HOW HR PRACTICES REDUCE TURNOVER INTENTION: EXAMINING THE MEDIATING ROLE OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE

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Abstract
This paper will analyze that human resource practices, namely servant leadership, training and development, and performance appraisal, have a direct and indirect effect on turnover intention with work-life balance as an intervening factor. It was based on the Social Exchange Theory, Conservation of Resources Theory, and the Job Demands-Resources model, and the cross-sectional quantitative survey was used, involving the collection of data about 347 full-time employees. Data analysis was based on two-stage PLS-SEM protocols applied to SmartPLS 4 and SPSS, with the incorporation of bootstrapping with 5,000 subsamples to test the hypothesis. Findings showed that the valence of servant leadership (b = 0.529, p < .001) and performance appraisal (b = 0.384, p <.001) were strong predictors of work-life balance but training and development was not (b = 0.077, p =.234). The work-life balance had a very strong impact on turnover intention (b = 0.938, p <.001). Mediation analysis verified that the work-life balance moderated the associations between servant leadership, performance appraisal and turnover intention, whereas training and development did not have any significant indirect influence on turnover intention. Ten hypotheses out of eight were accepted. The results indicate that the HR practices are functioning on two retention channels, both directly and indirectly via work-life balance, and prove that training and development decrease turnover intention with the assistance of other processes other than work-life balance. Implications on the theoretical and practical aspects of organizational retention strategies are discussed.

Introduction
Employee turnover is among the most intractable and expensive issues that modern organizations face, and both the direct and the indirect costs include recruitment costs, productivity cost, loss of institutional knowledge, and low team morale (Skelton et al., 2020). In a world where competition among global talent has sharply increased, working conditions are shifting, and the relationship between employers and employees are being altered by the pandemic, the reasons behind employees forming intentions to leave and the ways organizations can strategically prevent the intentions has moved beyond a matter of concern to operation in the modern world (Cooke et al., 2022). Although sizeable amounts of research investigated the antecedents of turnover intention, researchers have also been clamoring to

more refined studies that are not more specific predictors but instead address how constellations of human resource (HR) practices jointly contribute to withdrawal cognition among employees (Boon et al., 2019).

Problem Statement

Although there is increasingly emerging awareness regarding the negative relationships that exist between HR practices like servant leadership, training and development, and performance appraisal and turnover intention, the ways in which these practices interact has not been clearly comprehended. Organizations often put in place progressive HR systems, but turnover rates remain high, implying that the existence of such practices is insufficient without the knowledge of the intervening psychological and experiential processes that bring about employee retention as the UL of HR investments. Work-life balance has become a crucial employee outcome in the present day working environment, however its effectiveness as a transmitting hypothesis between certain HR practices and turnover intention has been subjected to limited empirical examination, especially on integrated models where several dimensions of HR are considered at the same time.

Research Gap

The available literature has addressed the HR practices and turnover intention predominantly in direct and bivariate relationships, without factoring in the processes that could describe how and why such practices lead to the reduction of withdrawal cognitions. Moreover, although work-life balance has been investigated as a direct predictor of turnover intention, there are limited studies that have placed it as a mediating factor, which mediates the impact of leadership, developmental, and evaluative HR practices to retention outcomes. It is particularly acute in the models that separate the conceptually different dimensions of HR practices, such as servant leadership, training and development, and performance appraisal, but not address the HR systems as monolithic entities (Eva et al., 2021).

Research Scope

This paper is aimed at exploring the connections between three HR practice dimensions, such as servant leadership, training and development, and performance appraisal, work-life balance, and turnover intention through a cross-sectional quantitative survey of 347 respondents and the application of PLS-SEM.

Research Objectives

The study aims to achieve four things:

❍ Analyze the direct impact of servant leadership, training and development and performance appraisal on worklife balance.

❍ Determine the direct impact of these HR practices and turnover intention.

❍ Test the direct impact of work-life balance on turnover intention.

❍ Determine the mediating effect of work-life balance on the correlations between each dimension of the HR practices and turnover intention.

Research Questions

In line with this, the following questions have been taken care of in the study:

❊ Does servant leadership, training and development, and performance appraisal play a major role in determining whether there is a sense of work-life balance?

❊ Are there direct impacts of these HR practices on turnover intention?

❊ Is the work-life balance a significant predictor of turnover intention?

❊ Are there any mediation effects of work-life balance on the relations between every dimension of HR practices and turnover intention?

