



Exploring the influence of organizational justice and psychological ownership on turnover intention among the Namibian Defence Force personnel in the Khomas Region

Goreses, S.¹, Pieters, W.R.^{2*}, & Haidula, L.O.N.³

¹University of Namibia, Psychology and Social work department, shivanagoreses@gmail.com

²University of Namibia, Psychology and Social work department,
wpieters@unam.na; P.O. Box 31976, Pioneerspark, Windhoek, Namibia

³University of Namibia, Psychology and Social work department, lhaidula@unam.na

*Corresponding author

Keywords: organizational justice, psychological ownership, turnover intention, Namibian Defence Force

Abstract

The defence force is important to the well-being, safety, and security of a nation. The availability of competent military personnel maintains national security and enables the country to withstand external threats to safety and security. The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of organizational justice and psychological ownership on the turnover intention of the Namibian Defence Force (NDF) personnel in Namibia. Understanding turnover intention assists organizations to reduce the influence of turnover, reduce additional expenses related to recruitment, training, and development, and enhance the overall performance of the organization. A quantitative research design (survey) was used to collect data on Namibian Defence Force personnel (n=325). The study found a negative relationship between organizational justice and turnover intention as well as between psychological ownership and turnover intention. A positive correlation was found between organizational justice and psychological ownership (excluding accountability). This study recommends that the organizational culture and working environment be improved to foster inclusivity, collaboration, mutual respect, and improved communication. With enhanced environment and working relationships, employees are likely to experience higher levels of organizational justice, psychological ownership, and reduced levels of turnover intention. This study adds to the limited literature on these variables and on the NDF in Namibia.

Introduction

According to Mitchell (2022) the key role of the military is to maintain peace and to safeguard the well-being of the nation. The Namibian Defence Force (NDF) was established by the Namibian Government on 2 June 1990, as stipulated by the Namibian Constitution under Chapter 15, Article 115. According to this Article, the purpose of the NDF is to defend the territory and national interests of Namibia. Military personnel would not hesitate to sacrifice their lives, if necessary, to maintain security and to enable others to enjoy a state of well-being (Bennet 2020). According to Bennett (2020) it

is essential to rely on the military as a factor for stability in a nation. Furthermore, alongside the police, they can help combat drug abuse and crime.

Soldiers also experience social challenges. According to Sasman (2011), Namibian NDF female soldiers were evicted with no prior notice, leaving them homeless and in need of immediate shelter. Prior to their eviction they paid only water and electricity bills (Sasman 2011). They receive low wages that are insufficient to pay for accommodation. Low wages and the inability to satisfy living needs can all lead to turnover intention.

When an individual decides to resign from their place of work, there is potentially a better alternative,



implying that their current workplace is not ideal. Turnover intention refers to the likelihood of an employee leaving the current job he/she is doing (Belete 2018). According to Pieters (2018a), while it would be ideal to have no turnover, some turnover is inevitable. Turnover should be minimised and managed effectively. Turnover affects the overall functioning of any organization. According to Pieters (2017), employees who leave an organization will eventually benefit another organization and contribute towards its success. Arif (2018) found a negative relationship between organizational justice and turnover intention.

According to Mengstie (2020) organizational justice entails judgment made by an employee about fairness of decisions at their place of work. These perceptions can in turn influence attitudes and behaviours of the employees. According to Pieters (2018a), when employees are treated fairly, they are more likely to experience satisfaction and engage more actively at work. However, when injustices occur, it may result in turnover intention.

Organizational justice and psychological ownership reported a positive correlation (Ibrahim 2016); however, there is a negative relationship between psychological ownership and turnover intention (Lu et al. 2017). Psychological ownership entails a feeling of possession towards something; it refers to a state in which individuals believe that an object, an organization, or anything that targets ownership, belongs to them (Dawkins et al. 2017). Psychological ownership is an essential tool for organizations to encourage work productivity and certain desirable employee behaviours at the workplace (Pickford et al. 2016). It encourages employees to contribute creatively to their work, as well as increasing motivation.

The primary objective of the study is to assess the influence of organizational justice and psychological ownership on turnover intention of Namibian Defence Force personnel in the Khomas region, Namibia. The secondary objective of the study is to assess whether NDF employees experience turnover intention differently based on sex, age, qualification, tenure, marital status, number of children, and rank.

According to Pieters (2017), when an organization reduces an employee's feelings of turnover intention, it contributes positively to the effectiveness of the organization. It is equally important for an organization to ensure fairness in the organization to ensure effectiveness and a positive work environment. It is crucial for the Namibian Defence Force to be well acquainted with its members' perception of fairness within the organization. If the needs of the Namibian Defence Force personnel are well catered for, it will lead to the protection of Namibian lives. This study will also help create awareness among the public by contributing to the availability of data on the turnover intention within the Namibian Defence Force and the factors that influence it.

