

# Human resource development and employee turnover intentions: the mediating role of employee engagement

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## ABSTRACT

*Highly engaged employees ensure organizational competitiveness and success. The study examined whether employee engagement mediates the relationship between human resource development and employee turnover intentions. A field study was conducted among six indigenously owned healthcare institutions and 14 internationally owned healthcare institutions. The data supported the hypothesized relationships. The results indicate a significant association between HRD and the levels of behavioral engagement. HRD and the levels of emotional engagement had an insignificant relationship. HRD and the levels of cognitive engagement were significantly related. The findings also indicated that the association between HRD and employee turnover intentions was mediated by employee engagement. The present study's emphasis on healthcare institutions may constrain the generalizability of the findings. The study suggests the adoption and development of well-designed and formulated HRD practices enhance employee engagement, knowledge development, and organizational commitment. By empirically demonstrating that employee engagement mediates the nexus of HRD and employee turnover intentions, the study extends the literature.*

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## Introduction

Organizations need highly motivated, enthusiastic, committed and engaged employees, since highly engaged employees ensures organizational competitiveness and success (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Kataria et al., 2013). Researchers that have made significant contributions to human resource development, have focused on HRD and their associated performance outcomes through several interconnected streams of inquiry (Gilley et al., 2011; McDonald & Hite, 2005; Otoo, 2020). Employees' skills are regularly developed and natured to address the issue of lack of qualified human resources in enhancing organizational performance (Uraon, 2018). Low levels of employee engagement and turnover intention are experienced by organizations in spite of their proactive approaches to HRD (Gupta, 2017; Shuck et al., 2011). As a result, organizations experience high employee turnover (Guchait & Cho, 2010). Low levels of employee engagement and turnover intention have a negative impact on both employee and organizational performance (Bhatnagar, 2012; Lacity et al., 2008; Markos & Sridevi, 2010). Several authors have advocated the connection between HRD (Ghosh et al., 2012), turnover intentions (Supeli & Creed, 2016) and employee engagement (Bailey et al., 2017). However, human resource development is an antecedent that significantly affects employee behavior in the workplace (Glambek et al., 2014; Cho & McLean, 2009). Axioms regarding the presence of employee engagement have been thoroughly studied (Saks, 2006). Employee engagement are thought to improve organizational citizenship behavior, commitment and task performance (Al Mehrzi & Singh, 2016; Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008). Enhanced levels of employee engagement are related with employee participation in HRD (Czarnowsky, 2008). Although the link between HRD and engagement may seem obvious, not much study has examined this relationship empirically (Shuck et al., 2011). Despite passing and related assertions, the connection between HRD and employee engagement is yet distinctly uncertain (Czarnowsky, 2008).

The crucial variability in HRD impacts employee engagement and employee turnover intentions (Ghosh et al., 2012). The social exchange theory (SET) can be espoused in understanding the connection between HRD, employee engagement and turnover

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intentions. According to the social exchange theory each party in a relationship has a duty to each other (Settoon *et al.*, 1996). Social exchange theory hypothesizes that the assessment of options and perceptions of benefit and cost influence how people interact with one another (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). While a firm may have strong HRD practice, employee perceptions of support for their participation in those interventions may be clearly low, which could negatively impact desired performance outcome. Nonetheless, the empirical link between employee participation in HRD and performance-related factors like employee engagement and employee turnover intentions is disproportionately underrepresented in literature.

Based on this gap, the aim of this study was to precisely examine within the context of employee engagement the association between HRD and turnover intentions. Consequently, the study intended to investigate the connection between HRD and employee engagement and how this potential relationship affected a worker's propensity to leave. Section two presents the literature review, hypotheses and conceptual framework. The next section gives a detailed description of the research context, methods, sample and measures. Section four presents the results obtained and discussions of the findings. The implication for practice, limitations and recommendations for further research are discussed in the paper's conclusion.