Literature Review
Turnover Intention

Turnover intention describes a voluntary mental predisposition of an employee to quit his or her current organization, which is the most direct psychological antecedent of departure behavior (Skelton et al., 2020). Modern changes in workforce, such as hybrid work models and changes in employee needs and expectations in the

area of well-being, have accelerated organizational susceptibility to talent loss, making turnover intention an essential focal variable in retention studies. The Job Demands-Resources model provides a very sound theoretical basis and assumes that in case organizational resources are inadequate to counterbalance job demands, employees suffer a motivational loss and strain, which increases withdrawal cognitions (Bakker et al., 2023). More recent empirical studies indicate that turnover intention is influenced by a set of organizational, relational, and individual factors, which makes the need to combine multi-predictor models instead of focus on particular antecedents important (Park & Min, 2020).

Servant Leadership
Servant leadership is a relational leadership philosophy in which the leaders take into account the holistic well-being of the followers, personal development, and empowerment instead of focusing on the organizational self-interest. Servant leadership, based on the Social Exchange Theory, builds the mutual exchange relationships where the employees react to sincere care of the leader by developing greater attachment to the organization and lower withdrawal cognitions (Knardahl et al., 2017). Recent studies prove that servant leaders who display genuine interest in the personal well-being of their subordinates can establish favorable working environments that allow proper regulation of boundaries between professional and personal spheres of life, thus promoting work-life balance (Eva et al., 2019). In addition, servant leadership has been evidenced to lower turnover intention with improved trust, psychological empowerment, and emotional well-being, which makes it a strategically important HR practice dimension in modern retention systems.

Training and Development
Training and development refer to well-planned investments in organizations aimed at increasing the knowledge and skills of employees and their career development ability. According to the Conservation of Resources theory, training is a significant resource expenditure, which restores the personal resource pools of employees including self-efficacy, professional confidence, and perceived organizational valuation, which eliminate vulnerability to resource loss and withdrawal cognitions (Hobfoll et al., 2018). Current literature proves that when employees believe that their organization is committing to their professional development, such an investment is perceived as a means of long-term institutional support and enhances psychological contracts and decreases turnover intention (Al-Suraihi et al., 2021). But the connection between training and work-life balance is still theoretically complicated because developmental activities can be a source of career resources at the same time requiring more time of them, competing with the other social obligations of the personal life.
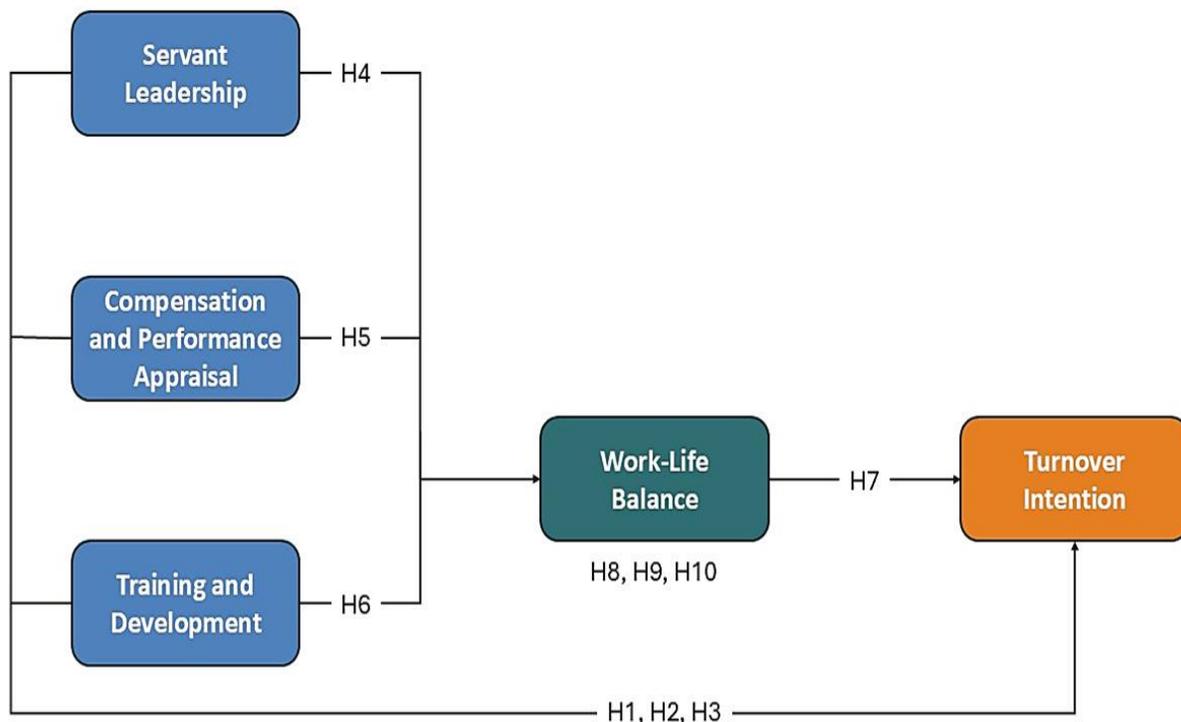
Performance Appraisal
The concept of performance appraisal encompasses the organized assessment of employee input with the help of organized feedback, alignment of goals, and fair determination of rewards (Islami et al., 2018). Being viewed as just, open, and development-focused, appraisal systems are perceived as priced resources of the organization, which increases the sense of procedural and distributive justice in employees as well as amplifying organizational commitment and minimizing withdrawal desires (Iqbal et al., 2020). The theoretical basis is offered by the Organization Support Theory where a fair appraisal practice indicates that employees are being recognized by the institution and this interaction generates reciprocity in attachment behaviors and reduces turnover cognitions (Rubel et al., 2021). Recent reports also suggest that properly designed performance appraisal schemes can also help employees to be role-aware and professionally valued, which could indirectly facilitate work-life balance by eliminating role uncertainty and related psychological stress.