Literature review and theoretical framework

Literature review

Most challenges that result from employee turnover have a negative influence on the finances and performance of an organization. These include all the costs involved in finding another employee by means of advertising, training, and paying employees who had to step in during the search for a new employee (Pieters 2017). The reputation of an organization is also at stake because turnover intention poses a damaging attitude long after an individual has left (Pieters 2017).

Turnover intention is difficult to measure for employees that have already left the organization (Pieters et al. 2022). There are two types of turnover: voluntary and involuntary. Voluntary turnover refers to an individual leaving an organization of their own accord (with intention) because of factors such as job dissatisfaction (Pieters et al. 2022). Involuntary turnover refers to the dismissal of an employee, which is often because of poor performance or misconduct at the workplace.

Organizations need to be fair in their distributive, procedural, and interactional justice systems to ensure the job satisfaction, commitment, and loyalty of their employees (Belete 2018). Pieters and Auanga (2018) found that organizational justice showed a positive relationship with organizational commitment and work engagement. Pieters (2018a) found that organizational justice predicted job satisfaction and work engagement. The feelings of injustice increase burnout of employees and their desire to leave the job (Aghaei et al. 2012). Very often, people leave when organizations do not distribute resources equitably or when they pay workers different wages for the same work. Some Namibian Defence Force personnel in low ranks regard their salaries as low. This leads to their withdrawal behaviour and causing them to think about quitting (Namwandi 2015). A study found that there is a negative correlation between organizational justice and turnover intention (Aslan & Uçar 2015).

Impartiality can be defined as the process where decisions are made based on objective criteria rather than the basis of bias and prejudice (Hooley 2023). A term within Industrial Psychology related to impartiality is organizational justice. According to Rusinowitz (2022), organizational justice refers to perceptions of employees about fairness in the workplace regarding processes and decisions, including how equitable they are. Organizational justice is inclusive of distributive and procedural justice. Distributive justice is about how fair the distribution of resources or rewards and outcomes is, whereas procedural justice is about fairness in how decisions are made in the organization whilst following procedures. Equality is the process of decision making based on equal division of resources or opportunities (Belden et al. 2018). Equity on the other hand considers the differences amongst people and their circumstances before making decisions (Belden et al. 2018). Organizational justice applies the principles of equality and equity within the workplace. There are other variables that also influence turnover intention such as psychological ownership.

Recent research suggests that when employees perceive and act as though they own the organization (psychological ownership), they feel they have a greater responsibility for its functioning and success (Lu et al. 2017). Employees eventually experience more commitment to the organization, which reduces their likelihood of quitting their job (Lu et al. 2017).

Psychological ownership is often obtained through gaining knowledge about an organization, as well as investing time and effort in it (Pickford et al. 2016). Psychological ownership developed because of the human desire to achieve ownership over something and to have a sense of belonging. Psychological ownership consists of territoriality, self-efficacy, self-identity, a sense of belonging, and accountability. The more an employee experiences psychological ownership, the more territorial they become and feel the need to defend their territory (Lu et al. 2017). Territoriality is deemed as the mediator between psychological ownership and turnover intention (Lu et al. 2017). An employee's engagement in territorial behaviour enhances their work environment and increases the embeddedness in the organization, which further reduces turnover intention (Lu et al. 2017). Territoriality was regarded as a preventive dimension of psychological ownership because it focused on individualistic behaviour more than on positive organizational behaviour (Olckers & Van Zyl 2020).

Efficacy refers to having a clear sense of self from a psychological attachment to objects (Olckers & Van Zyl 2020). Self-identity has to do with one's own belief in oneself to accomplish something; a sense of belonging refers to feeling at home. Accountability has to do with taking ownership of a task (Olckers & Van Zyl 2020).

There are positive and negative outcomes correlating with psychological ownership, some of which may lead to turnover. Positive outcomes of psychological ownership involve having reciprocity between an organization and an employee, whereas negative outcomes entail becoming overly territorial and reluctant in sharing knowledge (Pickford et al. 2016). According to Pickford et al. (2016), it is significant to understand an employee's perspectives on psychological ownership in an organization so as to know when it is crucial to promote satisfaction, ensure commitment, and encourage collective organizational citizenship.

High levels of organizational justice and psychological ownership may reduce the turnover intention of NDF employees in the Khomas Region. Being able to retain competent military personnel helps in the execution of national and international safety and security duties. Based on the literature discussed, the following hypotheses were developed.

Hypothesis 1: Organizational justice has a positive relationship with psychological ownership.

Hypothesis 2: Organizational justice has a negative relationship with turnover intention.

Hypothesis 3: Psychological ownership has a negative relationship with turnover intention.

Hypothesis 4: Turnover intention is experienced indifferently based on sex, age, qualification, tenure, marital status, number of children, and rank.

