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Impact of work alienation feelings on turnover intention in the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority located in Jordan

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Abstract:

The aim of this study was to examine the effect of work alienation on employee turnover intention among the employees in the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority. Descriptive, correlational, cross-sectional design were used by distributing of (100) self-reporting questionnaire, which was consist of three parts; the first part was for the demographical characteristics of the employees, the second part was for the Work Alienation scale and the third part was Anticipated Turnover Scale (ATS). The results revealed that work alienation levels was in a moderate level {mean= 3.13 (SD=.81)}, and a total of 27 (29.3%) employees show the aim of turnover the jobs. Moreover, the regression results reveals that there was a strong significance effect for work alienation on employee turnover intention ($r = .729$); and (53.1%) of the employee turnover intention could be explained from work alienation. The negative effect of work alienation in the preservation of the expert employees, need more focus and hard work by the human resources departments to take precautionary measures for this negative effect.

Keywords:

Work Alienation, Employee Turnover Intention, Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority, Jordan

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Introduction

Background

Human resources are considered as the most valuable asset in a unit as well as the crucial in the survival and development of any success organization (Obeidat, et al., 2019; Abuhashesh, et al. 2018; Jiang, et al. 2018; Aldmour & Obeidat, 2017; Santas, et al. 2016). So the work organizations are interested on employees' behaviors' and attitudes which could influence employee job performance (Al-Dmour & Yassine, 2018; Masa'deh, et al., 2018; Obeidat & Altheeb, 2018; Al-Dmour, et al., 2015; Sookoo, 2013; Masa'deh & Kuk, 2007). With increasing in the competition level those organizations facing a pressure to assign high priority for employee management as a considerable purpose to endure competitive advantage (Zawaideh, et al., 2018; Obeidat, et al. 2017; Halawi, 2014; Shannak, et al., 2012). The past decades have observed an increasing concern in understanding the cause that lead the employees to leave their profession (Alrowwad, et al. 2018; Obeidat,& Nofal, 2018; Van der Heijden, et al. 2009). Many theoretical works was done on employee turnover intention, as it is a significant issue for the organizations, it is proposed that impulses of job satisfaction and organizational adherence can perform as measures to control intention of the employee to turnover (Halawi, 2014).

Theoretical studies of the job satisfaction were merged new concepts, such as work alienation. Work alienation has a long history in the academic literature since the eighteenth century, when Karl Marx (1844/1961) was the first author who developed the concept of work alienation through the sociological and political writings of Karl Marx (Fedi, et al 2016). Then the conceptualization was reinforced by Hegel and Hess, when the work alienation appears due to isolation between capital and labour (Cetinkaya & Karayel, 2019; Santas, et al. 2016). Work alienation is popularly seen as a key impact, over work performance, job turnover, job adherence, burn-out and loyalty to the organization. Alienation has been specified with a many problems and negative outcomes (Alrowwad & Abualoush, 2020; Jawabreh, et al., 2020; Sookoo, 2013). Furthermore, this problem is not limited to professions like medicine, it's widespread in organizations too (Halawi, 2014; Al Azmi, et al. 2012).

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Problem statement

Work alienation meaning and measurement is suspicious and fraught with confusion, many different terms has been used in studies and measuring various aspect of work alienation (Sarros, et al. 2002). While the existing literatures manifest that the phenomenon of work alienation is growing among employees at a disturbing rate (Santas, et al. 2016). So this alarming rates and negative effects guide the Human resources managers to work more in understanding of this phenomenon and to work hardly to prevent it and its effects on their employees.

Significance of the study

Human resources management department in the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority aimed to prevent turnover intention for the expert employees. The researchers highlight on this study on the negative impact of the work alienation on the intention to stay for the employees on the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority and help the Human resources management department to work hardly to achieve their aim to increase the levels of employees' retention.

Purpose and research questions

The aim of this study was to explore the impact of work alienation feeling on employee turnover intention in the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority. To achieve this goal, the researchers focus on a number of objectives:

To identify the level of work alienation feeling and employee turnover intention among the employees in the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority.

To investigate the impact of work alienation feeling on employee turnover intention among the employees in the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority.

These objectives guided the researchers to identify the following research questions:

What are the levels of work alienation feeling and employee turnover intention among the employees in the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority?

Is there an impact of work alienation feeling on employee turnover intention among the employees in the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority?

Accordingly, the following hypothesis is presented. In fact, in this study the decision to accept or reject the hypothesis is based on statistical significance. Statistical significance considered as a description for a result or experiment when the probability is less than the significance level. The current study aims to examine the following hypothesis:

H₁: There is an impact of work alienation feeling on employee turnover intention among the employees in the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority.

Study variables and framework

This study was involved two major variables:

1. Work alienation:

Work alienation is main variable examined in this research. The concept of alienation can be determined as a decline in a personal harmony with social, cultural and natural surrounding and a reduction in the control over his/her surrounding, which lead to loneliness and despair (Dagli & Averbek, 2017).

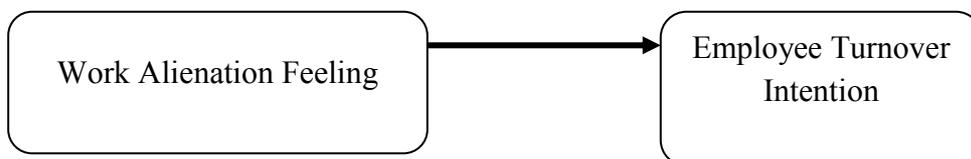
The body of previous Literature recognize five components of alienation: powerlessness (deficiency of control), meaninglessness (the inability to understand the relationship of one's contributions to a greater purpose), normlessness and isolation (when norms or rules of attitude do not guide behavior toward personal aims), and self-estrangement (when work becomes a way for satisfying just extrinsic needs rather than a means for expressing one's potential) (Sarros, et al. 2002).

2. Employee turnover intention:

Employee turnover has been an important problem in several organizations; the turnover intention is described as a behavioral intention that arises from several factors such as policies applied within an organization, market features and employee perceptions (Alzayed & Murshid, 2017).

3. Study framework:

For helping the researchers to achieve the study goal, the researchers develop the following Study frame work:



Source: Authors

Literature Review

Work alienation

Work alienation experienced by academic library workers was investigated by Sasyk on USA; a quantitative study was conducted to investigate the differentiation of the Work alienation levels according to the different in library work classifications and work areas, the results reported moderate levels of work alienation among the academic library workers {mean= 3.4(SD = .78)}, and the higher alienation found for paraprofessionals, administrators, and library workers in multiple areas or roles (Sasyk, 2017).

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Another point of view was discussed by Cetinkaya & Karayel, by examine the relationship between organizational performance and employee alienation among Turkish employees on 2019, the result reported a significance relationship between organizational silence and alienation, recommended for the organizations to eliminate the silence performance to get rid of work alienation and it's negative effects (Cetinkaya & Karayel , 2019).

Employee turnover intention

The levels of the employee turnover intention among Hospital Nurses in the USA were studied by Rosenkranz on (2012), and the results reported that 41(35.3%) participants had intent to turnover their work, while 75(64.7%) of the participant were don't show intent to leave (Rosenkranz, 2012).

Studying the factors that affect the employee turnover intention in the Ministry of Information in Kuwait was the main for aim for Alzayed, & Murshid on their study, and they conclude that the main factors that negatively affect the employees' intentions to leave were Employees' perception of commitment and job satisfaction, and they report a negative relationship between job engagement and the employee turnover intention (Alzayed, & Murshid, 2017). In Malaysia, a conceptual paper was done to evaluate the effect of turnover intention on the organization. Many negative consequences suggested being as consequence of the intentions for turnover for any organization, and one of the most significant consequences was effect on organization's cost, and the researchers provide few new paths for managing employees to decrease the turnover intentions in any organizations; such as taking on considerations the effect of the any decision on the employee before the application of the new decisions and to manage any work-family conflict (Ainer, et al. 2018).

Impact of work alienation feeling on employee turnover intention

In Netherland, Van der Heijden and his peers conduct a quantitative study on 1,187 registered nurses to investigate the Characteristic of work stressors on the turnover intention among nurses. The results of this study conclude that unsupportive work environment well increase Turnover Intention for the nurses indirectly by lowering job satisfaction level for the nurses (Van der Heijden, et al., 2009). Such a study was conducted in USA by Zeytinoglu and his peers, to evaluate the effect of job insecurity on the turnover intention for the nurses and revealed that there was a significance association between job insecurity and turnover intention the profession (Zeytinoglu, et al. 2011).

Methodology

Research design

This study used a descriptive, correlational, cross-sectional design to assess impact of Work Alienation feeling on Employee Turnover Intention in the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority and evaluate the levels of Work Alienation and Employee Turnover Intention.

Population and sample

The accessible population of the study was all employees in the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority. The sample size was calculated using G-power program with α probability of (5%) and power of (80%), with a medium effect size of (0.3), so the calculating program indicated the minimum number of sample is (84) employees.

Instrument of data collection

In order to achieve the goal of the study and based on previous literature, the researchers designed the study questionnaire, which was consist of three parts; the first part was for the demographical characteristics of the employees, the second part was for the Work Alienation scale and the third part was Anticipated Turnover Scale (ATS). Work alienation scale was adapted from the previous literature and the article of Nair and Vohra (2010). A 5-point Likert system was used to respond to the items, (1) for strongly disagree (SD), (2) for disagree (D), (3) for uncertain (U), (4) for agree (A), and (5) for strongly agree (SA). The increased of the scale sub-total indicated increase work alienation level (Nair & Vohra, 2010).

The Anticipated Turnover Scale (ATS) is a self-report questionnaire, which was developed by Hinshaw and Atwood (1984), and used to measure the employee's intention to turnover. The instrument contained twelve items and based on 7-point Likert scale format, The options were agree strongly (AS), moderately agree (MA), slightly agree (SA), uncertain (U), slightly disagree (SD), moderately disagree (MD), and disagree strongly (DS). Items are either positive or negative: items {2, 4, 5, 7, 11, and 12} are positive while {1, 3, 6, 8, 9 and 10} are negative (Hinshaw & Atwood, 1984).

For collecting the data, convenience sampling technique was used to distribute the questionnaire for the employees. But before conducting the study, pilot testing is done by taking (10) employees for the purpose of checking the reliability of the questionnaire. The responses of the employees were scored and the reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach's Alpha. As Cronbach's alpha coefficient is nearer to (1), the reliability of the scale increases (Santas et al. 2016). The instrument has (20) questions: (8) questions for work

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alienation scale and (12) questions for ATS. The result shows that the Cronbach's alpha ranges from (.818) to (.877) which show the scale is reliable, as in table (1).

Table (1). The instrument reliability.

Variables	No of items	Alpha value
1 Work alienation scale	8	.877
2 Anticipated Turnover Scale ATS	12	.818

Prepared by researchers depend on pilot study results

Data analysis

After collecting the valid questionnaires and calculating the response rate, the data has been coded manually and entered to Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 21) data base. Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) were used to the employee's demographical characteristics. Another descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) used to calculate the levels of work alienation and employee turnover intention for research question number one. Inferential statistics (Pearson correlation and simple liner regression) were used for testing the impact of work alienation feeling on employee turnover intention for research question number two.

Ethical considerations

This study got the approval of the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority to conduct this study among the Authority employees. Informed consent has been obtained for each participant with ensuring the confidentiality and anonymity and ensuring that the participating is voluntary; the participant could withdraw at any time during the data collection time. There is no risk on the involved employees and no financial issues in participating in this study. The researcher's phone numbers were mentioned, for any questions, or any help for the participants in filling out the questionnaire.

Results

Demographical information

The researchers distributed (100) questionnaires among the employees in the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority. Only (92) questionnaires were valid for analysis, making the response rate of 92% .

Table (2) shows that, out of (92) employees participated in this study; almost the half of the participants (54.3 %) were male. The majority of the participants (67.4%) were married. The age of more than (43.5%) of the participants were ranged from (30-39) years old. The half of the employees (50 %) were has BCS degree in the view of educational levels, and (37 %) of the participants were has higher education. Furthermore, (40.3 %) of participants have experience levels

ranged from (1 – 5 years) of the experience, while (8.7 %) of the participants was working in the authority for more than (10 years).

Table (2). Soico-demographic information of about the respondents (N= 92).

Category	Component	Frequency	Percentage
Gander	Male	50	54.3 %
	Female	42	45.7%
Age in years	20-29 years	37	40.2 %
	30-39 years	40	43.5%
	> 39 years	15	16.3%
Marital status	Single	26	28.3%
	Married	62	67.4%
	Others	4	4.3%
Educational level	Secondary education	12	13 %
	BCS degree	46	50 %
	Higher education	34	37 %
Years of experience	< 1 year	22	23.9 %
	1 – 5 years	37	40.3 %
	6 – 10 years	25	27.1 %
	> 10 years	8	8.7 %

Prepared by researchers depend on SPSS results

The answers of research questions

The first research question

To answer the first research question (What are the levels of work alienation feeling and employee turnover intention among the employees in the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority?); the researchers analyze the responses of the participant for the questionnaire of "Work alienation scale" and "Anticipated Turnover Scale (ATS)", by using the descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation and frequency). Analyzing the responses of the participating employees to ward "Work alienation scale" shows that the scores were ranged from (1.8) to (4.7) and the mean was {3.13 (SD=.81)}, which revealed a moderate level of work alienation among the employees in the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority.