## Literature Review

### Empirical Review and Hypothesis Development

#### *Human Resource Development*

Interdisciplinary in nature, HRD comprises a wide range of disciplines and practices (Weinberger, 1998). Swanson (2001) posited that HRD incorporated system, psychological and economic theories to add fresh perspectives to its theoretical underpinnings in its evolution. Nadler (1970) opined that HRD is a set of coordinated actions undertaken over a predetermined period of time intended to generate behavioral change. Simonds and Pederson (2006) also espoused economic, system and psychological theory to define HRD as a collection of organized and unstructured performance-based learning activities that increases an organization and individual capacity to successfully manage change. Cho and McLean (2009) postulates that HRD interventions seeks to reduce employee turnover, maintain highly engaged and committed employees and productive human resources. This goes parallel with the findings of Kareem and Hussein (2019) who contend that HRD enhances employees' knowledge and skills through a number of structured human resource activities. This is also consistent with the finding of Chew and Chan (2008) and Guchait and Cho (2010) which showed that HRD practices significantly and positively impact employee's intention to stay in their current position.

#### *Employee Engagement*

In the fields of management, organizational psychology and HRD, employee engagement is a newly developed concept (Gruman & Saks, 2011; Shuck, 2011). Robinson *et al.* (2004) highlighted that for a subject that has gained so much popularity, there has been remarkably little academic and empirical investigation. Shuck and Wollard (2010) defined employee engagement as the behavioral, cognitive and emotional condition of an individual employee directed toward desirable organizational results. Fleming and Asplund (2007) postulates that that employee engagement is the capacity to win over the minds, hearts, and souls of employees and inspire them to strive for excellence. There hasn't been any model or theory building on employee engagement. However, two study areas offer models of employee engagement. Personal engagement and disengagement model and burn out concept (Kahn, 1990; Maslach *et al.*, 2001). Kahn (1990) opined that availability, safety and meaningfulness are the psychological elements connected to workplace engagement or disengagement. Burnout implies a decline in employee engagement (Maslach *et al.*, 2001). Gallup (2002) categorized employees as engaged, non-engaged and actively disengaged. Engaged workers constantly strive to perform their jobs as effectively as possible. Employees who are actively engaged make an ongoing effort (Shuck *et al.*, 2011). The duties at hand take precedence over the goals of the organization when employees are disengaged (Wollard, 2011). Actively disengaged workers pose a concern since they not only deliver subpar performance but also undermine the motivation of other workers (Bhatnagar, 2012). Welch (2011) argued that the fundamental idea of engagement is similar to other concepts like organizational commitment. Emotional attachment to the organization and the desire to remain with organizations are how practitioners most frequently characterize engagement (Vecina *et al.*, 2013). Employees that are engaged in their work feel energized and connected to their work, and they take initiative to meet job needs (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2006). Employees that are engaged in their work are more dedicated, put in more effort, and are more likely to go above and beyond what is expected of them (Chalofsky & Krishna, 2009). Three unique components of engagement were postulated by Shuck and Reio (2011) which alignment result in the feeling of engagement. The following employee engagement facets; behavioural, emotional and cognitive engagements were examined in this study.

#### *Employee Turnover Intentions*

Employee turnover is an employee's consideration of leaving their position and intent to look for another employment outside the company (Bhatnagar, 2012). The experience that employees have had in their firms' accounts for this behaviour (Krishnan & Singh, 2010). This perception is formed by employees based on their knowledge of the environment and organizational procedures (Uraon, 2018). However, depending on whether or not they had a good or bad experience, employees may decide to stay or quit (Agarwal *et al.*, 2012). Employee turnover has significant impact on organizations by interrupting ongoing organizational activities and influencing the cost of human capital loss (Smyth *et al.*, 2009). Yin-Fah *et al.* (2010) endorsed the aforementioned opinion when they argued that employee turnover negatively impacts organizations especially when highly skilled and competent employees quit.

Cho et al. (2009) postulate that employee turnover intentions reveal a breach of association between employees and the organization. Karatepe and Ngeche (2012) argued that employee turnover intentions undermine organizational effectiveness. Similarly, Beach *et al.* (2003) contend that high employee turnover endangers organizations by undermining their production and efficiency and endangering their long-term existence.

#### *HRD and Employee Engagement*

Employees' behavior is greatly influenced by human resource development (Bartlett, 2001; Otoo *et al.*, 2019; Saks, 2006). Kahn (1990) accent that having unambiguous benefits, protective assurances and resources to uphold from their employers, employees are likely to engage. In the same vein, several other authors argue that since HRD practices are essential for managing these psychological states, the level of employee engagement can increase by implementing the right HRD interventions (Gilley *et al.*, 2011; Rousseau & Greller, 1994). HRD practices improve employee engagement through training and development programs like gender sensitivity training, diversity and conflict management (Shuck & Reio, 2011). Similarly, Schaufeli *et al.* (2006) accentuate that engaged employees take initiative to meet job needs, a strong sense of vitality and commitment. This is consistent with the study of Wollard and Shuck (2011) who found that employee engagement has consequences for all facets of HRD practices, including organizational development, career development, performance management and strategic change management.