Research design

This study made use of a quantitative research design, with the exploratory research method. The purpose of using a quantitative research method is that it works with structured data, which can be presented numerically (Matthews & Ross 2010). Since this study works with a large sample, it is ideal to use the quantitative research method. The study made use of a close-ended questionnaire collecting information on the biographical variables, perceptions of organizational justice and psychological ownership, and turnover intention of NDF employees in the Khomas Region.

This study made use of a short, structured questionnaire (electronic, and pen-and-paper). Questionnaires address the same sets of questions to many people (Matthews & Ross 2010). Section A included a biographical questionnaire which focused on the sex, age, tenure, marital status, number of dependants, highest qualification obtained, and rank of employees.

Section B measured perception of organizational justice with a measure developed by Colquitt (2001) measuring procedural and distributive justice. Sample items include "I am able to express my views and feelings about my organization's procedures" (procedural justice); "The rewards/punishment issued reflect the effort I put into my work" (distributive justice). Participants were required to respond on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (to a small extent) and 5 (to a large extent). Pieters (2018a) found acceptable reliability of 0.86 for procedural justice. The distributive justice dimension was also found to be a reliable measure in the Namibian context at 0.90 Cronbach's alpha (Pieters & Auanga 2018).

Section C measured psychological ownership using the *Psychological Ownership Questionnaire* (POQ) developed by Avey and Avolio (2007). Sample items include "I feel that people I work with in my organization should not invade my workspace" (territoriality); "I am confident in my abilities to contribute to my organization's success" (self-efficacy); "I would challenge anyone in my organization if I thought something was done wrong" (accountability); "I feel I belong in this organization" (sense of belongingness); "I feel this organization's success is my success" (self-identity). Responses range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). Acceptable reliability was reported by Lee (2017) of 0.83 (Self-efficacy), 0.81 (Sense of belongingness), and 0.84 (Self-identity).

Section D of the questionnaire assessed the employee's turnover intention. Turnover intention was measured using the *Turnover Intention Scale* (Michaels & Spector 1982). This scale makes use of a 6-point Likert type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). Example items include "I intend to quit my current job". Janik and Rothman (2015) reported acceptable reliability in the Namibian context (0.76).

The population of the study included all members of the Namibian Defence Force in the Khomas Region. There is no known number of NDF personnel as a whole because of confidentiality and security concerns of the Ministry of Defence. A small subset of the Namibian Defence Force personnel was selected. The study made use of availability sampling when selecting the participants (n=325). Availability sampling is non-discriminatory, and everyone had an equal chance

Table 1: Biographical Details of Sample

Category	Item	Frequency	Percentage
SEX	Male	230	70.8
	Female	95	29.2
AGE	24-28	30	9.2
	29-31	55	16.9
	32-35	61	18.8
	36-40	61	18.8
	41-45	47	14.5
	46-50	47	14.5
	51 and older	24	7.4
TENURE	Less than 1 year	1	0.3
	1-2	0	0.0
	3-4	1	0.3
	5-6	18	5.5
	7-8	63	19.4
	9-10	43	13.2
	11-15	102	31.4
	16 and more	97	29.8
QUALIFICATIONS	Grade 12	185	56.9
	Certificate	50	15.4
	Diploma	44	13.5
	Degree	24	7.4
	Honours Degree	8	2.5
	Master's Degree	4	1.2
	PHD	2	0.6
	Missing responses	8	2.5
NUMBER OF DEPENDANTS (children)	None	34	10.5
	1-2	114	35.1
	3-4	93	28.6
	5-6	41	12.6
	7-9	15	4.6
	10 and more	26	8.0
	Missing responses	2	0.6
MARITAL STATUS	Single	213	65.5
	Married	105	32.5
	Divorced	1	0.3
	Widowed	4	1.2
	Missing responses	2	0.6
RANK	Lieutenant/Major General/ Brigadier General	6	1.8
	Colonel/ Lieutenant Colonel/ Major	13	4.0
	Captain/ Lieutenant/ 2 nd Lieutenant	20	6.2
	Warrant Officer 1 or 2	25	7.7
	Staff Sergeant/ Sergeant	46	14.2
	Corporal/Lance Corporal	155	47.7
	Private/ Sergeant Major of the Army/Formation Sergeant Major/ Regimental Sergeant Major	59	18.2
	Missing responses	1	0.3
TOTAL		325	100

of being included in the study. The biographical details are reported in Table 1 below.

Ethics and procedure

The researchers applied for ethical clearance from the University of Namibia’s ethical clearance committee. Permission from the Ministry of Safety and Security was obtained, and consultative meetings were held with senior management at the different military bases where the research was conducted. The participants were informed that the questionnaire would be anonymous; they were also instructed not to provide their names, and their responses were treated with confidentiality. The study was voluntary, and participants were allowed to withdraw if, during the study, they felt the need to.

Participants were briefed about the objectives of the study, and informed consent was obtained. The researchers were present during the data collection process to answer any questions from participants. The questionnaires were completed within 5–10 minutes, collected afterwards, and stored in a locked cabinet. The electronic data is stored on a password-protected drive.

Data analysis

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences Version 27 (SPSS, 2020) was used to analyse the data. This study made use of a Pearson correlation to assess the relationship between the three variables. The Mann-Whitney U test was used to assess the relationship between sex and turnover intention. The Kruskal Wallis Test was used to assess the differences between age, tenure, marital status, number of dependants, highest

qualification obtained, and rank. The non-parametric statistics techniques were used since the sample population is relatively small and groups not equal in size (e.g. size of sample in different age categories, comparative to other age categories). Parametric statistics can be regarded as a more sophisticated technique however require that the sample is normally distributed (e.g. bell-shaped curve) and that the sample is big/sufficient (e.g. 120 per group/category being compared). Non-parametric statistics may not pick up some of the differences that exist like with parametric statistics.

Results

The means (M), standard deviation (SD), Cronbach’s alpha and correlations are reported in Table 2 below. Distributive justice (Organizational Justice), Territoriality (Psychological Ownership), and Self-efficacy (Psychological Ownership) did not meet the reliability standards of 0.60 and higher (Resi & Judd 2000); therefore, these dimensions were excluded from further analysis in this study.

Procedural justice and organizational justice (combined) reported positive relationships with psychological ownership (sense of belongingness), sense of identity, and psychological ownership (positive). Procedural justice and organizational justice reported a negative relationship with turnover intention. Psychological ownership (accountability), sense of belongingness, sense of identity, and psychological ownership (positive) reported negative relations with turnover intention.

Hypothesis 4 of this study investigated the relationship between sex, age, qualification, tenure, marital status, number of children, and rank with turnover intention. Males reported higher levels of turnover intention compared to females. Younger employees

Table 2: Descriptive statistics and Pearson rank order correlation

Item	Mean	SD	A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
OJ_PJ	15.09	26.92	0.64	-						
OJ_COM	18.61	31.43	0.66	0.96**	-					
PO_ACC	8.71	3.02	0.76	-0.04	-0.04	-				
PO_SOB	13.95	18.10	0.83	0.00	0.01	0.04	-			
PO_SID	13.65	11.34	0.76	0.01	0.02	0.10*	0.89**	-		
PO_POS	56.54	33.06	0.73	0.03	0.04	0.23*	0.91**	0.86**	-	
TI	8.19	5.52	0.89	-0.03	-0.03	-0.02	-0.06*	-0.06*	-0.09*	-

*Statistically significant: $p \leq 0,05$

* Practically significant correlation (medium effect): $0,30 \leq r \leq 0,49$

** Practically significant correlation (large effect): $r \geq 0,50$

- OJ_PJ: Organizational Justice (Procedural Justice)
- OJ_COM: Organizational Justice (Combined)
- PO_ACC: Psychological Ownership (Accountability)
- PO_SOB: Psychological Ownership (Sense of Belongingness)
- PO_SID: Psychological Ownership (Self-identity)
- PO_POS: Psychological Ownership (Positive)
- TI: Turnover Intention

Table 3: Non-parametric statistics, the relationship between turnover intention and the biographical variables

Biographical variable	Significance	Outcome	Category	Mean score
Sex	0.00*	Significant	Males	8.90
			Females	6.46
Age	0.00*	Significant	24–28	218.32
			29–31	183.40
			32–35	172.45
			36–40	159.73
			41–45	151.02
			46–50	136.18
			51 and older	107.38
			Tenure	0.00*
			3–4 years	265.50
			5–6	219.08
			7–8	201.37
			9–10	170.69
			11–15	146.53
			16 and more	139.47
Marital status	0.00*	Significant	Single	176.23
			Married	135.58
			Divorced	62.50
			Widowed	122.88
Number of dependants (children)	0.19	Insignificant	None	188.44
			1–2	167.63
			3–4	143.80
			5–6	164.94
			7–9	173.63
			10 and more	156.48
Qualification	0.01*	Significant	Grade 12	145.83
			Certificate	163.09
			Diploma	177.95
			Degree	206.79
			Honours degree	179.75
			Master's degree	133.38
			PhD degree	252.75
Rank	0.00*	Significant	Lieutenant/ Major/ Brigadier General	158.58
			Colonel/ Lieutenant Colonel/ Major	103.77
			Captain/ Lieutenant/ 2 nd Lieutenant	114.08
			Warrant Officer 1/ 2	151.26
			Staff Sergeant/ Sergeant	138.73
			Corporal/ Lance Corporal	157.02
			Private/ Sergeant Major of the Army/ Formation Sergeant Major/ Regimental Sergeant Major	229.96

