are encouraged to address these limitations.

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Employee Turnover in Non-Profit Sector: A Systematic Literature Review

ANNEXURE

Table

Table 1. Studies reviewed in this SLR

Title	Author	Year	Source title
A Job to Believe In: Recruitment in the Scottish Voluntary Sector	Dennis Nickson, Chris Warhurst, Eli Dutton and Scott Hurrell	2008	Human Resource Management Journal
Agency Problems between Managers and Employees in Nonprofit Organizations: A Discrete Choice Experiment	Stijn Van Puyvelde, Ralf Caers, Cind Du Bois and Marc Jegers	2013	Nonprofit Management and Leadership
An Empirical Analysis of the Mediating Role of Fear of COVID-19 Between Telecommuting and Employees Retention	Abdul Samad Kakar, Rauza, Aervina Misron and Fahad Lateef	2023	Employee Responsibilities and Rights Journal
Antecedents, Consequences, and Context of Employee Engagement in Nonprofit Organizations	Kunle Akingbola and Herman A. van den Berg	2019	Review of Public Personnel Administration
Benchmarking organizational commitment across nonprofit human services organizations in Pennsylvania	Kara D. Rutowski, Jeffery K. Guiler and Kurt E. Schimmel	2009	Benchmarking: An international journal
Burnout and Turnover Intention Among Social Workers: Effects of Role Stress, Job Autonomy and Social Support	Hansung Kim and Madeleine Stoner	2008	Administration in Social Work
Challenges In Talent Acquisition and Retention: A Study of Non-Profit Sector in India	Dr. Sunildro L.S. Akoijam	2019	International Journal of Scientific & Technology Research
Child Welfare Workers' Perspectives on Contributing Factors to Retention and Turnover: Recommendations for Improvement	Carly Johnco, Alison Salloum, Kayla R. Olson and LaTishia M. Edwards	2014	Children and Youth Services Review
Factors Impacting Intention to Leave in Social Workers and Child Care Workers Employed at Voluntary Agencies	Wendy Schudrich, Charles Auerbach, Junqing Liu, Gretta Fernandes, Brenda McGowan and Nancy Claiborne	2011	Children and Youth Services Review
Human Resource Challenges in Human Service and Community Development Organizations: Recruitment and Retention of Professional Staff	Carolyn Ban, Alexis Drahnak-Faller and Marcia Towers	2003	Review of Public Personnel Administration

Employee Turnover in Non-Profit Sector: A Systematic Literature Review

Implementing an Employee Performance Management System in a Nonprofit Organization	Karen Becker, Nicholas Antuar and Cherie Everett	2011	Nonprofit Management and Leadership
Inclusion and commitment as key pathways between leadership and nonprofit performance	Kim C. Brimhall	2019	Nonprofit Management and Leadership
Is It “Just Work”? The Impact of Work Rewards on Job Satisfaction and Turnover Intent in the Nonprofit, For-Profit, and Public Sectors	Keely Jones Stater and Mark Stater	2018	American Review of Public Administration
Is It the Job or the Support? Examining Structural and Relational Predictors of Job Satisfaction and Turnover Intention for Nonprofit Employees	Joshua R. Knapp, Brett R. Smith and Therese A. Sprinkle	2017	Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly
Is Mission Attachment an Effective Management Tool for Employee Retention? An Empirical Analysis of a Nonprofit Human Services Agency	Seok Eun Kim and Jung Wook Lee	2007	Review of Public Personnel Administration
Job Demands and Resources and Employee Well-Being in the Chinese Nonprofit Sector	Guosheng Deng, Chienchung Huang, Shannon P. Cheung and Shaoming Zhu ³	2021	Frontiers in Psychology
Job Mobility Among Millennials: Do They Stay or Do They Go?	Khaldoun AbouAssi, Jasmine McGinnis Johnson and Stephen B. Holt	2019	Review of Public Personnel Administration
Mission Attachment and Satisfaction as Factors in Employee Retention	William A. Brown and Carlton F. Yoshioka	2003	Nonprofit Management and Leadership
Money Talks or Millennials Walk: The Effect of Compensation on Nonprofit Millennial Workers Sector-Switching Intentions	Jasmine McGinnis Johnson and Eddy S. Ng	2016	Review of Public Personnel Administration
Organizational climate, job satisfaction, and turnover in voluntary child welfare workers	Yong Li, Hui Huang and Yi-Yi Chen	2020	Children and Youth Services Review
Organizational Justice and Social Workers’ Intentions to Leave Agency Positions	Tae Kuen Kim, Phyllis Solomon, and Cinjae Jang	2012	Social Work Research
Person-Organization Commitment: Bonds of Internal Consumer in the Context of Non-profit Organizations	Emma Juaneda-Ayensa, Mónica Clavel San Emeterio and Carlos González-Menorca	2017	Frontiers in Psychology
Predicting and Managing Turnover in Human Service agencies: A Case Study of an Organization in Crisis	Danny L. Balfour and Donna M. Neff	1993	Public Personnel Management

