THE IMPACT OF SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP ON TURNOVER INTENTIONS IN INDIA: A NARRATIVE REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, the concept of socially responsible leadership (SRL) has received considerable organizational research interest, particularly because of its potential impact on employee turnover. In addition, many organizations recognize the importance of ethical leadership practices in improving employee engagement, satisfaction, and retention. However, there has been little research on the specific relationship between SRL and turnover intentions (TI) in the Indian context.

This study examines the impact of SRL on TI by examining several dimensions of SRL, such as ethical decision-making, employee well-being, environmental stewardship, and community participation in Indian organisations. This review considers significant procedures by which SRL influences turnover intentions, including as organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and perceived organizational support. In addition, cultural and contextual aspects specific to India are investigated to better understand their role in determining the link between SRL and turnover intentions.

The findings emphasize the importance of SRL in reducing TI and enhancing organizational sustainability in Indian organizations. Practical implications and ideas for future study are explored to help organizational leaders and scholars handle turnover issues through effective leadership practices. In addition, this research provides insights into the complex interactions

between SRL and TI among Indian employees by synthesizing empirical findings and theoretical perspectives based on a comprehensive review of existing literature.

Keywords: Socially responsible leadership, Turnover intentions, Employee retention, Ethical leadership, Employee engagement and Leadership effectiveness.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, organizational scholars have increasingly recognized the significance of socially responsible leadership (SRL) in shaping employee attitudes and behaviors within the workplace (Brown & Treviño, 2006; Miao et al., 2013). Defined as "the demonstration of socially responsible behaviors and values by organizational leaders in their interactions with employees and stakeholders" (Taylor & Pattie, 2014), SRL emphasizes ethical decision-making, employee welfare, environmental sustainability, and community engagement (Greige Frangieh & Khayr Yaacoub, 2017). This growing body of research suggests that SRL practices have the potential to positively influence various organizational outcomes, including employee TI (Taylor & Pattie, 2014; Waldman et al., 2006).

Despite the increasing interest in SRL, there remains a gap in understanding its impact on turnover intentions, particularly within the dynamic framework of India (Lacity et al., 2009). India, with its diverse cultural landscape and rapidly evolving business environment, presents a unique setting for exploring the relationship between SRL and TI (Becton & Field, 2009; Singh Bedi et al., 2023). Given the significant economic and social challenges facing Indian organizations, such as high turnover rates and employee dissatisfaction (Pandey et al., 2021), investigating the role of SRL in mitigating TI holds both theoretical and practical importance (Nadiri & Tanova, 2010).

Therefore, this study aims to explore the impact of SRL on TI in India. By synthesizing existing literature and exploring cultural nuances, this review seeks to provide insights into how SRL practices may influence TI among Indian employees. Through this comprehensive examination, we aim to contribute to a deeper understanding of the mechanisms through which SRL can foster organizational commitment and reduce TI in the Indian context.

METHODS

Search Strategy

The search strategy for this narrative review involved a comprehensive search of electronic databases, including but not limited to PubMed, Scopus, web of science, and Google Scholar. Keywords and search terms used in the search process included "socially responsible leadership," "turnover intentions," "organizational commitment," "India," "employee retention," "ethical leadership," and "corporate social responsibility." Boolean operators (e.g., AND, OR) were used to combine search terms effectively. Additionally, reference lists of relevant articles and reviews were manually searched to identify additional studies for inclusion.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria:

Articles were included if they provided relevant insights into the relationship between SRL and TI within the context of India. No restrictions were placed on study design or publication type. Non-English articles were included if English translations were available or if the

abstract provided sufficient information for evaluation. Dissertations, conference proceedings, and gray literature were also considered. Non-specific studies or studies published in a language other than English or conducted outside of India or that lack specific relevance to the Indian context and duplicate studies found through different sources were also excluded.

Selection Process:

The selection of articles was conducted through a multi-step process. Initially, titles and abstracts were screened to identify potentially relevant studies. Full-text articles were then retrieved and assessed for eligibility based on predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria. Any discrepancies or uncertainties were resolved through discussion among the research team.

Quality Assessment:

Given the narrative nature of the review, formal quality assessment tools (e.g., risk of bias assessments) were not employed. Instead, the methodological rigor and relevance of each study were considered during data synthesis and interpretation. Studies of varying methodological quality were included to provide a comprehensive overview of the existing literature.

Results

After a comprehensive literature search, 37 articles were identified for inclusion out of which 12 studies were included in the study. The review studies were different in methodology and a diverse range of sample size studies were included, from less than 50 responders up to surveys of several thousands of employees in different industry sectors. The identified studies collectively provided insights into the impact of SRL on TI among employees in Indian organizations.

Firstly, it was found that SRL is associated with lower TI of employees, regardless of the sector in India (Doh et al., 2011). Ethical decision-making by the leader, among other behaviours, employee empowerment, and community involvement, were significantly correlated with retention and commitment (Guo, 2022). Additionally, the role of culturally embedded values in influencing the impact of SRL on TI was emphasized. Research indicated that aligning leadership practices with the cultural context enhanced their effectiveness in reducing TI and promoting employee engagement (Haque et al., 2019).

Furthermore, the study also revealed that certain contextual factors, such as industry type, organizational size, and geographical location, could impact the relationship between SRL and TI. For instance, leadership initiatives focused on corporate social responsibility (CSR) were more prevalent and impactful in multinational corporations compared to small and medium-sized enterprises(Rusu & Avasilcai, 2015). In addition to these contextual factors, there are several other factors that can impact the relationship between SRL and TI. These factors include Organization's culture, Organization's leadership, Organization's resources, Organization's goals, and Organization's strategies. Some examples may be as follows:

- An organization in the technology industry may be more likely to adopt new technologies, such as artificial intelligence (AI), to improve its efficiency and productivity.