reported higher levels of turnover intention when compared to older employees in this sample. Employees with a shorter tenure at the NDF experienced higher levels of turnover intention. Single employees reported higher levels of turnover intention compared to married employees. No significant differences were reported between the number of dependants (children) and turnover intention. Employees with a degree reported the highest significant level of turnover intention. In terms of rank, the senior and junior ranks experience a higher turnover intention than do the middle ranks, both for commissioned and for non-commissioned ranks. In terms of commissioned officers, Lieutenant/Major/ Brigadier General (high ranked) and Captain/Lieutenant/ 2nd Lieutenant (lower ranked) reported higher levels of turnover intention compared to Colonel/ Lieutenant Colonel/ Major (middle ranked). The same was observed for con-commissioned officers and enlisted personnel. Warrant officer 1/2 (lower ranked) and Corporal/ Lance Corporal (higher ranked) reported higher levels of turnover intention compared to Staff Sergeant/Sergeant (middle ranked). The high and low ranked personnel also reported the highest level of turnover intention (Private- low ranked; and Sergeant Major of Army/ Formation Sergeant Major/ Regimental Sergeant Major- high ranked). The results related to hypothesis 4 is reported in Table 3 below (interpret with caution considering that some categories have a smaller number of participants).

Discussion and recommendations

The primary objective of this study was to investigate the influence of organizational justice and psychological ownership on turnover intention of NDF employees in the Khomas Region, Namibia. The secondary objective was to assess whether differences exist within the categories of sex, age, qualification, tenure, marital status, number of children, and rank in relation to turnover intention. Except for accountability (psychological ownership), organizational justice and psychological ownership reported a positive relationship, supporting *Hypothesis 1* of this study (weak relationship). Ibrahim (2016) found a positive association between organizational justice and psychological ownership. When the NDF treats employees fairly based on policies and procedures, distributes rewards, benefits and disciplinary procedures fairly, these employees are likely to feel more part of the NDF. Experiencing organizational justice signifies consideration towards employees, thus enhancing their identification with the organization. Pickford et al. (2016) emphasizes the importance and benefits of psychological ownership for the employee and organization. This study sample reported high levels of organizational justice and psychological ownership. Organizational justice and psychological ownership influence job satisfaction (Pieters 2017) and loyalty (Belete 2018), organizational commitment, and work engagement (Pieters & Auanga 2018).

Hypothesis 2 of this study assessed the negative relationship between organizational justice and turnover intention. The findings of this study support *Hypothesis 2* (weak relationship). When employees are not treated fairly, they are likely to leave. The same negative relationship was found between organizational justice

and turnover intention (Arif 2018; Aslan & Uçar 2015). Mengstie (2020) noted that the perception of fairness or lack thereof influences the attitudes and behaviours of employees. Pieters (2018a) pointed out that when employees experience organizational justice, they are more likely to experience job satisfaction and work engagement. Apart from increasing feelings of burnout, Aghaei et al. (2012) found that organizational injustice increases the desire to leave (turnover intention). It is thus recommended that the NDF re-evaluates the organizational culture and work environment. The working environment of the NDF is very hierarchical; a more humane and collaborative approach could be considered. Namwandi (2015) reported that many employees were dissatisfied with the conduciveness of the working environment and the poor relationship with supervisors. If employees are considered and involved, their job attitudes could influence the perception of organizational justice and psychological ownership. Pieters and Auanga (2018) found a positive relationship between organizational justice, organizational commitment, psychological meaningfulness, and work engagement. Normative commitment and psychological meaningfulness predicted work engagement of employees. It is also recommended that employees be educated about policies on a regular basis and that superiors explain why certain rewards or penalties are being administered. An understanding of how and why certain decisions are made enhances organizational justice and psychological ownership.

This study explored the negative relationship between psychological ownership and turnover intention. The results of this study confirmed *Hypothesis 3*, a negative relationship between psychological ownership and turnover intention (weak relationship). A negative relationship between psychological ownership and turnover intention was also supported by other studies (Lu et al. 2017). Psychological ownership encourages higher levels of productivity and desirable employee behaviour (Pickford et al. 2016) whilst reducing unwanted behaviour like turnover intention (Lu et al. 2017). Olckers and du Plessis (2015) found that communication needs to be clear, relationships maintained, ethical conduct practised, recognition and acknowledgement awarded, and effective leadership applied to enhance psychological ownership. It is thus recommended that the NDF enhances communication and relationships between subordinates and supervisors. By having improved relationships, employees would become more committed and engaged at work. It is also recommended that the NDF improves or develops recognition and acknowledgement systems for excellence and for diligent employees.

The fourth hypothesis of this study explored the relationship between sex, age, qualification, tenure, marital status, number of children, rank, and turnover intention. *Hypothesis 4* was mostly supported by the results of this study. Apart from the number of dependants (children); sex, age, qualification, tenure, marital status, and rank reported significant differences with turnover intention. It is interesting to note, even in this male-dominated profession of military service, that males reported higher levels of turnover intention. Ammann and Staudacher (2021) noted that the challenges related to being an African male have changed and become more complex with changes related to

social, political, and financial changes. Females have equal rights in society and increased access to political and financial resources. Males being predominantly associated with the role of provider may experience significantly more pressure compared to female NDF employees with low salaries and benefits. [Sasman \(2011\)](#) reported that NDF employees were evicted from the military base for not paying their rent. Low wages were cited as the reason for not being able to pay their rent. This study recommends that male employees be educated about gender sensitivity and sensitized to the new world of work. Educating males about equality and equity, dual-career marriages, and how to adopt improved gender roles can help reduce stress related to old-fashioned perceptions and practices.

The significant differences reported for age, tenure, and rank in relation to turnover intention may be related to African practices regarding respect and seniority. [Idang \(2015\)](#) reported that as children, Africans learn about the rituals and practices related to respect for the head of the household, elders, and political leaders. These values and practices are carried over to the workplace and applied. Younger, short-tenured and junior-ranked employees may be regarded as less influential, less insightful, or less resourceful. These younger, short-tenured and junior-ranked employees may experience frustration because they could be ignored, less considered, or less respected, thus increasing their intention to leave. [Idang \(2015\)](#) noted that culture is dynamic. Younger, short-tenured and lower rank employees could foster principles related to equality, democracy, and inclusivity. However, the military is a very authoritarian type of organization where age, seniority, and rank matter, and respect does not necessarily need to be earned. The significant differences between age, tenure, and rank in relation to turnover intention could also be because of fewer opportunities to obtain other employment. When employees become older, settle into the organization, or are progressing within the ranks of the organization, they become more embedded into the workplace, thus experiencing lower levels of turnover intention ([Peltokorpi 2013](#)). The lower turnover intention of middle-ranked employees was reported in this study. Higher-ranked employees are usually tasked with more responsibilities and required to respond to queries from top-ranked officials, which could be associated with higher intention to leave. Being responsible for the performance of lower ranked employees may add to the work stress associated with senior work roles. [Olckers and du Plessis \(2015\)](#) noted the importance of ethical conduct. All personnel should be treated with mutual respect and consideration. Mutual respect and consideration can ensure that the relationship between employees is enhanced and that employees become more open to sharing and listening to the ideas and views of others. Feeling respected and engaged in an ethical manner enhances psychological ownership (identifying with the organization) and reduces turnover intention.

Single employees reported higher levels of turnover intention. [Karraker and Dorius \(2016\)](#) noted that married couples reported higher financial net wealth, assets, and income compared to single people. [Pieters \(2018b\)](#) reported no significant difference between marital status and turnover intention. The low wages associated with the NDF could add more financial

pressure to single employees than to married employees with dual income. Being married may ensure that the challenges related to the continued rising cost of living are shared and managed collectively. Being married also comes with discussions and insights on financial management. It is thus suggested that all employees, especially single employees, attend financial literacy training and learn how to budget. If single employees do not have the luxury of a second income, perhaps training on how to manage their current income may help. [Namwandi \(2015\)](#) noted that the salary was the biggest motivator to join the NDF.

The number of dependants (children) did not significantly influence the levels of turnover intention for the sample. Employees with no or differing numbers of children experienced similar levels of turnover intention. The same insignificant difference was found by [Pieters \(2018b\)](#) between number of dependents and turnover intention.

[Du Plooy and Roodt \(2013\)](#) found no significant relation between qualification and turnover intention of employees. This study found that level of qualification reported significant differences in relation to turnover intention. [Pieters \(2018b\)](#) noted that when employees gain educational qualifications, they become more hopeful of transitioning into better-paid jobs. Education and experience enhance mobility within (higher ranks) and outside the organization. The Ministry of Defence should review human resource policies by focusing on staff retention and progression. When employees advance themselves in terms of tertiary education, they should be recognized and promoted with better salaries and benefits. Many employees reported that the salary was the motivating factor for them to join the NDF ([Namwandi 2015](#)). Promotions should be fair and according to policy guidelines. Advancement policies need to consider working experience, training completed, and educational qualifications. Employee retention is improved by career development and especially when there are somewhat competitive activities in which employees engage and feel that they are learning and improving their skills. Advancement does not always need to be vertical but also through advanced tasks and assignments, deployment, training, and development.

The working environment of NDF personnel should be improved; it is their home away from home. One of the factors that improve job satisfaction is an improved working environment. The working environment also plays a role in terms of organizational justice and psychological ownership, thus reducing turnover intention. A bureaucratic environment may stifle creativity, healthy working relations, inclusivity, and performance.

Some of the limitations experienced when conducting this study include a language barrier as some personnel needed the research content to be explained in languages other than English. There is a lack of previous research studies conducted on the topic, and therefore limited access to literature concerning the Namibian Defence Force and their turnover intention. This study cannot be generalised to the rest of the population, considering that it was done in the Khomas Region. The study was unable to determine cause-effect relationships between the variables considering the nature of survey research. Considering the weak relationships

between organizational justice, psychological ownership, and turnover intention; it is recommended that future studies focus on other variables (job satisfaction; job demands and resources; work stress) that may be more significant regarding turnover intention for this population.

Conclusion

The aim of this study was to explore the influence of organizational justice and psychological ownership on turnover intention of NDF personnel in the Khomas Region. The study found a positive relationship between organizational justice and psychological ownership (excluding accountability). A negative relationship was reported between organizational justice and turnover intention. A negative relationship was found between psychological ownership and turnover intention. This study found significant differences between sex, age, tenure, marital status, qualification, and rank in relation to turnover intention. The number of dependants displayed insignificant differences related to turnover intention. Different recommendations are proposed to enhance organizational justice and psychological ownership, whilst reducing turnover intention.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank Mrs N. Alweendo for her role in the data collection. Your efforts are noticed and appreciated. Special appreciation goes to all the men and women in the NDF who supported and took part in the study.

References

- AGHAEI, N., MOSHIRI, K., & SHAHRBANIAN, S. 2012. Relationship between organizational justice and intention to leave in employees of sport and youth head office of Tehran. *European Journal of Experimental Biology*, 2(5), 1564–1570.
- AMMANN, C., & STAUDACHER, S. 2021. Masculinity in Africa beyond crisis: complexity, fluidity, and intersectionality. *Gender, Place, and Culture*, 28(6), 759–768.
- ARIF, S. 2018. Impact of organisational justice on turnover intentions: moderating role of job embeddedness. *SEISENSE Journal of Management*, 1(2), 35–52.
- ASLAN, H., & UÇAR, M. 2015. The effect of organizational justice on turnover intentions: a field study in Gaziantep. *Journal of Social Sciences Research*, 9(3), 1911–1919.
- AVEY, J.B., & Avolio, B.J. 2007. *Psychological ownership questionnaire*. Mind Garden Inc., United States of America.
- BELDEN, C., HARRIS, B.J., VALBRUN, V., CARTER, K.A., & JONES, T.L. 2018. Moving beyond equality: perspectives on achieving inclusion through equity in our organization and beyond. The Winter Group Inc., taken from <https://www.wintersgroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/MovingBeyondEquality.pdf> on 10 June 2024.
- BELETE, A.K. 2018. Turnover intention influencing factors of employees: An empirical work review. *Journal of Entrepreneurship & Organization Management*, 7(3), 1–7.
- BENNETT, E. 2020. Importance of the military army in society. Retrieved from <http://www.pksoi.org/importance-of-the-military-army-in-society/> on 08 August 2022.
- COLQUITT, J.A. 2001. On the dimensionality of organisational justice: A construct validation of a measure. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 86, 386–400.
- DAWKINS, S., TIAN, A. W., MARTIN, A., & NEWMAN, A. 2017. Psychological ownership: A review and research agenda. *Journal of Organisational Behavior*, 38, 163–183.
- HOOLEY, T. 2023. Impartiality: a critical review. *Journal of the National Institute for Career Education and Counselling*, 50(1), 41–53.
- IBRAHIM, M.M.S. 2016. The mediating role of psychological ownership in the relationship between ethical leadership and organisational justice, and the multiple forms of employee performance behaviours. *European Journal of Business and Management*, 8(9), 188–202.
- IDANG, G.E. 2015. African culture and values. *Phronimon*, 16(2), 97–111.
- JANIK, M., & ROTHMAN, S. 2015. Meaningful work and secondary school teachers' intention to leave. *South African Journal of Education*, 35(2), 1–13.
- KARRAKER, A., & DORIUS, C. 2016. Marital histories, gender, and financial security in late mid-life: evidence from four cohorts in the health and retirement study. Centre for retirement research, Boston College, taken from <http://crr.bc.edu> on 06 February 2023.
- LEE, A. 2017. *Development and empirical evaluation of an explanatory psychological ownership structural model*. Unpublished Master's thesis, University of Pretoria. Pretoria, South Africa.
- LU, L., LIU, J., & ZHAO, N. 2017. Why employees stay: the roles of psychological ownership, territoriality and work relationship closeness in affecting employee turnover intention. *Frontiers of Business Research in China*, 11, 1–16.
- MATTHEWS, B., & ROSS, L. 2010. *Research methods. A practical guide for the social sciences*. Italy: Rotolito Lombarda.
- MENGSTIE, M.M. 2020. Perceived organizational justice and turnover intention among hospital healthcare workers. *BMC Psychology*, 8, 1–11.
- MICHAELS, C.E., & SPECTOR, P.E. 1982. Causes of employee turnover: A test of the Mobley, Griffeth, Hand, and Meglino model. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 67(1), 53–59.
- MITCHELL, R.W. 2022. PEO IEW&S staff share military experiences, personal stories on Veterans' day. Taken from https://www.army.mil/article/261916/peo_iew_staff_share_military_experiences_personal_stories_on_veterans_day on 8 December 2022.
- NAMWANDI, P.I. 2015. *An investigation on the causes of employees' turnover in the ministry of defence*. Unpublished honours project, International University of Management. Windhoek, Namibia.
- OLCKERS, C., & DU PLESSIS, Y. 2015. Psychological ownership as a requisite for talent retention: the