From another point of view, and before the analyzing of the participants responds toward "ATS", the researchers reversed the respondent of (1, 3, 6, 8, 9 and 10) questions. According to the properties of the ATS and depending on the previous studies, the researchers classify the responses of the employees with an ATS score ≥ 4.0 shows intent to turnover, while those with an ATS score < 4.0 are don't shows intent to turnover. The ATS scores were ranged from (2.6) to (6.4) and the mean for the whole sample was {3.8 (SD=.659)}. A total of 27 (29.3%)

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employees had aim to turnover with ATS mean more than 4, and 65 (70.7%) were don't show the aim to turnover ATS mean less than 4, as in table (3).

Table (3): Analysis of ATS responses (N= 92).

	Category	Frequency	Percentage %
1	ATS mean (≥ 4)	27	29.3
2	ATS mean (< 4)	65	70.7

Prepared by researchers depend on SPSS results

The second research question

To answer the second research question (Is there an impact of work alienation feeling on employee turnover intention among the employees in the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority?); the researchers applied simple liner Regression analysis. The regression result {Table (4)}; reveals that the regression equation reaches the significance ($F=179.933$, $p < 0.00$). And there was a positive strong significance impact for work alienation feeling on employee turnover intention ($r = .729$); the results conclude that (53.1%) of the employee turnover intention could be explained from work alienation feeling.

Table (4): Result of regression model for the impact of work alienation on turnover intention.

Model	F	Sig. F	R	R ²
1	179.933	.000**	.729	.531

Prepared by researchers depend on SPSS results

Discussions

Studying the levels of work alienation among employees in the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority reported a moderate level of work alienation { $M= 3.13$ ($SD=.81$)}. Such a supported results was reported in USA by Sasyk (2017) during studying the levels of work alienations among academic library workers; and revealed moderate levels of work alienations with mean { $3.4(SD =.78)$ } (Sasyk, 2017). The results of the employee turnover intention levels were shows that 27 (29.3%) employees had intention to turnover, while 65 (70.7%) were don't had intention to turnover. These results was supported by previous studying of turnover intention levels among nurses in USA and revealed that 41(35.3%) of the participated nurses had intention to turnover their job while 75(64.7%) were of the participated nurses don't had intention to turnover (Rosenkranz, 2012). Furthermore, the results of this study indicate that there a strong significant impact for work alienation feeling on turnover intention among the employees in the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority, this impact can be explain (53.1%) of the employee's turnover intention as a result from work alienation feelings. Such a negative effect of the work alienation feelings was reported by Kaynak, et al. (2016), by studying the effect of work alienation on the job performance

among services sector workers in Turkey; the results conclude that there was a significance negative effect of the work alienation on job performance (Kaynak, et al. 2016).

Conclusion

This study highlight on the impact of work alienation on the employee turnover intention among the employees in the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority, and reported that the work alienation feeling can explain (53.1%) of the employee turnover intention, and indicate that there a significance relationship between work alienation feeling and the employee turnover intention. This relationship helps the organizations to work more to prevent of employee turnover by working hardly to eliminate of work alienation feeling among the authority employees. In addition, the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority should offer better services in alignment with the latest Information Systems as suggested by researchers (e.g. Tarhini, et al., 2018; Yassien & Mufleh, 2017; Masa'deh, et al. 2015; 2017a,b; Almajali & Al-Lozi, 2016; Karajeh & Maqableh, 2014; Masa'deh, 2012, 2013, 2016; Al-Dmour, et al., 2015; Masa'deh & Shannak, 2012; Shannak, et al. 2010).

Recommendation

According to the result of the study, employee's alienation level for the whole sample was "moderate", and in the aim to decrease these level, the researchers recommended to the human resources managers to increase the behaviors that prevent alienation feeling by taking into consideration employees' desires and expectations, reinforcing communication within the authority, and establishing open communication channels directly with the employees. Similar studies can be carried out by comparing governmental and private organizations in the aim of co-operations between the different organizations to decrease the levels of work alienations feelings and turnover intention among the employees.

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