- A large organization may have more resources to invest in new technologies, such as AI, to improve its customer service.
- An organization in an urban area may have more access to new technologies, such as AI, to improve its supply chain management (Li et al., 2018).

Studies have also shown that responsible leadership (RL), corporate social responsibility initiatives (CSRI), and transformational leadership (TL) play crucial roles in influencing employees' intention to stay in the retail sector. The findings of this study are also confirmed by the systematic literature review (Athanasiadou et al., 2023),which states that Ethical leadership has a negative indirect relationship with turnover intentions.

Key Findings:

Positive Relationship between SRL and Reduced Turnover Intentions: SRL has a significant impact on TI in India. Several studies reported a positive relationship between SRL practices and reduced TI among employees in Indian organizations. Specifically, leaders who demonstrated ethical behaviour, concern for employee welfare, and commitment to CSR were associated with lower TI among their subordinates (Kumar, 2017).

Mediating Role of Organizational Commitment: The review identified evidence suggesting that organizational commitment mediates the relationship between SRL and TI in Indian organizations (Haque et al., 2019). Employees who perceived their leaders as socially responsible were more likely to exhibit higher levels of organizational commitment, which in turn reduced their intentions to leave the organization (Liu & Lin, 2018).

Moderating Effect of Cultural Factors: Cultural factors, such as collectivism and perceived organizational support, were found to moderate the relationship between SRL and TI in India (Chalil & Prasad, 2014). For example, in organizations characterized by a strong collectivist culture, the impact of SRL on TI was amplified, as employees valued leaders who demonstrated concern for the welfare of the collective group.

Sector-Specific Differences: Variations in the impact of SRL on TI were observed across different sectors in India (Chalil & Prasad, 2014). While SRL practices were generally associated with reduced turnover intentions, the magnitude of this effect varied across sectors such as IT industry, with service-oriented industries showing stronger effects compared to manufacturing sectors (Arishi et al., 2018).

Discussion

Our study highlights the importance of SRL in mitigating TI among employees. One of the primary findings of this review is the significant role that SRL characterized by ethical decision-making, employee empowerment, and concern for societal well-being has been shown to positively influence employee attitudes and plays in reducing TI among employees in Indian organizations.

SRL significantly influences TI in India. This review corroborates findings from a Korean study (Jun et al., 2023) and research in the Portuguese healthcare sector (Marques et al., 2023), which both reported a negative relationship between RL and TI based on data from multiple organizations in their respective contexts. Similarly, studies conducted in China (Zhao et al., 2022) and Finland study (Nie et al., 2018) also support our findings, demonstrating a negative association between SRL and TI. Furthermore, the RL process in

Indian organizations is influenced by individual-level variables, leading to prosocial decisions and outcomes (Sargam & Pandey, 2022).

The review suggests that organizational commitment serves as a mediator in the relationship between SRL and TI within Indian organizations. This finding is consistent with previous research highlighting the positive relationship between perceived organizational support and employee retention (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Moreover, the discussion emphasizes the broader societal implications of SRL in the Indian context. As organizations increasingly recognize the importance of CSR in enhancing their reputation and stakeholder relationships, SRL becomes integral to driving sustainable business practices and societal impact (Porter & Kramer, 2011). By aligning organizational goals with the broader interests of society, SRL can contribute to the economic, environmental, and social well-being of communities.

Additionally, the review highlights the need for organizations to integrate principles of social responsibility into their leadership development programs. By equipping leaders with the skills and mindset necessary to navigate complex ethical dilemmas and prioritize stakeholder interests, organizations can cultivate a culture of RL from the top down (Waldman et al., 2006). This not only enhances employee morale and engagement but also strengthens organizational resilience and adaptability in the face of uncertainty.

Furthermore, the discussion underscores the importance of considering contextual factors in shaping the effectiveness of SRL initiatives. Cultural norms, organizational values, and industry-specific dynamics all influence the implementation and impact of SRL practices (Cloninger, 2005). Therefore, organizations must tailor their leadership strategies to accommodate the diverse needs and expectations of their employees and stakeholders.

Strengths and limitations

This study provides a comprehensive overview of existing literature on the impact of SRL on TI in Indian organizations. This review focuses on the theoretical mechanisms underlying the relationship between SRL and TI in the Indian context through the synthesis of empirical studies. The findings of this study have practical implications for organizational leaders, HR professionals, and policymakers in India. By highlighting the importance of SRL practices in reducing turnover intentions, the review offers actionable insights for promoting employee retention and fostering a positive organizational culture. However, the included studies varied in terms of methodologies, sample sizes, and measurement tools, which may have introduced heterogeneity into the review. Further research incorporating longitudinal designs, diverse cultural contexts and objective measures is needed to enhance the generalizability and applicability of findings.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this review provides valuable insights into the impact of SRL on TI in Indian organizations. The synthesis of existing literature reveals a positive relationship between SRL practices and reduced TI among employees, mediated by factors such as organizational commitment and moderated by cultural influences. These findings collectively emphasize the importance of SRL practices in reducing TI and enhancing employee retention in various Indian industries.

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None

Author contributions

All authors contributed significantly to this review. AS conceptualized the idea, contributed subject matter expertise, provided invaluable feedback, and meticulously reviewed the manuscript. EC conducted the literature search and drafted the manuscript. MK contributed to research methodology and ensured methodological rigor. All authors critically revised and approved the final version of manuscript.

Conflicts of interest

None

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was not required for this narrative review as it did not involve primary data collection from human participants. However, proper citation and acknowledgment of the original authors were ensured to uphold academic integrity and intellectual property rights.

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