- voice of highly skilled employees. *European Journal of International Management*, 9(1), 52–73.
- OLCKERS, C., & VAN ZYL, E.L. 2019. Psychometric properties of the Psychological Ownership Questionnaire. *Australian Journal of Psychology*, 71(2), 127–136.
- PIETERS, W.R. 2017. Basic psychological need satisfaction and the impact on turnover intention across industries, Windhoek. *Journal for Studies in Humanities and Social Studies*, 6(1), 42–46.
- PIETERS, W.R. 2018a. Assessing organizational justice as a predictor of job satisfaction and employee engagement in Windhoek. *South African Journal of Human Resource Management*, 16(1), 1–11.
- PIETERS, W.R. 2018b. *The effect of job attitudes, job embeddedness and work engagement on turnover intention of academic staff at the University of Namibia*. Unpublished Doctoral thesis, University of the Free State. Bloemfontein, South Africa.
- PIETERS, W.R. & AUANGA, N. 2018. Enhancing work engagement of teachers through organisational commitment, organisational justice and psychological conditions in Namibia. *Journal for Studies in Humanities and Social Sciences*, 7(2), 140–167.
- PIETERS, W.R., VAN ZYL, E., & NEL, P. 2022. Factors affecting lecturers' decision to stay or leave academia, Namibia. *South African Journal of Human Resource Management*, 20, 1–10.
- PICKFORD, H.C., JOY, G., & ROLL, K. 2016. Psychological ownership: Effects and applications. *Mutuality in Business*, 2, 1–19.
- RUSINOWITZ, S. 2022. Organizational Justice 101: How to foster fairness in the workplace. Retrieved from: <https://www.charthop.com/resources/blog/dei/organizational-justice-fairness-workplace/> on 8 August 2022.
- Sasman, C. 2011, December 19. Namibia: Soldiers evicted from Suiderhof military base. The Namibian newspaper retrieved from <https://www.namibian.com.na/89586/archive-read/Suiderhof-evictions-executed-on-8-August-2022>.
- SPSS 2020. SPSS 27.0 for Windows. Chicago, IL: SPSS Incorporated. released overboard. Data on the location and depth of each trawl conducted by the fishing vessel were also recorded.

About the Authors

Ms Sahgarhika Goreses is a UNAM graduate. She graduated with an honour's degree in Industrial/Organisational Psychology.

Ms Lea Haidula completed her MA in Clinical Psychology from the University of Namibia (UNAM) and has 23 years' lecturing experience. She has worked with filming companies on translating socio-behavioral embedded films between English and Oshiwambo. Her teaching focuses on social psychology and developmental psychology for children and adolescents. Her research interests are culture, and identity development.



Associate Professor Dr Wesley Pieters (Senior Industrial/Organizational Psychology lecturer) is passionate about employee wellbeing and workplace wellness. His research focuses on workplace justice, leadership, and job attitudes. Komeine K M Nantanga, who holds a PhD from the University of Guelph, Canada, is an Associate Professor of Food Chemistry and Processing Engineering at the University of Namibia. He is a member of the South African Association for Food Science and Technology, and of the Cereals & Grains Association (formerly the American Association of Cereal Chemists (AACC International)).



His research interests include connecting community diets to their underlying scientific and technological principles to improve the quality of life through intelligent consumption of foods. His key focus on food security is directed at understanding the safety of nutritious foods, especially those that are indigenous, in order to develop shelf-stable varieties for consumers from different socio-economic sectors.

Technical and research services rendered to some of the major food industries and laboratories in SADC, Canada, Croatia, and the USA have provided him with experience in dealing with diverse audiences. He has encouraged the development of learners by sponsoring floating trophies in Mathematics, English, and the Sciences in several education circuits and schools in the Oshana and Oshikoto regions of Namibia.