Employee Turnover in Non-Profit Sector: A Systematic Literature Review

Predictors of secondary traumatic stress among social workers: Supervision, income, and caseload size	Adam Quinn, Pengsheng Ji and Larry Nackerud	2018	Journal of Social Work
Public Value at Cross points – A Comparative Study on Employer Attractiveness of Public, Private, and Nonprofit Organizations	Adrian Ritz, Kristina S. Weißmüller and Timo Meynhardt	2022	Review of Public Personnel Administration
Recruitment and selection practices among nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in Ghana	Eugene Abrokwhah, Ge Yuhui, Ramous Agyare and Anita Asamany	2018	Labor History
Retaining Social Workers: The Role of Quality of Work and Psychosocial Safety Climate for Work Engagement, Job Satisfaction, and Organizational Commitment	Martin Geisler, Hanne Berthelsen and Tuija Muhonen	2019	Human Service Organizations: Management, Leadership & Governance
Sector Switching in Good Times and in Bad: Are Public Sector Employees Less Likely to Change Sectors?	Jaclyn S. Piatak	2017	Public Personnel Management
Staffing, Retention, and Government Funding	Kunle Akingbola	2004	Nonprofit Management and Leadership
The Effect of Attitudinal and Behavioral Commitment on the Internal Assessment of Organizational Effectiveness: A Multilevel Analysis	Patrick Valeau, Jurgen Willems and Hassen Parak	2016	Voluntas
The Effect of Volunteers on Paid Workers' Excess Turnover in Nonprofit and Public Organizations	Benjamin Bittschi, Astrid Pennerstorfer and Ulrike Schneider	2017	Review of Public Personnel Administration
The Impact of Collective Psychological Ownership on Turnover Intention Among Social Service Workers	Xuebing Su, Kun Liang and Victor Wong	2021	Human Service Organizations: Management, Leadership & Governance
The impact of work engagement and meaningful work to alleviate job burnout among social workers in New Zealand	Kim-Lim Tan and Peik Foong Yeap	2021	Management Decision
The Influence of Human resource Management Practices on Employee voluntary turnover rates in the Canadian Non-Governmental Sector	Victory. Haines, III, Patricejalette and Karine Larose	2010	Industrial and Labor Relations Review
The Influence of Value Perspectives on Prior Plans, Job Satisfaction, and Turnover Intentions in Nonprofit Agencies	Julie Hayden and Susan Madsen	2008	The Journal of Business Inquiry

Employee Turnover in Non-Profit Sector: A Systematic Literature Review

The limits to employee involvement? Employee participation without HRM in a small not-for-profit organisation	Karen Philip, Jim Arrowsmith	2020	Personnel Review
The meaning and relevance of internal market orientation in nonprofit organisations	Pratik Modia and Gurjeet Kaur Sahib	2017	Service Industries Journal
The Ties that Bind: Social Networks, Person-Organization Value Fit, and Turnover Intention	Donald P. Moynihan and Sanjay K. Pandey	2007	Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory
Unfolding Turnover: The Turnover Decision-Making Process of Social Workers in China	Yaojian Wu and Anna Chen	2021	Journal of Social Service Research
Voluntary Turnover in Nonprofit Human Service Organizations: The Impact of High-Performance Work Practices	Selden and Sowa	2015	Human Service Organizations: Management, Leadership & Governance
Why do Social Workers Leave? A Moderated Mediation of Professionalism, Job Satisfaction, and Managerialism	Ziyu Liu, Hung Wong and Jifang Liu	2023	Internation Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health
Work Engagement and Turnover Intention in the Palestinian Nonprofit Sector: Do Personal Resources Matter?	Anas Mahmoud Salem Abukhalifa, Nurul Liyana Mohd Kamil and Chen Chen Yong	2023	Journal of Social Service Research
Worker Motivations, Job Satisfaction, and Loyalty in Public and Nonprofit Social Services	Carlo Borzaga and Ermanno Tortia	2006	Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly