

Research on the Impact of Mental Health on Employee Resignation and Strategies for Enhancing Workplace Well-Being

Jingchuan Tang^{1,a,*}

¹*Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Nottingham Ningbo China, Ningbo, Zhejiang Province, China, 315199*

a. hiyjt4@nottingham.edu.cn

**corresponding author*

Abstract: Psychological health issues not only affect individuals worldwide but also have an impact on many organizations. Research evidence indicates a close connection between the rising employee resignation rates within organizations and the mental health status of employees. Taking an organizational perspective and drawing from relevant organizational behavior and psychology literature, this paper studied the influence of individual psychological health on resignation behavior to demonstrate how organizational strategies interact with mental health, affecting the dynamic relationship between individual employees and the organization as well as the outcomes of these dynamics. Subsequently, this paper provides recommendations for improving workplace well-being and reducing resignation rates. The organization should invest substantial efforts to consider employees' mental health and establish a supportive working environment to reduce resignations directly and indirectly caused by psychological problems, therefore maintaining the sustainable operation of the organization, and articulating the research objectives. Ultimately, it emphasizes that organizations should investigate effective strategies that prioritize mental health and retain talent.

Keywords: mental health, organization, employee, resignation, psychological problems

1. Introduction

The rising rate of employee resignations is a concern for organizations, necessitating an examination of the causes. This report explores the intricate relationship between mental health and resignations, strategies for fostering employee well-being, and key findings from relevant scholarly articles. Mental health has a significant influence on resignation rates. Research indicates that employees experiencing symptoms of mental health disorders are more likely to consider leaving their jobs [1]. Work-related stress is strongly associated with resignation intentions, and higher stress levels increase the likelihood of resigning [2]. Burnout, a sign of poor mental health, is also linked to increased resignation rates over time [3]. In conclusion, understanding the impact of mental health on resignations is vital for creating a supportive work environment. Therefore, this paper provides insights and recommendations for enhancing workplace well-being and reducing resignation rates.

Organizations can prioritize mental health and retain talent by exploring the relationship, investigating effective strategies, and summarizing key findings.

2. Impact of Mental Health on Resignation

Mental health disorders can profoundly impact employees' decisions to resign from their organizations. Here are three key reasons why mental health disorders can influence resignation rates:

Decreased Job Satisfaction: Mental health disorders, such as depression and anxiety, can significantly affect an individual's job satisfaction. Employees experiencing these disorders may struggle with negative thoughts, low self-esteem, and a general sense of unhappiness, making it difficult for them to find fulfillment in their work. Over time, this diminished job satisfaction can contribute to their decision to seek alternative employment or resign altogether. For example, a study by Wang, Bowling, and Eschleman found that employees with depression reported lower levels of job satisfaction compared to their mentally healthy counterparts [4]. This decreased job satisfaction may stem from their inability to engage fully in their work, reduced motivation, and diminished enjoyment of their responsibilities. Furthermore, the negative effects of mental health disorders on job satisfaction can create a cycle of discontentment. Employees experiencing depression and anxiety may struggle to perform at their best, leading to decreased job performance and potential reprimands or criticism from supervisors [5]. This, in turn, can further exacerbate their mental health issues, leading to a continuous decline in job satisfaction. Moreover, not only individual but also organizational factors, such as a lack of support or resources to address mental health concerns, can also contribute to decreased job satisfaction. Employees may feel unsupported or misunderstood, leading to feelings of isolation and frustration. As a result, all these factors contribute to declining job satisfaction and can eventually lead to a higher rate of resignation as time passes.

Impaired Performance and Productivity: Mental health disorders have a profound impact on an employee's ability to perform at their full potential, which can significantly affect overall productivity. When individuals experience symptoms such as difficulty concentrating, fatigue, and reduced motivation due to their mental health challenges, their work performance can be compromised. These impairments can result in a decrease in the quality of work produced and the ability to meet deadlines or achieve goals effectively. Moreover, the diminished performance and productivity associated with mental health issues can have cascading effects on an employee's job satisfaction and sense of accomplishment. When individuals perceive a decline in their performance standards, they may experience heightened levels of stress and feelings of failure. This negative cycle can further exacerbate their existing mental health symptoms and contribute to a sense of frustration and inadequacy in the workplace [1]. As the impact of mental health on performance and job satisfaction becomes more pronounced, employees may feel compelled to explore other work opportunities that can better accommodate their mental health needs and allow them to perform optimally. The desire to find a work environment that understands and supports their mental well-being becomes a crucial factor in their decision to resign. These employees may seek organizations that prioritize employee mental health, provide resources for managing mental health challenges, and foster a supportive culture.

Work-related Stress and Burnout: Mental health disorders are often associated with increased levels of work-related stress and burnout. Excessive work demands, long hours, and a lack of support can exacerbate symptoms and contribute to a deteriorating mental state. Employees facing chronic stress and burnout are more likely to experience emotional exhaustion, reduced engagement, and a decreased sense of accomplishment. In such circumstances, resigning may be seen as a necessary step to prioritize self-care, seek treatment, and regain a healthier work-life balance. Employees who experience chronic work-related stress and burnout are more likely to face emotional exhaustion, reduced engagement, and a decreased sense of accomplishment in their work [6]. Emotional

exhaustion is characterized by feelings of being drained, overwhelmed, and emotionally depleted due to prolonged stress. Reduced engagement refers to a decreased sense of connection and enthusiasm toward work, leading to a decline in motivation and productivity. A decreased sense of accomplishment manifests as a perceived lack of fulfillment or achievement in one's work. In such circumstances, resigning may be seen as a necessary step for individuals to prioritize self-care, seek appropriate treatment, and regain a healthier work-life balance [5]. Resignation can be seen as a means to break free from the cycle of chronic stress and burnout, allowing employees to focus on their well-being and recover from the negative effects of work-related stress.

It is important for organizations to recognize the impact of mental health disorders on employees and address them proactively. By implementing supportive policies, creating a positive work environment, and offering resources for mental well-being, organizations can help alleviate the factors that contribute to resignation rates related to mental health.

3. Strategies to Improve Employee Happiness

Organizations must develop comprehensive strategies and support measures to address mental health concerns and mitigate resignation rates. The World Health Organization's publication, "Mental Health and Work: Impact, Issues, and Good Practices", provides valuable insights into effective approaches [7].

Firstly, promoting mental health awareness through training programs and initiatives that reduce stigma and encourage open dialogue can enhance the job satisfaction of employees. Training programs and initiatives that focus on stigma and fostering open dialogue create an environment where mental health is prioritized and respected. By creating a culture that supports mental well-being, employees will feel more comfortable discussing their challenges and seeking appropriate assistance [8]. This can be achieved through workshops, seminars, or awareness campaigns that educate employees about common mental health issues, provide information on available resources, and promote self-care practices. Providing this knowledge helps employees recognize signs of mental health challenges in themselves and their colleagues, enabling them to take appropriate actions and offer support when needed. Through all sorts of training, employees can obtain a higher level of job recognition and appreciation from their employers, thus reducing job dissatisfaction and the leaving phenomenon. When organizations invest in mental health awareness, employees feel valued and supported, which can lead to a stronger sense of loyalty and commitment to the company [8]. Recognizing the importance of mental well-being in the workplace sends a clear message that employees' mental health is valued as much as their physical health, contributing to a positive work culture. Moreover, promoting mental health awareness can have a direct impact on reducing job dissatisfaction and the phenomenon of employees leaving the organization. A study by Kessler suggests that job satisfaction is significantly influenced by factors like mental well-being and a supportive work environment. When employees feel that their mental health is acknowledged and that resources are available to support them, they are less likely to experience burnout or disengagement from their work [1]. In turn, this can lead to reduced turnover rates and increased retention of talented employees.

Secondly, effective leadership is crucial to fostering a positive work environment that values mental health. Thus, it can enhance the productivity and performance of the employees. According to Bakker et al., they highlight the critical role of leadership in promoting employee well-being [5]. Leaders who prioritize and model positive mental health behaviors can create an atmosphere of trust, support, and open communication. By demonstrating empathy and understanding, leaders can encourage employees to seek help and provide necessary mental health support resources. This active communication can lead to the early identification of potential issues, allowing for timely interventions and support. Effective leaders also ensure manageable workloads, distribute tasks

equitably, and provide opportunities for skill development and growth, which contribute to efficiency in the work and promote higher-quality productivity. For organizations, this consideration for workload management is crucial in preventing excessive stress and burnout among employees [5]. When employees are overwhelmed with work demands, their mental health can suffer, leading to decreased job satisfaction and performance. Effective leaders actively monitor their team members' workloads and provide necessary support or adjustments to ensure a healthy work-life balance. Additionally, leaders who offer opportunities for skill development and growth contribute to employees' overall well-being and job satisfaction. When employees have the chance to enhance their skills and knowledge, they feel a sense of accomplishment and value within the organization. Professional growth and development opportunities can also boost employee motivation and engagement, leading to higher-quality productivity and improved performance. Furthermore, leaders who prioritize mental health create a positive organizational culture that encourages self-care and well-being. When leaders actively promote the importance of mental well-being, employees are more likely to adopt healthy coping strategies and prioritize their mental health. This, in turn, can lead to reduced absenteeism, improved job satisfaction, and increased employee retention.

Additionally, to cope with work-related stress and burnout, implementing work-life balance practices and flexible working arrangements can help alleviate them and promote overall well-being. Research has shown that flexible working arrangements, such as flexible schedules and telecommuting options, have a positive impact on employee mental health [9]. With the flexibility to adjust their work hours or work remotely, employees can better manage personal commitments and responsibilities, leading to reduced conflicts between work and personal life [10]. As a result, they are less likely to experience the overwhelming pressure of trying to balance their professional and personal obligations, which can contribute to decreased work-related stress by allowing employees to have more control over their work-life integration, reducing the potential for work-related stress [10]. Moreover, flexible working arrangements can also play a significant role in mitigating burnout. Burnout often results from prolonged exposure to excessive job demands and limited resources to cope with those demands. By allowing employees to have control over their work arrangements, organizations empower them to adopt strategies that can prevent burnout. For instance, employees can schedule breaks throughout their workday, allowing them time to recharge and refocus. This proactive approach to managing workload and taking regular breaks can help prevent feelings of exhaustion and burnout [10]. Meanwhile, encouraging employees to take breaks, utilize their vacation time, and establish boundaries between work and personal life also contributes to a healthier work-life balance. Many employees may hesitate to take time off due to the fear of falling behind or being seen as less committed. However, research has shown that taking breaks and utilizing vacation time is essential for mental rejuvenation and preventing burnout [10]. Organizations can actively promote the importance of work-life balance and self-care, and leaders can lead by example by taking regular breaks and vacations themselves. Meanwhile, encouraging employees to disconnect from work during their non-working hours allows them to recharge mentally and emotionally, which contributes to overall well-being and job satisfaction. Organizations can support this by promoting a culture that respects employees' personal time and discourages after-hours work communication, except in emergencies.

And lastly, to alleviate the mental disorders of employees who have already suffered, organizations can also offer employee assistance programs (EAPs), counseling services, and peer support networks. These are further measures organizations can adopt to support their employees' mental well-being. EAPs provide confidential counseling services and referrals to external resources, ensuring employees have access to professional help when needed. By providing a safe and confidential space for employees to discuss their concerns, EAPs can play a significant role in early intervention and the prevention of more severe mental health issues. EAPs can also serve as a valuable referral system,

connecting employees to external resources and specialized care if necessary. The availability of such programs demonstrates an organization's commitment to the well-being of its workforce, fostering a sense of trust and support among employees. In-house counseling services or partnerships with mental health professionals can also offer convenient and effective support. These services can be tailored to address the specific needs of employees, providing them with personalized and accessible mental health care [11]. Whether through individual counseling sessions or group therapy, in-house services can create a supportive environment where employees can receive professional guidance in managing their mental health challenges. Additionally, these services can complement the efforts of EAPs, further enhancing the organization's mental health support network. Peer support networks create opportunities for employees to connect with others who may have experienced similar challenges, fostering a sense of belonging and support. These networks can be established through employee resource groups, mentorship programs, or support groups focused on mental health and well-being. By engaging in peer support, employees can share their experiences, exchange coping strategies, and provide emotional support to one another. This camaraderie helps reduce feelings of isolation and stigma surrounding mental health issues, encouraging employees to seek support and assistance when needed. Furthermore, encouraging employees to participate in mental health initiatives and providing ongoing education on mental health awareness are additional strategies organizations can adopt to create a supportive and inclusive work environment. By promoting mental health literacy, organizations can empower employees to recognize signs of distress in themselves and others, thereby facilitating early intervention and support. At the same time, for employees already suffering from mental health problems, appropriate humanistic care is necessary, such as granting some leave. As described in the above strategies, in addition to systematic scientific intervention, a good rest period also has a positive impact on psychological stress and other negative states. Thus, supporting the mental well-being of employees is crucial for creating a healthy and productive work environment. Implementing measures such as EAPs, in-house counseling services, and peer support networks demonstrates an organization's commitment to the mental health of its workforce. By offering accessible and confidential resources, organizations can help employees cope with mental health challenges effectively [11]. Additionally, promoting mental health awareness and encouraging employees to engage in supportive initiatives contribute to fostering a workplace culture that prioritizes and values mental well-being. By investing in these measures, organizations can contribute to the overall satisfaction, engagement, and performance of their employees.

By implementing these strategies and support measures, organizations can demonstrate their commitment to maintaining employee mental health and well-being, ultimately reducing resignation rates and creating a positive work environment that values and supports mental health.

4. Conclusion

In summary, it has studied the potential impact of mental health on employees' resignations in organizations, and proposed several coping strategies and directions to address this phenomenon. Organizations that prioritize employee mental health can effectively decrease resignation rates and establish a supportive work environment. Mental health significantly impacts employees' performance and job satisfaction. Consequently, organizations must invest substantial efforts to ensure a healthy atmosphere, thereby facilitating smooth operations. To cultivate a culture that values and supports employee well-being, organizations should: (1) Conduct awareness training and initiatives that reduce stigma. (2) Establish work-life balance practices through flexible working arrangements, which can help employees manage their personal and professional lives. (3) Provide effective leadership to prioritize mental health. (4) Offer employee assistance programs, counseling services, and peer support networks. Ultimately, these endeavors contribute to a healthier and more productive workforce, benefiting both individuals and the organization as a whole. In further research,

it will combine organizational behavioral theories such as motivation theory to positively explore the relationship between motivation and psychological state changes, to determine that whether motivation can hinder resignation even when employees are experiencing negative mental states, moving beyond solely studying the impact of mental issues on employee resignation.

References

- [1] Kessler, S. R., Lucianetti, L., Pindek, S., Zhu, Z., & Spector, P. E. (2020). *Job satisfaction and firm performance: Can employees' job satisfaction change the trajectory of a firm's performance?*. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 50(10), 563-572.
- [2] Saijo, Y., Yoshioka, E., Hanley, S. J. B., Kitaoka, K., & Yoshida, T. (2018). *Job Stress Factors Affect Workplace Resignation and Burnout among Japanese Rural Physicians*. *The Tohoku journal of experimental medicine*, 245(3), 167–177. <https://doi.org/10.1620/tjem.245.167>
- [3] Pieper, C., Schröer, S., & Eilerts, A. L. (2019). *Evidence of workplace interventions—a systematic review of systematic reviews*. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 16(19), 3553.
- [4] Bowling, N. A., Eschleman, K. J., & Wang, Q. (2010). *A meta-analytic examination of the relationship between job satisfaction and subjective well-being*. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 83(4), 915-934.
- [5] Bakker, A. B., Demerouti, E., & Euwema, M. C. (2005). *Job resources buffer the impact of job demands on burnout*. *Journal of occupational health psychology*, 10(2), 170.
- [6] Maslach, C., Schaufeli, W. B., & Leiter, M. P. (2001). *Job burnout*. *Annual review of psychology*, 52(1), 397-422.
- [7] World Health Organization. (2020). *Mental health and work: Impact, issues, and good practices*. World Health Organization.
- [8] Evans-Lacko, S., Brohan, E., Mojtabai, R., & Thornicroft, G. (2012). *Association between public views of mental illness and self-stigma among individuals with mental illness in 14 European countries*. *Psychological medicine*, 42(8), 1741-1752.
- [9] Allen, T. D., Golden, T. D., & Shockley, K. M. (2018). *How effective is telecommuting? Assessing the status of our scientific findings*. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 19(3), 49-73.
- [10] Berg, J. M., Dutton, J. E., & Wrzesniewski, A. (2020). *Job crafting and meaningful work*. In B. J. Dik, Z. S. Byrne, & M. F. Steger (Eds.), *Purpose and meaning in the workplace* (pp. 81-104). American Psychological Association.
- [11] Attridge, M. (2019). *A global perspective on promoting workplace mental health and the role of employee assistance programs*. *American Journal of Health Promotion*, 33(4), 622-629.