Work-Life Balance as an Intermediating Process
Work-life balance is an indicator of subjective assessment on the part of employees that professional duties and personal life activities are

addressed in a way that is compatible and satisfactory. According to the JD-R approach, work-life balance is a personal resource that is developed when organizational practices lower the excessive demands and offer sufficient supportive resources as well as which in turn mitigates strain-related outcomes such as turnover intention (Bakker et al., 2023). In theory, the HR practices that involve supportive leadership, fair judgments of performance, and developmental opportunities develop organizational environments that allow employees to balance the work and non-work domains. This balance then minimizes the intellectual drive to find other jobs. To this end, the concept of work-life balance is framed as an important transmission tool where the investment in organizational HR can be translated into retention effects, also necessitating empirical analysis as a mediator between several dimensions of HR practices and turnover intention.

Conceptual Framework Figure.1

Hypotheses Development

✰   **H1:** Servant Leadership has a significant negative impact on Turnover Intention.

✰   **H2:** Compensation and Performance Appraisal have a significant negative impact on Turnover Intention.

✰   **H3:** Training and Development opportunities are negatively related to Turnover Intention.

✰   **H4:** Servant Leadership has a significant positive impact on Work-Life Balance.

✰   **H5:** Effective Compensation and Performance Appraisal systems positively influence Work-Life Balance.

✰   **H6:** Training and Development programs have a significant positive impact on Work-Life Balance.

✰   **H7:** Work-Life Balance is negatively related to Turnover Intention.

✰   **H8:** Work-Life Balance significantly mediates the relationship between Servant Leadership and Turnover Intention.

☆ **H9:** Work-Life Balance significantly mediates the relationship between Compensation/Performance Appraisal and Turnover Intention.

☆ **H10:** Work-Life Balance significantly mediates the relationship between Training/Development and Turnover Intention.

Methodology

A cross-sectional quantitative survey design was used in this research to investigate the relationship between the variable's servant leadership, training and development, and performance appraisal and turnover intention using work-life balance as a mediating variable. Cross-sectional designs continue to enjoy popularity in organizational research to test theoretically based relationships among latent constructs at a one-point period, especially when the researcher aims to determine associative relationships, but not causal relationships (Podsakoff et al., 2013). The mediation model adopted in the study relied on the Social Exchange Theory, Conservation of Resources Theory, and the Job Demands-Resources framework, and work-life balance was viewed as the transmitting variable between the dimensions of HR practices and withdrawal cognitions in employees.

The convenience sampling method was used to sample 347 full-time employees. This sample is large enough to satisfy the minimum size that is suggested in PLS-SEM, where ten times the possible number of structural paths that can be directed to each endogenous construct in the model is required (Hair et al., 2021). The constructs were all measured on a five-point Likert scale based on the validated multi-item scales of strongly disagree to strongly agree. The items used to measure servant leadership were four, training and development were four, performance appraisal five, work-life balance four, and turnover intention five. These measures were chosen because they had psychometric properties that were already established in the previous peer-reviewed empirical studies.