#### *HRD and Behavioral Engagement*

Behavioral engagement is the tangible, overt manifestation of emotional and cognitive engagement (Shuck & Reio, 2011). Behavioral engagement augments the levels of actual performance (Macey & Schneider, 2008). Rich *et al.* (2010) postulate that behaviour engagement improves organizational citizenship behavior and task performance. Lee and Bruvold (2003) contend that employee participation in HRD practices results in employee contribution towards higher organizational performance. The following is hypothesized.

H1: HRD is significantly related to the levels of behavioral engagement.

#### *HRD and Emotional Engagement*

Emotional engagement is an employee's readiness to invest their beliefs, pride and knowledge following a favorable cognitive assessment (Baumruk, 2004). Zigarmi *et al.* (2009) accent that emotional engagement is premised on the perception and beliefs of cognitively engaged individuals, which explains how beliefs and emotions are generated, shaped and directed. Macey and Schneider (2008) argued that employees exhibiting higher levels of emotional engagement feel more connected and part and parcel of the organization. Rich *et al.* (2010) accentuates that participation in HRD precipitates employee decision to take action. The following is hypothesized.

H2: HRD is significantly related to the levels of emotional engagement.

#### *HRD and Cognitive Engagement*

Cognitive engagement is an individuals' appraisal of the safety and meaningfulness as well as the sufficiency of resources to augment task performance with the required skill level (Kahn, 1990). Brown and Leigh (1996) contend that employees' cognitive assessments of their jobs indicate their level of engagement or propensity to work. Rich *et al.* (2010) posited that employee participation in HRD interventions results in enhanced engagement levels. Shuck *et al.* (2011) argued that persistent exposure to these unfavorable participating in HRD practices culminates in employee isolation and high employee turnover. The following is hypothesized.

H3: HRD is significantly related to the levels of cognitive engagement.

#### *Employee Engagement and Employee Turnover Intentions*

Truss *et al.*, (2013) posited that highly engaged employees are dedicated to their organization with a strong sense of passion. Employee engagement enhances productivity, employee retention and job satisfaction (Harter *et al.*, 2002). Similarly, several authors argue that employee engagement reduce absenteeism and employee turnover intentions (Dalal *et al.*, 2012; Xanthopoulou *et al.*, 2009). In the same vein, Khan (1990) contends that due to emotional, mental and physical attachment to their professions, higher engaged people put a lot of effort into their work. This is consistent with the study of Hakanen *et al.*, (2008) who found that improved engagement level leads to a lesser turnover intention, positive mind set and attitude towards work. The following is hypothesized.

H4: Employee engagement is significantly related to employee turnover intentions

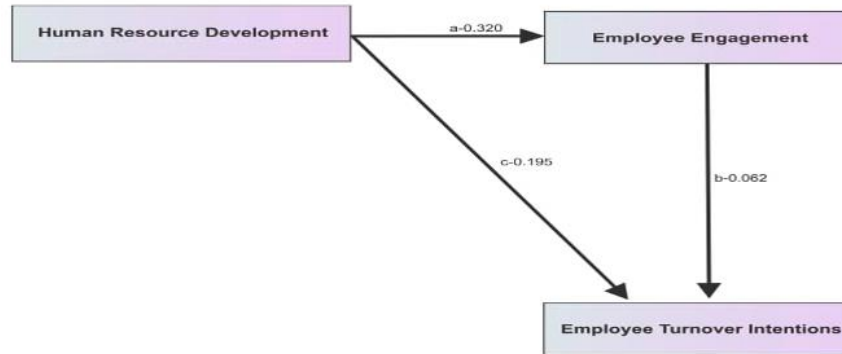
#### *The Mediating Role of Employee Engagement*

The connection between employee engagement and organizational outcomes has been examined by several researchers (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; McDonald & Hite, 2005). Employee engagement enhances knowledge development, individual performance, financial returns and customer loyalty (Gupta *et al.*, 2017; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Song *et al.*, 2012). Several other authors emphasize that echelons of employee engagement lower the likelihood of turnover intentions and improve commitment and organizational citizenship behavior (Kataria *et al.*, 2013; Truss *et al.*, 2013). The literature on strategic SHRD and social exchange theory is referenced in this study (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). According to SET, a series of interactions between

two parties who are in a condition of reciprocal interdependence and feel obligated could lead to the discovery of a reciprocal relationship (Blau, 1964). Lavelle *et al.*, (2009) contend that high levels of social exchange encourage positive behaviour and decreases turnover intentions and absenteeism. Similarly, several authors accentuate that higher employee engagement enhance competitive advantage, productivity and reduces employee turnover intentions (Bal *et al.*, 2013; Valentin, 2014; Wollard, 2011). The following is hypothesized.

H5: Employee engagement mediates the relationship between HRD and employee turnover intentions.

The model of mediation with path coefficient is depicted in figure I.



**Figure 1:** Model of Mediation with path coefficient

## Research and Methods

### Research Setting and Data Structure

An empirical investigation was conducted in accredited health care institutions in general practice and specialty clinics. Institutions that provide health care play a significant role in maintaining people's health throughout their lives and are essential to the successful development of people, families and societies (World Health Report, 2003). The Ghana Health Service Directory (2022) was used to gather information about the health care institutions. Data were collected from 20 health care institutions of which 14 were internationally owned while 6 are indigenously owned. The study sample was 1280 respondents. Cross-sectional study design and standardized questionnaire were employed (Saunders *et al.*, 2003). Health care institution were selected using a purposive sampling technique (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). Employees were chosen as the study's main informants (Schein, 2004). 900 respondents provided an exhaustive response (a 70.3 percent response rate). 70.0 percent of healthcare institutions are internationally owned, while 30.0 percent were indigenously owned. Evaluation anxieties were reduced thereby allaying the concern of common method by protecting the identity of respondents (Fuller *et al.*, 2016; Mossholder *et al.*, 1998; Richardson *et al.*, 2009).

**Table 1:** Profile of Respondents

Variables	Frequency (s)	Percentage of totals (%)	Variables	Frequency (s)	Percentage of totals (%)
<b>Gender</b>			<b>Education</b>		
Male	510	56.7	Senior High	85	9.4
Female	390	43.3	Diploma	139	15.4
			HND	99	11.0
<b>Age</b>			Bachelor's degree	164	18.2
18-25	180	20.0	MBBS	272	30.3
26-35	469	52.1	Postgraduate Diploma	59	6.6
36-45	140	15.6	Master's degree	82	9.1
46-55	71	7.9			
56-65	40	4.4	<b>Health Care Institution</b>		
<b>Department</b>			Indigenously owned	6	30.0
Medical	300	33.3	Internationally owned	14	70.0
Nursing	185	20.6			
Paramedical	215	23.9			
Dietary	55	6.1			
Outpatient	65	7.2			
Accident & Emergency	45	5.0			
Operating Theatre (OT)	35	3.9			

## Measures and Analytic approach

On a Likert scale of 1 to 5, with 5 representing "strongly agree," and 1 "strongly disagree," all measures were scored. HRD: Lee and Bruvold (2003) perceived investment in employee development (PIED) scale was used in measuring HRD. Sample items include "employees receive training in the skills needed for advancing their careers", "employees are provided with career counselling and planning assistance", "career-management program for the employees is supported", and "systematic program to evaluate employees' skills and interests. The reliability of the scale was 0.94.

*Employee Engagement:* Behaviour engagement (Rich et al., 2010), emotional engagement (Shuck et al., 2014) and cognitive engagement (Macey & Schneider, 2008) were employed in measuring employee engagement. Sample items include "I give my job everything I have", "a lot of energy is devoted to my job", "I make every effort to do a good job", "I take pride in my work", "I feel energized at work", "I have a good feeling about my job", "I only have work on my mind", "I focus a lot of attention on my work" and "I am engrossed in my task while at work". The reliability of the scale was 0.88.

*Employee Turnover Intentions:* Cho et al. (2009) scale of turnover intentions was employed in measuring employee turnover intentions. Sample items include "I will quit as soon as I can land a better job", "I am seriously considering leaving my job", "I am seeking for a job actively". The reliability of the scale was 0.82.

A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to examine whether indicators accurately depicted the postulated constructs (Otoo & Mishra, 2018). A two-level hierarchical linear model was created and tested. A structural equation modeling (SEM) was employed in testing the model and hypothesis (Hoyle, 2011). The relationship between the observed indicators and their latent construct as well as the connection between the sub-dimensions were investigated (Otoo et al., 2019). The mediation model was evaluated using Baron and Kenny (1986) classical product method. The mediation model is displayed in figure 1 above.

## Results

A three-factor CFA model with good model fit ( $\chi^2/df = 2.85$ , RMSEA= 0.051, SRMR= 0.044, TLI=0.974, CFI=0.982) represented HRD, employee engagement and employee turnover intentions (Herzog & Boomsma, 2009; Tanaka, 1993). The coefficient's estimates ranged from 0.79 to 0.87 (Sekaran, 2003; Pallant, 2005). The range of standard estimates was 0.56 to 0.72. (Gerbing & Anderson, 1992; Kline, 2011). Estimates for AVE ranged from 0.68 to 0.94, while estimates for CR a ranged from 0.86 to 0.96 (Jackson, 2007; Wang, et al., 1996). Discriminating validity was established (Bollen, 1990; Hoyle 2011).

**Table 2:** Descriptive statistics, Correlations, and Scale reliabilities

Items	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. Human Resource Development	18.67	6.08	1				
2. Behavioral Engagement	12.84	4.15	0.248**	1			
3. Emotional Engagement	10.75	3.23	0.275**	0.382**	1		
4. Cognitive Engagement	8.36	2.72	0.446**	0.456*	0.455**	1	
5. Employee Turnover Intentions	7.69	2.12	0.509**	0.461**	0.405**	0.483**	1

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). \*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 2 presents descriptive statistics and intercorrelations between variables. For model test results, see Table 3. Results of the CFA are shown in Table 4 while the discriminant validity test is shown in Table 5.

**Table 3:** Results of the Measurement and Structural Model Test

Model	$\chi^2$	Df	$\chi^2/df$	P	RMSEA	SRMR	TLI	CFI
First order CFA								
Human Resource Development	215.627	68	3.17	0.000	0.054	0.052	0.924	0.932
Employee Turnover Intentions	224.806	69	3.26	0.000	0.056	0.054	0.919	0.923
Employee Engagement	218.634	67	3.27	0.000	0.057	0.056	0.914	0.921
Second order CFA								
Human Resource Development	212.528	68	3.12	0.000	0.055	0.054	0.926	0.937
Employee Turnover Intentions	217.694	69	3.15	0.000	0.057	0.056	0.934	0.941
Employee Engagement	215.634	67	3.21	0.000	0.058	0.057	0.916	0.933
Measurement model-Overall model	226.231	64	3.53	0.000	0.057	0.053	0.953	0.976
Structural model -Overall model	136.571	48	2.85	0.000	0.051	0.044	0.974	0.982

Note. RMSEA=Root mean square of approximation; SRMR=Standardized Root Mean Residual; TLI=Tucker-lewis index; CFI=Comparative fit index; \*p<0.05.

**Table 4:** Confirmatory Factor Analysis (Factor Names, Factor Loadings and Cronbach's alpha)

Factor	Items	(λ)	AVE	CR
Human Resource Development (α=0.94)	Employees receive training in the skills needed for advancing their careers.	0.884		
	Employees are provided with career counselling and planning assistance.	0.906		
	Employee training is supported	0.914	0.72	0.96
	Career-management program for the employees is supported	0.939		
	Systematic program to evaluate employees' skills and interests.	0.893		
Behavioral Engagement (α=0.85)	I give my job everything I have.	0.838		
	A lot of energy is devoted to my job.	0.725	0.62	0.90
	I make every effort to do a good job.	0.696		
	I put all of my effort into finishing my work.	0.755		
	A lot of energy exerted on my job.	0.819		
Emotional Engagement (α=0.81)	I take pride in my work.	0.694		
	I feel energized at work.	0.886		
	My work interests me.	0.680	0.56	0.86
	I am pleased with my work.	0.763		
	I have a good feeling about my job.	0.840		
Cognitive Engagement (α=0.83)	I only have work on my mind	0.825		
	I focus a lot of attention on my work.	0.856	0.66	0.91
	I am engrossed in my task while at work.	0.852		
	A lot of attention is devoted to my job.	0.856		
	I will quit as soon as I can land a better job.	0.821		
Employee Turnover Intentions (α=0.82)				
	I am seriously considering leaving my job.	0.781	0.64	0.81
	I am seeking for a job actively.	0.798		

Notes: AVE represents average variance extracted; CR represents composite reliability. All Factor loadings are significant at  $p < 0.05$

**Table 5:** Discriminant Validity

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Human Resource Development	(0.802)				
2. Behavioral Engagement	0.088	(0.815)			
3. Emotional Engagement	0.128	0.496	(0.736)		
4. Cognitive Engagement	0.569	0.237	0.353	(0.770)	
5. Employee Turnover Intentions	0.172	0.397	0.604	0.286	(0.809)

Notes: Values in diagonal represent the squared root estimate of Average variance extracted (AVE)

Results of the hypothesis tests for HRD effects are shown in Tables 6 and 7. A significant association between HRD and the levels of behavioral engagement was observed for the first hypothesis (0.514,  $p < 0.05$ ).

**Table 6:** Inferences drawn on Hypotheses

Hypothesis	Beta coefficient	p value	Result
H <sub>1</sub> : HRD is significantly related to the levels of behavioural engagement	0.514	0.000	Accepted
H <sub>2</sub> : HRD is significantly related to the levels of emotional engagement	0.191	0.206	Rejected
H <sub>3</sub> : HRD is significantly related to the levels of cognitive engagement	0.326	0.012	Accepted
H <sub>4</sub> : Employee engagement is significantly related to employee turnover intentions	-0.079	0.140	Rejected
H <sub>5</sub> : Employee engagement mediates the relationship between HRD and employee turnover intentions.	0.416	0.002	Accepted

Accordingly, hypothesis 1 was confirmed. Hypothesis 2 was not substantiated because, in contrast to the first hypothesis, there was an insignificant association between HRD and the levels of emotional engagement (0.191,  $p > 0.05$ ). Hypothesis 3 is supported by the association between HRD and the levels of cognitive engagement, which was significantly favorable (0.326,  $p < 0.05$ ). Employee engagement and employee turnover intentions did not significantly correlate (-0.079,  $p > 0.05$ ). Therefore, hypotheses 4 is not supported. The association between HRD and employee turnover intentions was mediated by employee engagement (0.416,  $p < 0.05$ ). Consequently, confirming Hypothesis 5.

**Table 7:** Standardized direct, indirect and total effects of HRD

	HRD		Total Effect	p value
	Direct	Indirect		
Employee Engagement	0.320		0.320	0.000
Employee Turnover Intentions	0.195	0.062	0.257	0.000

## Discussion

The current study sought to ascertain whether employee engagement mediated the association between HRD and employee turnover intentions. The study's results did show a significant association between HRD and the levels of behavior engagement. Committed employees are more likely to engage in conduct that increases their worth to the organization (Zeinabadi, 2010). An insignificant association between HRD and the levels of emotional engagement was reported. A significant association between HRD and with the levels of cognitive engagement was observed. Engaged employees feel energized and connected to their work, and take initiative to meet job needs (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2006). The results of the study also showed an insignificant association between employee engagement and employee turnover intentions. The connection between HRD and employee turnover intention was mediated by employee engagement suggesting that, higher echelons of employee engagement lower the likelihood of turnover intentions, improve organizational commitment and citizenship behavior (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Shuck & Reio, 2011; Song *et al.*, 2012). Employee engagement enhances knowledge development, individual performance, financial returns and customer loyalty (Dalal *et al.*, 2012; Saks, 2006; Kataria *et al.*, 2013). These findings contribution to the extant literature is discussed below.

