

SHRM Dimensions, Work Engagement and Intention to Quit: LinkedIn As a Data Source

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of strategic human-resource management (SHRM) on employees' intention to quit, mediated by work engagement in the construction sector in GCC countries. The major findings of this study indicate that strategic human-resource management (SHRM) has a direct positive impact on work engagement and an indirect negative impact on employees' intention to quit through work engagement. The study also indicated that work engagement has a direct negative impact on employees' intention to quit.

Structural equation modeling was employed to analyze data collected from 612 participants *via* a LinkedIn dataset. All participants work in the construction sector in Gulf States (GCC countries) and are members at LinkedIn as a professional social-networking site. Social-media network LinkedIn was employed to collect the data required for analysis. The study offers evidence and guidance for HRM practitioners for direct HRM practices and SHRM constructs in fostering work engagement and managing employees' intention to quit. There is a lack of research examining the impact of SHRM and its components on employees' intention to quit, mediated by work engagement. Thus, this study confirms the argument that SHRM can be an effective approach to influence employees' intention to quit through work engagement.

Keywords: Strategic human-resource management (SHRM), Work engagement, Intention to quit, Structural-equation modeling (SEM).

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الأبعاد الاستراتيجية للموارد البشرية، والاندماج الوظيفي، ونية ترك العمل: لنكدن (LinkedIn) كمصدر للبيانات

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ملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى الكشف عن مدى تأثير العوامل الاستراتيجية للموارد البشرية على نية ترك العمل من خلال الاندماج الوظيفي في قطاع الإنشاءات لدول مجلس التعاون الخليجي. دلت أهم نتائج هذه الدراسة على وجود أثر إيجابي ومباشر لاستراتيجية الموارد البشرية على الاندماج الوظيفي، ووجود أثر سلبي وغير مباشر على نية الموظفين لترك العمل من خلال الاندماج الوظيفي. وقد أشارت هذه الدراسة إلى أن الاندماج الوظيفي له تأثير سلبي ومباشر على نية الموظفين لترك العمل. تم توظيف نماذج المعادلات الهيكلية (SEM) لتحليل البيانات التي تم جمعها من 612 مشاركاً من خلال بيانات منصة لنكدن (LinkedIn). ويعمل جميع المشاركين في هذه الدراسة في قطاع الإنشاءات في دول مجلس التعاون الخليجي، وهم أعضاء على منصة لنكدن بصفقتها منصة مهنية في شبكة التواصل الاجتماعي، وقد تم استخدامها لجمع البيانات لغايات التحليل. وقدمت هذه الدراسة أدلة ودلائل لمديري الموارد البشرية وللممارسين في إدارة الموارد البشرية الاستراتيجية حول أهمية تعزيز الاندماج الوظيفي والتعامل مع نوايا الموظفين لترك العمل. وأظهرت هذه الدراسة شحاً في الدراسات التي اختبرت مدى تأثير الموارد البشرية الاستراتيجية وأبعادها على نية الموظفين لترك العمل من خلال المتغير الوسيط وهو الاندماج الوظيفي. وعليه، فإن هذه الدراسة تؤكد أن استراتيجية الموارد البشرية يمكنها أن تشكل أداة فاعلة للتأثير على نية ترك العمل من خلال الاندماج الوظيفي.

الكلمات الدالة: إدارة الموارد البشرية الاستراتيجية، الاندماج الوظيفي، نية ترك العمل، نمذجة المعادلات الهيكلية.

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1. INTRODUCTION

This paper concentrates on an important issue for today's business organizations pertaining to strategic human-resource management (SHRM), work engagement and intention to quit. Strategic human-resource management (SHRM) is an ever expanding and growing field of research and practice that aims to integrate and align HRM practices and approaches at the functional level with organizational strategy at the corporate level to improve business performance (Lim, Wang & Lee, 2017; Memon et al., 2020). Hence, HRM professionals are in a perfect position to create HRM strategy that aligns with corporate strategy to advance employees' competencies for building and sustaining an enduring competitive advantage.

Brown, Metz, Cregan and Kulik (2009) noted that operating strategically is not an easy task for HRM professionals; for instance, human-resource managers face operational challenges when they try to be strategic partners in their organizations. Maden (2015), Albrecht, Bakker, Gruman, Macey and Saks (2015), Conway, Fu, Monks, Alfes and Bailey (2016), Yang et al. (2018) and Bellamkonda et al., (2021) have examined the relationship between human-resource management practices and work engagement. These studies revealed that human-resource management and work engagement are positively related. However, lack of research and empirical work seems evident when reviewing the set of relationships and consequences of specific human-resource management activities, work engagement and intention to quit. Hence, the main contribution of this study lies in exploring the impact of specific components of strategic human-resource management (SHRM) on employees' intention to quit, mediated by work engagement in GCC countries.

2. Strategic Human-resource Management (SHRM)

Researchers view strategic human-resource management as an ever-evolving field of study (Kim, Wright & Su, 2010; Memon et al., 2020). Scholars offer various definitions to

describe strategic human-resource management. Dessler (2016:72) defined strategic HRM as a process of "formulating and executing human-resource policies and practices that produce the employee competencies and behaviors that a company needs to achieve its strategic aims". Mansoori, Barzoki, Javadi & Kianpour (2019) referred to strategic HRM as the use of HRM practices for providing input into organizational strategic planning to gain a competitive advantage. Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart & Wright (2017) viewed strategic HRM as a pattern of planned human-resource deployment and activities intended to enable an organization to achieve its goals (Melhem, 2018). Furthermore, strategic HRM can be viewed as future-oriented human-resource initiatives, projects and programs that influence organizations seeking better quality of working life and engagement among their employees (Kulikowski, 2022; Saks, 2022).

Perhaps, the resource-based view (RBV) is very relevant in this context, as it seeks to explain the internal sources of a firm's strategic competitive advantage (Kraaijenbrink, Spender & Groen, 2010; Peteraf & Barney, 2003). Hence, RBV theory is an appropriate theoretical perspective to address significant strategic human-resource management issues (Kulikowski, 2022). RBV implies that firms establish inimitable and non-substitutable capabilities through SHRM practices and that these capabilities are key to the firms' competitive advantages (Bush, 2018). This is an important result, because companies can utilize strategic human-resource management (SHRM) as an efficient tool to implement a strategic competitive advantage (Aboramadan, 2020; Boon, Eckardt, Lepak & Boselie, 2018; Bush, 2018; Datta, Guthrie & Wright, 2005; Garcia-Carbonell, Martin-Alcazar & Sanchez-Gardey, 2015; Gellweiler, 2018; Imenda, 2014; Lim et al., 2017; Piening, 2018; Yucel, 2021).

Colakoglu, Erhardt, Pougnet-Rozan and Martin-Rios (2019) argued that strategic human-resources practices should be configured in an integrated structure, rather than operating as individual isolated functions. Ghosh, Shuck, Cumberland and D'Mello (2019) examined how interventions in the form of strategic human-resource development could influence psychological capital and work engagement. Furthermore, Delery and Roumpi (2017) added that HRM practices are not simple devices that enable organizations to produce sustainable competitive advantage (Saks, 2022). They argued that HRM practices can contribute to a firm's sustainable competitive advantage, not only by enhancing employees' ability and offering motivation and opportunities, but also by shaping supply-side and demand-side mobility constraints for human resources through HRM practices (Aboramadan, 2020; Boon et al., 2018).

Closely related, work engagement has become a major concern and aspect of SHRM initiatives, both academically and professionally (Thurgood & Barrick, 2015). Verburg and Boon (2015) examined the stimulation of innovation through engagement and human-resource management. They suggested that HRM practices can enhance workers' engagement and, in turn, improve their work behavior. Also, Arevshatian, Shantz and Alfes (2014) examined the link between HRM practices and work engagement, uncovering four contextually relevant HRM practices (training, participation in decision making, opportunities for development and communication) that are positively correlated to employee performance, indicating that work engagement mediates these relationships (Bal & De Lange, 2015; Shuck, Twyford, Reio Jr. & Shuck, 2014). Gollan, Kalfa and Xu (2015) revealed that strategic human-resource management significantly impacts firms' performance indirectly, rather than directly, during the implementation of

high-performance work systems. Gollan et al. (2015) and Kramar (2012) also indicated that HRM policies have been applied to accomplish organizational results in the long term through career-development procedures and assessment of the performance of the human-resource department. This study was important in highlighting the role of career progression in line with our model, which adopts career progression as a significant dimension for strategic human-resource management (SHRM) (Kulikowski & Sedlak, 2020).

In a similar vein, Lengnick-Hall, Lengnick-Hall, Andrade and Drake (2009) identified seven themes across time in the strategic HRM literature: (1) explaining contingency perspectives and fit, (2) shifting from a focus on managing people to creating strategic contributions, (3) elaborating HR system components and structure, (4) expanding the scope of SHRM, (5) achieving HR implementation and execution, (6) measuring outcomes of SHRM and (7) evaluating methodological issues. Every one of these themes played a considerable role in the development of the field. The growing importance of strategic impact was accompanied by an increasing interest in linking HR efforts to competitive performance (Martín-Alcázar, Romero-Fernández and Sánchez-Gardey, 2008).

Sullivan (2004) suggested that the most difficult strategy to apply is performance culture, but it also has the greatest prospective effect. The overall conceptual model for this study is illustrated in Figure 1. In this research, the focus is on employees' intention to quit as an outcome of strategic human-resource management (SHRM), mediated by work engagement. This study used a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) model which includes the following observed variables:

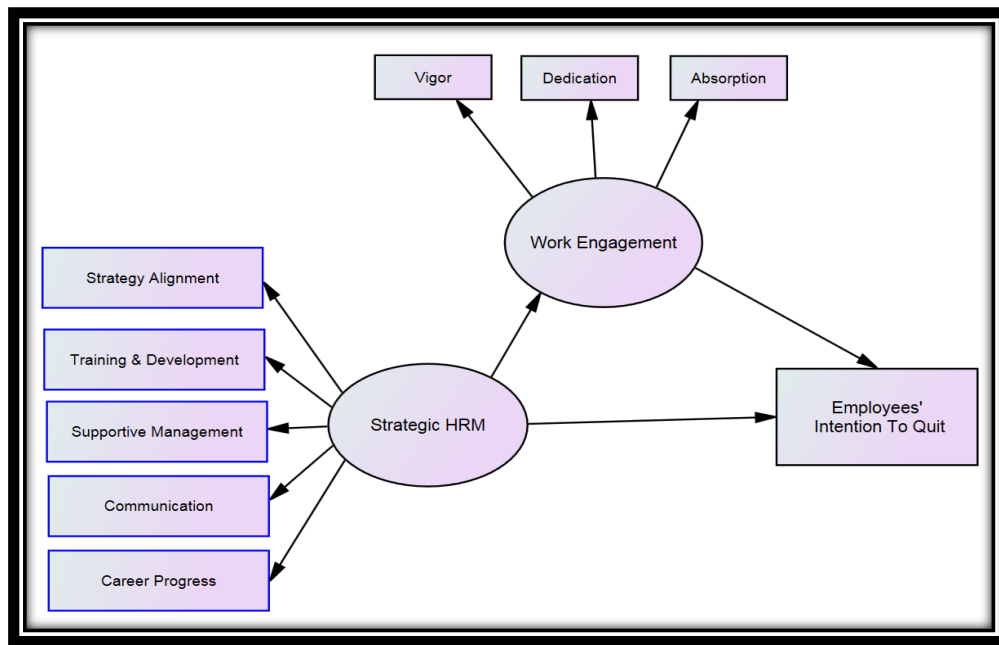


Figure (1)
The structural-equation model proposed for this study

3. Work-engagement Concepts

Still, the meaning of work engagement is equivocal among both academics and practitioners and the term is used at different times to refer to psychological or emotional states or behaviors (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2009; Macey & Schneider, 2008). For the purpose of this study, we refer to the definition of (Schaufeli, 2012; Schaufeli, Bakker & Salanova, 2006:41) that work engagement is "a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication and absorption": Vigor implies high levels of dynamism and mental flexibility while working, the commitment to invest effort in one's work and determination even in the face of difficulties (Bakker & Albrecht, 2018; Eldor, 2016; Schaufeli et al., 2006). Dedication occurs when employees are strongly involved in their work and feel a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride and challenge (Bakker & Albrecht, 2018; Schaufeli et al., 2006). Finally, absorption is when an employee is fully focused and enthusiastically engaged while time passes quickly and an employee has difficulties with separating from work

(Melhem, 2019a; Schaufeli et al., 2006).

However, work engagement is not without antecedents and consequences. For example, Pradhan, Dash and Jena (2019) postulated that work engagement significantly mediated the relationship between HR practices and job satisfaction and that work engagement has the potential to mediate or moderate human-resource management practices and other aspects of organization behavior. Such correlation or association between work engagement and other HRM practices or organizational factors makes work engagement an important and interesting concept for research and business practice (Chamorro-Premuzic, Garrad & Elzinga, 2018; Matthews, 2018; Song, Chai, Kim & Bae, 2018). Such background motivates more investigation into more important associations (antecedents and consequences) between work engagement and other human-resource management activities (Melhem, 2019b).

4. Development of Hypotheses

4.1 Work-engagement Consequences

Exploring work-engagement antecedents is vital for the success of organizations and for improving individual and collective performance. Knight, Patterson and Dawson (2017) found that low work engagement may cause reduced happiness and work performance. The idea of work engagement suggests that engaged employees are physically, cognitively and emotionally engaged in their job responsibilities and feel a perception of value (incentive for investing in-role performance), emotional safety (a perception of confidence and protection at work) and availability (a perception of having the physical and emotional requirements necessary for the job) (Knight et al., 2017).

Cesário and Chambel (2017) investigated the influence of organizational commitment and work engagement on employee performance and found that work engagement was relevant to predictions of employee performance, while commitment did not show significant predictive strength. Accordingly, Huang, Ma and Meng (2018) examined the effect of high-performance work systems (HPWSs) on employee attitudes and on employee engagement and revealed that HPWS is positively related to employees' positive mood and job satisfaction and that job satisfaction and positive mood lead to high employee engagement. Moreover, employees' positive mood and job satisfaction mediate the relationship between HPWS and employee engagement. Low levels of work engagement may lead to high levels of dissatisfaction among employees and increase their intention to lower their productivity or performance-related behaviors. To this end, Shantz, Alfes and Latham (2016) studied the importance of work engagement at the workplace. They tested the assumption that a low level of work engagement leads to higher turnover intentions and deviant employee behavior. The study revealed that employee work engagement correlates negatively with lagged measures of turnover intentions and deviant work behavior directed toward the organization. This finding

motivates more significant effort and attention to explore relevant factors and specific variables associated with work engagement (Bakker, Demerouti & Sanz-Vergel, 2014).

Although previous efforts and literature have tackled the relationship and influence of SHRM on innovation, empowering leadership, job crafting, performance-based pay and job satisfaction, still there seems to be a gap in the literature regarding the exploration of SHRM and employees' intention to quit, mediated by work engagement (Yucel, 2021). This is lacking to date, especially when we touch on the business environment and context of this study. Consequently, there seems to be a lack of research focusing on the role of SHRM and employees' intention to quit, mediated by work engagement, in business organizations in Arabian Gulf Countries. This paper aims to provide logic and evidence of the importance of this association, theoretically and in practice.

As a result of the above discussion regarding SHRM practices, work engagement and intention to quit, the following hypothesis can be established:

H1: Strategic human-resources management (SHRM) practices have a positive impact on work engagement.

4.2 Training and Development

Training and development efforts allow business organizations to reinforce those skills that each employee needs to improve his/her capability and to develop positive attitudes and behaviors toward his/her organization. These developmental activities take all employees to a higher level, so that they all have similar skills and knowledge required to implement the job and lead to higher levels of satisfaction and commitment to the job and the organization.

Wu, Yu, Cai, Huo and Cai (2017) suggested that mentoring and orientation training of newly-hired

employees reduces their intention to quit. Al Adresi and Darun (2017) used structural-equation modeling to find that workers are more dedicated to the company when they get the best SHRM. On-the-job training was the key SHRM practice found to influence employees' commitment toward the company. The study is important in that it identifies training and employee-development activities as strategic HRM practices. Al-Emadi & Marquardt (2007) hypothesized that training has a positive impact on employees' commitment.

Hence, it is hard to overestimate the importance of training and development at this moment, but it is evident that training is an important source for knowledge, skills and ability for employees and all these are sources of confidence and self-efficacy.

Certain HRM activities, including training, appear to result in some organizations experiencing positive outcomes. Findings indicated that training, training satisfaction and work engagement are the most significant factors for predicting an employee's intention to leave (Memon, Salleh & Baharom, 2016). Still, more research is needed to validate and substantiate the relationships between training and development and work engagement.

Hence, we formulate the following hypothesis:

H_{1.1}: Training and development has a significant positive impact on work engagement.

4.3 Strategy Alignment

Strategic Human Capital (SHC) and strategic HRM can illuminate and supplement one another. Boon et al. (2018) established that the integration of SHC and strategic HRM defeats the shortcomings in the two parts and makes a progressively strong way to deal with research into human capital (Boon et al., 2018; Szierbowski-Seibel & Kabst, 2018). Albrecht, Breidahl and Marty (2018) expanded previous work-engagement research by showing how organizational-level resources and organizational engagement relate to job resources and work engagement. Specifically, they showed that organizational resources such

as strategic alignment, human-resource practices and senior leadership are positively related to an organizational engagement climate and job resources, which, in turn, relate to employee work engagement.

Strategic alignment in this study is based upon Boswell's (2006) line-of-sight concept and is different from other ideas, as it focuses on perceived alignment between the job and organizational strategic priorities, rather than the congruence between values held by an individual and the organizational value and culture (e.g. person-organization fit) or between work-related goals of employees and those of their supervisors (Biggs, Brough & Barbour, 2014).

Furthermore, it is expected that the relationship between strategic alignment and work engagement will be direct, rather than reciprocal, as proposed by Biggs et al. (2014). Biggs et al. (2014) speculated that high levels of work engagement would positively predict strategic alignment over time and *vice versa*. The primary theoretical contribution of this study is the investigation of the direct relationship between strategy alignment and work engagement. Hence, we formulate the following hypothesis:

H_{1.2}: Strategy alignment has a significant positive impact on work engagement.

4.4 Management and Organizational Support

Many studies have demonstrated that employees who feel supported by their organizations would feel obligated to reveal favorable attitudes and behaviors towards their organizations (Rhoads & Eisenberger, 2002). Also, many empirical studies have reported positive outcomes of high levels of organization and management support for both organizations and employees, showing increasing affective commitment, trust and performance (Caesens & Stinglhamber, 2014; Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011). Other studies showed that job resources, particularly social support, play an important role in the development of work

engagement (Li, Sun & Dong, 2018; Llorens, Bakker, Schaufeli & Salanova, 2006).

According to Ambrosius (2018), management support is crucial for employees' commitment to stay with the company. The more organizational support companies can offer, the greater the probability that employees stay within the company (Al Saifi, Dillon & McQueen, 2016).

Zhong, Wayne and Liden (2016) emphasized that high-performance human-resource functions were directly correlated to job engagement, as well as indirectly correlated through employees' organizational support (Allen & Shanock, 2013; Arevshatian et al., 2014). Accordingly, Maertz Jr, Griffeth, Campbell and Allen (2007) suggested that management support has a significant impact on employee turnover (Maertz Jr et al., 2007).

However, more empirical work is still needed to explore the impact of both management and organizational support on work engagement and intention to quit. Hence, we formulate the following hypotheses:

H_{1.3}: Supportive management has a significant positive impact on work engagement.

H_{1.4}: Supportive management has a significant negative impact on employees' intention to quit.

4.5 Communication

Communication is an important factor for the success of any organization, where efficient communication guarantees the flow of information between all relevant parties and decreases potential misunderstanding, dissatisfaction and lack of trust. Roehl (2019) proposed that the alignment of HR practices and communication influences the development of the psychological contract of employees, so that employees require both highly aligned HR practices and high-quality communication to form consistent contract perceptions. Memon et al. (2020) revealed that communication has an immediate influence on the success of change and an indirect influence on the success of change through emotional commitment. The study also found that trust only has an indirect effect on the success of change

through emotional commitment. This research makes a significant contribution concerning the influence of communication on organizational performance (Cheney, 2007; Marquardt & Brown, 2014).

Connecting corporate communication to business strategy is vital to effectively provide a sense of commitment and engagement among employees. Communication is an essential HRM aspect of any organization. Whether the objective is to inform employees on new policies and procedures or to listen to the attitudes of employees, active communication is an important element to be considered. To be effective, organizations should have comprehensive policies and strategies for communicating with their employees. Hence, it is expected, according to the research model in this study, that communication should influence employees' commitment and engagement in the job. Hence, we formulate the following hypothesis:

H_{1.5}: Communication has a significant positive impact on work engagement.

4.6 Career Progression

Employees are expected to be more engaged when they understand that their organization is concerned about their career progression. Archibong, Harvey, Baxter & Jogi (2015) referred to career progression as the process of managing historical information regarding past jobs and career progression that can be utilized to guide future success and career decisions. It is a linear career movement, focusing on the person within a job role, potentially advancing up the levels of seniority and responsibility within a company or by moving to another company. When organizations offer career-progression opportunities to their employees, this is vital for employees to feel that they are growing with the company and provide a sense of purpose, which in turn encourages loyalty and offers employees something to look forward to (Xu, Loi & Chow, 2019).

Shuck, Peyton Roberts and Zigarimi (2018)

indicated that sustainable careers are flexible, adaptable, offer opportunities for renewals and meet the long-term needs and goals of employees (Archibong et al., 2015; Malhotra, Smets & Morris, 2016). Ekonen and Heilmann (2015) suggested that careers are never created in a vacuum, nor is career development based on personal interest only. Instead, careers are developed in interactive circumstances. McGinley, O'Neill and Martinez (2014) performed two types of research to identify the impact of career progression on both career change and turnover. Career development and career progression are predicted to impact work engagement. It is expected that those who progress well in their careers will also be engaged in their jobs in order to excel and perform well and then advance in their careers. This assumption is lacking empirical research specifically exploring the association between work engagement and career progression.

In conclusion, previous studies tackled many important elements related to career progression. However, none of these studies have tried to look at the association between career progression, work engagement and the intention to quit. Hence, we formulate the following hypothesis:

H_{1.6}: Career progression has a significant positive impact on work engagement.

4.7 Employees' Intention to Quit

Employees' intention to quit and the staff turnover in organizations are considered as some of the most significant challenges to HRM in general and SHRM in particular. However, the consequence of employees' intention to quit has received considerable attention from top management and human-resource management professionals. Para-González, Jiménez-Jiménez and Martínez-Lorente (2019) revealed that proactive SHRM can produce HR practices and systems of high performance which increase employees' commitment and lead to improved results in the performance of both employees and organizations. Para-González et al. (2019) investigated the link between SHRM and employees' commitment and their intention to quit. Moreover, Ghosh

and Gurunathan (2015) revealed that commitment-based HR practices affect employees' intention to quit. The study indicates that on-the-job embeddedness is negatively related to job-change intentions and mediates the relation between commitment-based HR practices and employees' intention to quit.

Ambrosius (2018) revealed that, when dealing with employee retention, both strategic talent management and human capital need to be taken into consideration. The study also identified that strategic talent-management practices are the most important aspects of decreasing employees' intention to quit.

Fahim (2018) concluded that the implementation of most excellent HRM practices is considered a significant strategic instrument for the retention of employees. Furthermore, evidence has been provided that SHRM supports employee retention (Al-Mohaisen and Kasasbeh, 2021).

Jabeen & Alhashmi (2018) implemented a study in the UAE to explore the factors that may lead to employees' intention to quit and revealed that work-family conflict and job autonomy are significantly correlated with the intention to quit.

In conclusion, the above studies suggested a strong association between HRM practices and employees' intention to quit. Also, research demonstrated a significant association between human-resource management practices and work engagement in reducing employees' intention to quit in GCC states.

As a result, the following hypotheses can be introduced:

H2: Strategic human-resources management (SHRM) practices have a negative impact on employees' intention to quit, mediated by work engagement.

H3: Work engagement has a negative impact on employees' intention to quit.

5. Method

5.1 Sampling

The population of the current study includes all employees in the construction industry in GCC countries who have active accounts at the LinkedIn social-networking site. LinkedIn is a professional social-media site used for building and sharing professional relations. It has become a widely recognized tool since its launch in 2003 (LinkedIn Press Room). Semi-skilled and unskilled laborers are excluded and not part of the study. The sample included 612 respondents taken by a systematic random method from the population count of 19,057 employees. The study tested the theoretical model by employing a measurement model ($n=612$) and the missing values = zero.

5.2 Instrument

SHRM contained five factors; career progression, communication, supportive management, training and development and strategy alignment. Career progression consists of five items adopted from McConnell (2011). A sample item is “Our company identifies the career goals and developmental needs of employees based on their performance appraisal”. Communication is represented by five items, with a sample item: “Top management listens to employees' concerns and suggestions”. Supportive management consists of five items, of which, “My manager helps me understand my strengths and areas for development” is one important aspect of supportive management style. A five-item scale of training and development was adopted from McConnell (2011). A sample item is “Our company encourages employees to participate in various training programs, seminars and workshops relevant to our job responsibilities”. Finally, the

fifth factor in the HRM scale is strategy alignment, which is measured by five items. A sample item is, “My manager works to align the goals of our department with the goals of the whole company”.

Work engagement is measured by three factors adopted from Seppälä et al. (2009). A six-item scale of vigor was adopted by Seppälä et al. (2009). A sample item is “At my job, I feel strong and active”, followed by ‘dedication’ with a five-item scale, represented by a sample item of “The work that I do is meaningful and purposeful”. The third factor of work engagement is absorption, which is assessed by five items, with “When I work, I forget everything else around me” as one important item that describes the extent to which employees are engaged and particularly absorbed by the task at hand. Intention to quit is represented by five items adopted from Kennedy (2006). Sample items are, “I would not continue to work for this company in the future” and “I would leave my company right now, because I don't have a sense of obligation to the people in it”. The coefficient-reliability value of all scales in this study was strong, ranging between 0.089 and 0.092.

5.3 SEM Research-model Identification

The research model illustrated in Figure 2 shows that the latent variables (including error terms/disturbances) within the model have an assigned scale. The degree of freedom is above zero and the research model is identified and achieves the minimum requirements of identification.

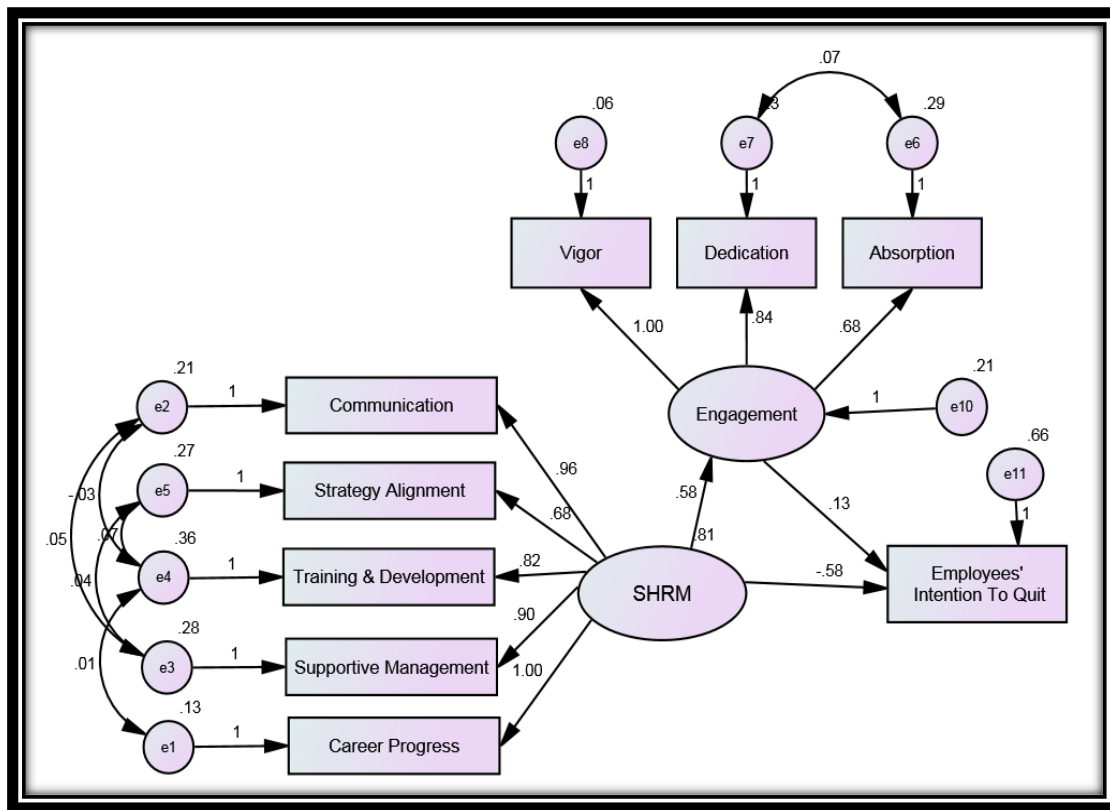


Figure (2)
SEM research model

5.4 Model Estimation

According to Kline (2015), the method of maximum likelihood (ML) estimation is the default in most SEM programs and most structural-equation models described in the literature are analyzed with this method. Kline (2015) also emphasized that maximum likelihood explains the statistical principle behind the derivation of parameter

estimates; the estimates maximize the likelihood (the continuous generalization) that the data (the observed covariance) was drawn from this population. This research seeks to employ the maximum likelihood (ML) method to estimate the research model, as indicated in Table 1.

Table 1
Standardized regression weights

Factors		Estimate
Engagement	SHRM	0.744
Career Progression	SHRM	0.936
Communication	SHRM	0.873
Supportive Management	SHRM	0.831
Vigor	Engagement	0.931

Factors		Estimate
Dedication	Engagement	0.779
Absorption	Engagement	0.663
Employees' Intention to Quit	Engagement	-0.650
Training & Development	SHRM	0.788
Strategy Alignment	SHRM	0.757

Table 1 indicates that the factor loading of career progression is 0.936. This factor very strongly loads on the latent variable, SHRM. Table 1 indicates also that employees' intention to quit tends to have the lowest factor loading, -0.650. Hence, the factor loading for all variables is strong enough to proceed to the next stage in this analysis. Hence, during the model estimation stage, no variables were removed.

5.5 Model Testing

According to Schumacker and Lomax (2004), after obtaining the parameter estimates, the next step is to determine how well the data fits the model. Table 2

illustrates the regression estimates and the critical value (C.R.) is above 1.96 for all factors and the probability of getting a critical ratio in absolute value is highly significant at less than 0.001 for all factors. Moreover, the regression weight for **all factors** is significantly different from zero at the 0.001 level (two-tailed). Finally, the sign of the parameter "employees' intention to quit" is negative, which agrees with what is expected from the theoretical model. In conclusion, the decision is to maintain the hypothesized model, because the model under consideration fits the data.

Table 2
Regression weight estimates

Factors		Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Engagement	SHRM	0.562	0.027	20.649	***
Career Progression	SHRM	1.000			
Communication	SHRM	0.936	0.030	30.879	***
Supportive Mgt	SHRM	0.885	0.032	27.730	***
Vigor	Engagement	1.000			
Dedication	Engagement	0.856	0.042	20.451	***
Absorption	Engagement	0.693	0.042	16.656	***
Employees' Intention to Quit	Engagement	-0.878	0.077	-11.357	***
Training & Development	SHRM	0.827	0.033	25.068	***
Strategy Alignment	SHRM	0.667	0.028	23.868	***

Note: For all values, $P < 0.01$.

Model Modification

Table (3) shows the regression estimates after applying

the modification indices revealing the proper model fit after the performed modifications.

Table 3
Regression weight estimates after indices modification

		Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Result
Engagement	SHRM	0.583	0.027	21.731	***	Significant
Career Prog.	SHRM	1.216	0.49	24.956	***	Significant
Comm.	SHRM	0.955	0.030	31.998	***	Significant
Supp. Mgt.	SHRM	0.900	0.032	28.219	***	Significant
Training	SHRM	0.822	0.033	24.956	***	Significant
Str. Align.	SHRM	0.681	0.028	24.527	***	Significant
Vigor	Engagemen t	1.159	0.057	20.340	***	Significant
Dedication	Engagemen t	0.863	0.042	20.357	***	Significant
Absorption	Engagemen t	0.625	0.045	13.901	***	Significant
Intention to Quit	Engagemen t	-0.862	0.076	-11.375	***	Significant

Note: For all values, $P < 0.01$.

Construct Validity

Construct validity in the data is fulfilled according to Civelek (2018), because factor loads above 0.50 are evidence of convergent validity. Moreover, when the critical

rate value of a statement in CFA results is greater than 2 as an absolute value, this means that this item is loaded to the factor that it is related to, according to Kline (2015) and Civelek (2018).

Table 4
Regression results of the confirmatory factor analysis

Items	Conceptual Variable	Standardized Factor Loads	Standard Error	Critical Ratio
Engagement	SHRM	1.050	0.027	21.731
Career Progression	SHRM	0.926	0.049	24.956
Communication	SHRM	0.882	0.030	31.998
Supportive Mgt.	SHRM	0.836	0.032	28.219
Vigor	Engagement	0.677	0.057	20.357
Dedication	Engagement	0.572	0.042	20.357

Absorption	Engagement	0.435	0.045	13.901
Training & Development	SHRM	0.776	0.033	24.956
Strategy Alignment	SHRM	0.766	0.028	24.527
Intention to Quit	Engagement	-0.464	0.076	-11.375

Note: For all values, $P < 0.01$; $n = 612$.

Table 4 demonstrates the results of the confirmatory factor analysis. What is important here is that the standard factor loads of the factors under each conceptual variable are over 0.50, except for absorption (0.435) and intention to quit (-0.464), while the critical rate (CR) value is greater than 2. Hence, the convergent validity of the research model is high.

Goodness-of-fit Statistics

Kline (2015) suggested different methods for evaluating

model fit. Approximate fit indices are scaled as goodness-of-fit statistics, because the higher their values, the closer the model fit. Values of goodness-of-fit indices are more or less standardized, so that their range is 0-1.0, where a value of 1.0 indicates the best fit.

Table 5 demonstrates the model fit-value estimates of CMIN/DF, CFI, AGFI, GFI, NFI and RMSEA. The model fit shows that all estimates are excellent.

Table 5
Summary of estimated fit values

Fit Indices	Values	Acceptable Fit	Goodness of Fit	Result
CMIN/DF	2.047	$2 < \text{CMIN/DF} < 3$	$0 < \text{CMIN/DF} < 2$	Acceptable
CFI	0.995	$0,95 < \text{CFI} < 0,97$	$0,97 < \text{CFI} < 1$	Goodness
AGFI	0.966	$0,85 < \text{AGFI} < 0,90$	$0,90 < \text{AGFI} < 1$	Goodness
GFI	0.986	$0,90 < \text{GFI} < 0,95$	$0,95 < \text{GFI} < 1$	Goodness
NFI	0.990	$0,90 < \text{NFI} < 0,95$	$0,95 < \text{NFI} < 1$	Goodness
RMSEA	0.041	$0,05 < \text{RMSEA} < 0,08$	$0 < \text{RMSEA} < 0,05$	Goodness
Source: Civelek (2018: 18) & Schumacker and Lomax (2010: 76).				

To conclude, Figure 3 illustrates goodness-of-fit values of the model. The model emphasized that there is statistically significant support for the principle that strategic human-resources management (SHRM) can be measured and predicted through the five dimensions (strategy alignment, training and development, supportive management, communication and career progression) that constitute the construct of strategic human-resource management. However, the results also indicated that career progression

was the factor with the highest loading. The results significantly support the view that vigor, dedication and absorption constitute the construct of work engagement. The results also show that strategic human-resource management has a negative impact on an employee's intention to quit, mediated through work engagement. Finally, the results indicate that strategic human-resource management has a positive impact on work engagement.

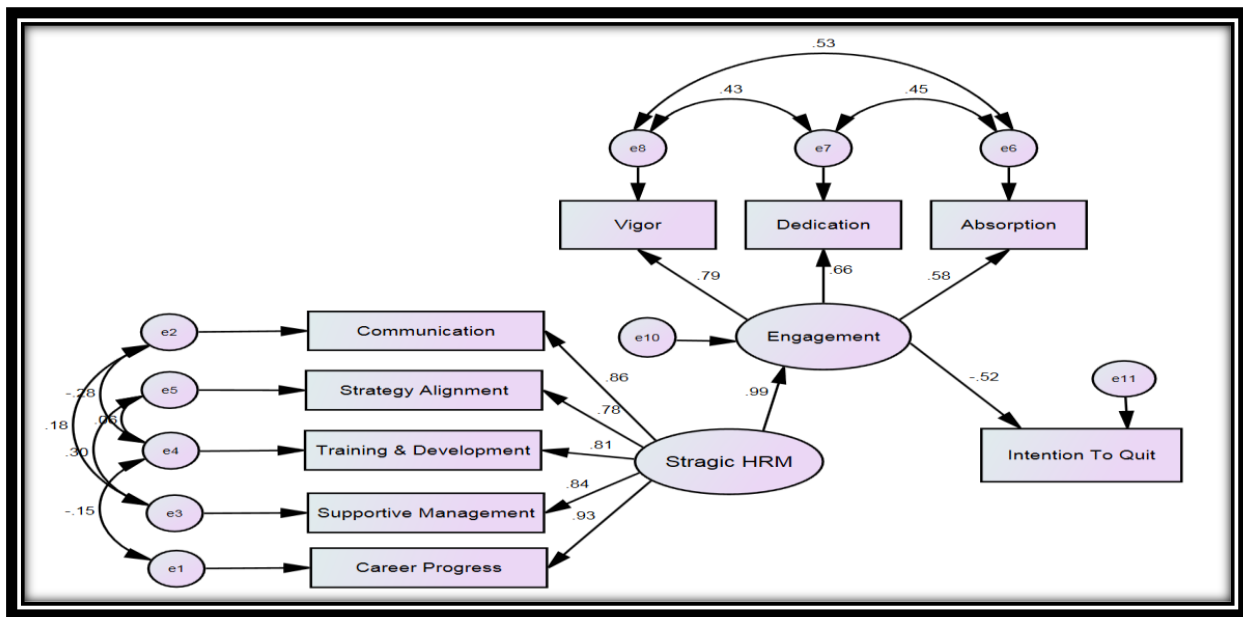


Figure (3)
Goodness-of-fit model

6. Discussion

The model developed in this study represents the impact of strategic human-resource management (SHRM) on employees' intention to quit, mediated by work engagement. **First**, the measured variables (strategy alignment, training and development, supportive management, communication and career progression) comprise one latent construct, strategic human-resource management (SHRM). **Second**, vigor, dedication and absorption comprise one latent construct, work engagement. **Third**, SHRM has a direct positive impact on the work engagement construct and an indirect negative impact on employees' intention to quit. **Fourth**, work engagement has a direct negative impact on employees' intention to quit (Saks, 2022).

The findings of this study help understand how perceived strategic human-resource management (SHRM) practices are realized among employees. Going beyond Ghosh et al. (2019), our findings contributed differently that the communication process in business organizations is distinctively important for work engagement and intention to stay at work. Hence, effective communication may help

employees maintain good working relationships and positive attitude towards one's job and workplace (Ghosh et al., 2019; Saks, 2022).

Also, we arrived at similar results to those of Arevshatian et al. (2014) regarding the strategic human-resource management dimensions. However, training and development, communication and career progression are shown as significant factors among other SHRM dimensions. This result expanded our understanding of the importance of involving employees in training programs to improve their skills and increase their knowledge and the importance of developing career-progression plans for employees in the GCC. Thus, training programs allow employees to strengthen the skills that each employee needs to improve. Training plans which include developmental courses result in enhancing employees' competencies and professional levels. Additionally, respondents perceive that career-progression and developmental plans represent an effective way to reach their career objectives.

Strategic alignment is also seen as a significant dimension to predict and measure strategic human-resource management (SHRM). This specific finding was not reported in previous studies. It is perhaps reasonable that, when SHRM, business strategy and organizational culture are aligned, they create a sense of direction and purpose for employees to channel their actions and decisions.

Consequently, this result supports the assumption of our theoretical model that strategy alignment, training and development, communication, supportive management and career progression embody the construct of strategic human-resource management.

The findings of this study indicated that strategic human-resource management (SHRM) has a statistically significant impact on work engagement. These findings are consistent with Shuck et al. (2014), Thurgood and Barrick (2015) and Verbarg and Boon (2015). Therefore, our study accepts the hypothesis that strategic human-resource management (SHRM) has a significant positive impact on work engagement. The findings also indicated that the indirect effect of SHRM through work engagement on employees' intention to quit is negative and significantly correlated to employees' intention to quit. These findings are consistent with Ambrosius (2018), Fahim (2018), Ghosh and Gurunathan (2015) and Saks (2022). Hence, this hypothesis was supported.

Finally, our study accepted the hypothesis that work engagement has a significant negative impact on employees' intention to quit. Engaged employees are expected to be more connected to their organizations and to have a lower tendency to leave them. This result is also supported by several scholars who found that work engagement is negatively related to intention to quit. These findings are also consistent with Chen (2018).

7. Implications for Future Researchers and Practitioners

The results of this study have several implications for future research. Researchers and HRM professionals are encouraged to conduct more research to explore the

relationship of SHRM with other known constructs. Furthermore, this study examined only a five-dimensional SHRM construct. However, future studies are encouraged to test other SHRM dimensional constructs, such as talent management, innovation, change management and high-performance work systems to assess their statistical significance. Moreover, this study estimated the impact of SHRM on employees' intention to quit, mediated by work engagement in the construction sector in the GCC: future studies are encouraged to measure this impact in other industries and sectors as well as in other countries.

HRM practitioners are encouraged to plan and implement SHRM programs and activities as supported by the results of this study. Enrolling employees in activities, such as training and development and supporting their career progression, may result in decreasing employees' intention to quit. An organization that offers supportive management and efficient communication channels is in a better position to expect a low quit rate from its employees. Finally, implementing efficient programs in work engagement and commitment helps organizations enhance SHRM programs and gain more prosperous results (Abuzaid and Rawashdeh, 2020).

Finally, this study utilized the social-media network, LinkedIn, to collect data and implement the study. Future studies are encouraged to utilize this approach, especially in cases with a wide geographical distribution of respondents across many countries. The informal communication style with the respondents was more efficient than the formal style; so, future researchers are encouraged to utilize this informal communication approach in the data-collection process (Abuzaid and Rawashdeh, 2020).

8. Limitations

Employees' perception of SHRM is not the only

factor that could affect their intention to quit. Furthermore, employees in GCC countries come from varied cultural backgrounds; so, their diversified backgrounds are a restriction because of their different expectations from the organization, which may affect their intention to quit. Moreover, the size of the sample is a limitation to this research. The sample includes only employees who work in GCC countries. This means that the results may only be applicable to organizations in this region, which limits the ability to generalize the research results.

While this study has provided important insights, there are some other limitations, which may limit its generalizability:

1. This study utilized only the construction sector in the GCC countries. Despite the valuable information that

comes from this study, caution must be used when generalizing from construction to other sectors and categories. There may be similarities, but other sectors may have different results.

2. There were some limitations to the distribution of the electronic survey. Some respondents refused to open the survey link, because they do not usually open links from people whom they do not personally know.

Future studies might also examine the impact of further mediators and moderators on the relationship between SHRM and employees' intention to quit. As the contingency perspective suggests, the impact of SHRM depends on further organizational and environmental factors.

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