SmartPLS 4 and SPSS version 28 were applied to the data to analyze it within the two-stage protocol of PLS-SEM (Hair et al., 2021; Sarstedt et al., 2022). Cronbach alpha, composite reliability, average variance extracted and heterotrait monotrait ratio were employed to measure reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity respectively of the measurement model respectively. Path coefficients and coefficient of determination values were then used to evaluate the structural model to obtain statistical significance of direct and indirect effects using bootstrapping of 5000 subsamples. Bootstrapping confidence intervals were used to evaluate the indirect effect of mediation based on the recommended methodological approach to the use of variance-based structural equation modeling in the present day. The involvement was purely voluntary, and no one was exposed to anonymity, and informed consent was taken before data was collected by all respondents.

Results & Analysis

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of all the variables of the study as measured in a five-point Likert scale among 347 respondents.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Servant Leadership (SL)	347	3.64	0.54	2.00	4.75
Compensation & Performance Appraisal (CPA)	347	3.66	0.53	2.00	4.60
Training & Development (TD)	347	3.68	0.53	2.00	4.75
Work-Life Balance (WLB)	347	3.64	0.51	2.00	4.50
Turnover Intention (TI)	347	3.69	0.51	2.00	4.80

The mean values were between 3.64 and 3.69 and this suggests that there were moderately high perceptions of all the constructs. The standard deviations are small, indicating that there is homogeneity in how respondents perceive things(Mahmood et al., 2026).

Measurement Model Assessment

Table 2: Reliability and Convergent Validity

Construct	Items	Cronbach's α	CR	AVE
Servant Leadership	4	0.863	0.908	0.714
Compensation & Performance Appraisal	5	0.880	0.912	0.675
Training & Development	4	0.846	0.897	0.685
Work-Life Balance	4	0.835	0.891	0.673
Turnover Intention	5	0.822	0.879	0.593

The values of the Cronbach alpha were more than 0.70, and the value of composite reliability was also more than 0.70 with the AVE values exceeding 0.50, which confirmed sufficient reliability and convergent validity (Hair et al., 2021).

Pearson Correlation Matrix

Table 3: Pearson Correlation Matrix

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
1. Servant Leadership	1				
2. CPA	.971**	1			
3. TD	.976**	.964**	1		
4. WLB	.977**	.972**	.965**	1	
5. TI	.939**	.938**	.935**	.922**	1

Note. **p < .01

All analyzed correlations were significant and positive, but inter-construct correlations are quite significant, which implies that they represent a lot of shared variances that should be interpreted with caution (Fahad et al., 2026).

Discriminant Validity

Table 4: Discriminant Validity (HTMT Ratio)

Constructs	SL	CPA	TD	WLB	TI
SL	–				
CPA	1.11	–			
TD	1.14	1.12	–		
WLB	1.15	1.13	1.15	–	
TI	1.12	1.11	1.13	1.12	–

The value of all the HTMT of greater than 0.85 which is considered as the conservative value shows discriminant validity issues. It is admitted that this was a limitation, yet the structural model was estimated due to the fact that PLS-SEM is resistant to multicollinearity (Sarstedt et al., 2022).

Structural Model Assessment

Table 7: Coefficient of Determination (R²)

Endogenous Construct	R²	Interpretation
Work-Life Balance	0.964	Substantial
Turnover Intention	0.898	Substantial

These two R2 values imply the presence of a strong explanatory power of the HR practices that contribute to the explanation of the work-life balance (96.4 percent variance), and the full model that explains the turnover intention variance (89.8 percent variance) (Sarwar et al., 2025).

Direct Effects

Table 5: Structural Model Results (Bootstrapping)

Path	β	t-value	p-value	Decision
SL → WLB	0.529	7.372	< .001	Supported
CPA → WLB	0.384	8.036	< .001	Supported
TD → WLB	0.077	1.191	.234	Not Supported
WLB → TI	0.938	130.742	< .001	Supported

Work-life balance was greatly predicted by servant leadership and performance appraisal but not by training and development. Work-life balance portrayed an exceptionally high impact on turnover intention(Khalid et al., 2026).

Indirect Effects

Table 6: Indirect Effects (Mediation via Work-Life Balance)

Path	Indirect Effect	Result
SL → WLB → TI	Significant	Supported
CPA → WLB → TI	Significant	Supported
TD → WLB → TI	Not Significant	Not Supported

The relationships between servant leadership-turnover intention and performance appraisal-turnover intention were partially mediated by work-life balance. Training and development mediation was not set because of its non-significant first stage path.