### *Implications for Theory*

The noteworthy association between HRD and the levels of behaviour engagement suggests that participation in HRD results in employee contribution towards higher organizational performance (Lee & Bruvold, 2003). The results support earlier research that showed that behaviour engagement improves organizational citizenship behavior and task performance (Rich *et al.*, 2010). They also parallel previous research which revealed that behavioral engagement augments the levels of actual performance (Macey & Schneider, 2008). The findings validate the suppositions of researchers (Gupta *et al.*, 2017; Shuck, 2011). The study further indicated that HRD had a significantly relationship with the levels of cognitive engagement. This result implies that employees' cognitive assessments of their jobs indicate their propensity to work and engagement (Brown & Leigh, 1996). The results are consistent with earlier studies that showed that employee participation in HRD results in enhanced levels of engagement (Christian *et al.*, 2011). The findings validate the supposition of researchers (Fleming & Asplund, 2007; Ghosh *et al.*, 2012). The association between HRD and employee turnover intentions was mediated by employee engagement. This result implies that higher engaged employees put a lot of efforts in their jobs because of their emotional, cognitive and physical attachment (Khan, 1990). The results are in line with earlier research that showed that employee engagement increases productivity and employee retention and job satisfaction (Harter *et al.*, 2002). They also parallel previous research which revealed that higher echelons of employee engagement reduce absenteeism and employee turnover intentions (Shuck *et al.* 2014; Valentin, 2014). The findings validate the supposition of researchers (Otoo, 2019; Otoo *et al.*, 2022).

### *Implications for Practice*

Employees' behavior is greatly influenced by human resource development (Bartlett, 2001; Otoo *et al.*, 2019; Saks, 2006). HRD practices seeks to reduce employee turnover, maintain highly engaged and committed employees and productive human resources (Cho & McLean, 2009). The findings show a significant association between HRD and the levels of behaviour engagement. Therefore, health care institution would a major interest in (re)examining behaviour engagement practices where employees exert of energy on their jobs as well as put in much effort in accomplishing their jobs (Shuck & Reio, 2011). Health care institution would need to (re)think behaviour engagement strategies where employees devote a lot of energy to their jobs as well give their jobs their everything (Al Mehrzi & Singh, 2016). The findings also show a significant association between HRD and the levels of cognitive engagement. It is imperative for health care institutions to (re) think a cognitive engagement practice where employees focus a lot of attention on their jobs as well as engrossed in their task while at work (Shuck *et al.*, 2011). A cognitive engagement approach would need to be (re)considered in the healthcare institution, where employees devote a lot of attention to their jobs as well have their jobs on mind (Brown & Leigh, 1996). The findings further showed that employee engagement mediated the connection between HRD and employee turnover intentions. Employee engagement enhances knowledge development, individual performance, financial returns and customer loyalty (Gupta *et al.*, 2017; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Song *et al.*, 2012). This is particularly significant since employee engagement enhances competitive advantage, productivity and reduces employee turnover intentions (Bal *et al.*, 2013; Valentin, 2014; Wollard, 2011). Therefore, it would be useful for healthcare institutions in creating effective employee engagement strategies since highly engaged employees are dedicated to their organization with a strong sense of passion (Truss *et al.*, 2013). Health care institutions would have to (re)consider the adoption and development of well-designed and formulated HRD practices to enhance employee engagement, knowledge development and organizational commitment.

## Conclusion

This study examined within the context of employee engagement the association between HRD and turnover intentions as well as the connection between HRD and employee engagement, and how this potential relationship affected a worker's propensity to leave. The importance of HRD in improving employee engagement is highlighted. The study's findings are consistent with the literature theoretically on improving employee engagement put out by Shuck and Wollard (2010) and Fleming and Asplund (2007). Employee engagement enhance competitive advantage, productivity and reduces employee turnover intentions (Bal *et al.*, 2013; Valentin, 2014; Wollard, 2011). Therefore, employee engagement enhancement is encouraged to improve knowledge development and organizational commitment. By empirically demonstrating that employee engagement mediates the nexus of HRD practices and employee turnover intentions, the study extends the literature.

### *Limitations and Direction for future study*

Despite the study's potentially important theoretical and practical contributions, its potential limitations should be considered when evaluating the results. Firstly, because the study was cross sectional, it is impossible to completely exclude the possibility of a causal association or reverse causality from the results. Future longitudinal studies are necessary for these goals (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). Additionally, the study only considers the employees' subjective opinions. However, future studies should advocate for objective measurements (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2012; Mossholder *et al.*, 1998). Using objective measurements also lessens the possibility of common method bias (Andersson & Bateman, 1997; Craighead *et al.*, 2011). The current study investigated a mediation mechanism that clarifies HRD effects on employee turnover intentions. However, to conduct a focused and comprehensive exploration, future practical and theoretical efforts are required to acquire a clear and thorough analysis of the connection between HRD and employee turnover intentions. Finally, the present study's emphasis on health care institutions may constrain the generalizability of the findings.

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