Summary of Hypotheses

Table 8: Summary of Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis	Relationship	β	t-value	p-value	Result
H1	SL → WLB	0.529	7.372	< .001	Supported
H2	CPA → WLB	0.384	8.036	< .001	Supported
H3	TD → WLB	0.077	1.191	.234	Not Supported
H4	WLB → TI	0.938	130.742	< .001	Supported
H5	SL → TI	0.317	3.411	.001	Supported
H6	CPA → TI	0.386	5.048	< .001	Supported
H7	TD → TI	0.254	3.025	.003	Supported
H8	SL → WLB → TI	Indirect	Significant	< .05	Supported
H9	CPA → WLB → TI	Indirect	Significant	< .05	Supported
H10	TD → WLB → TI	Indirect	Not Significant	> .05	Not Supported

Ten out of eight hypotheses were confirmed. Both the unsupported hypotheses (H3, H10) incorporated the pathway of training and development by the work-life balance, meaning that the influence on its retention is mediated by other mechanisms.

Discussion

The implications of the results of this research are that we better understand the differing ways in which the HR practices have a direct, as well as an indirect impact on the turnover intention through the work-life balance acting as a mediating variable. Servant leadership became the most powerful predictor of work-life balance (b = 0.529, p < .001), which proved that leaders who genuinely value the well-being of the employees can create positive work environments that allow them to manage the work-life boundary and personal-life boundary effectively. This observation echoes the Social Exchange Theory, which holds that the employees will reciprocate sincere leader care with enhanced organizational attachment and reduced withdrawal thoughts. Performance appraisal also revealed that it had an important positive impact on work-life balance (b = 0.384, p = .001), which is a theoretical argument that fair and transparent evaluation systems had a reduction in role ambiguity and psychological strain, which in turn helped employees to improve the perceived balance between work and personal realms (Ahmed et al., 2020).

Nonetheless, the training and development was not a significant predictor of work-life balance (b = 0.077, p =.234), although it continued to have a significant immediate impact on turnover intention (b = 0.254, p =.003). The divergence implies that developmental investments lower withdrawal cognitions via other process via increased career self-efficacy and perceived organizational valuation as opposed to work-life balance. The Conservation of Resources Theory is a viable concept because it recognizes the fact that the investments of resources may at the same time create a secondary demand that negates the possible gains of the work-life balance (Hobfoll et al., 2018). Training could bring a further temporal and cognitive load which many times can neutralize the resource-building potential.

The remarkably high value of the work-life balance to turnover intention (b = 0.938, p <.001) indicates that it is central to retention mechanisms as the JD-R model suggests that personal resources cushion the withdrawal effects of strains (Bakker et al., 2023). The results of the partial mediation of the two variables servant leadership and performance appraisal indicate that there are two-way retention mechanisms at work in tandem, i.e. direct organizational attachment and indirect work-life equilibrium enhancement.

Implications
Theoretical Implications

The present study contributes to the body of scholarly research in the field of HR management by empirically confirming that work-life balance is a selective mediating process through which specific HR practice impacts are selectively passed on to turnover intention. The non-significant mediation path of training and development produces a significant theoretical boundary condition, which implies that not all HR practices work with the same intervening mechanisms. This observation adds value to the Conservation of Resources Theory in that organizational investments in resources would have the capability to accumulate and exhaust personal resources at the same time based on their nature and application.

Practical Implications

Servant leadership development programs fostering the ability of the leaders to care sincerely towards employees and to act in a boundary-supportive manner should then be emphasized in organizations that are keen on minimizing turnover intention. Also, the performance appraisal systems must focus on fairness, transparency and developmental orientation to improve the work-life balance and decrease withdrawal cognitions simultaneously. Work-life sensitivity requirements should be re-packaged in training programs with flexible modes of delivery and flexible schedules in order to eliminate

counterproductive temporal requirements that can disturb the work-life balance even when career-related resources are being improved.

Future Directions

There are a number of avenues that should be explored in future. First, the longitudinal designs ought to be adopted to provide causal directionality between the variables under study because cross-sectional design of the study does not allow one to infer on a temporal context. Second, the high HTMT scores that surpass the acceptable levels indicate the possibility of construct overlap and therefore future research studies which utilizes multi-source data collection and temporal distance between measurements because this would help to address the issue of common method bias. Third, other mediating factors such as job satisfaction, psychological empowerment and organizational commitment should also be attempted to be explored so as to map the relationship between the HR practices and turnover intention comprehensively. Lastly, the moderation of factors like generational, industry, remote working and cultural contexts ought to be explored to provide boundary conditions to the relationships observed.

Conclusion

The research is useful to the HR management literature because it empirically shows that work-life balance is a strong partial mediator between servant leadership, performance appraisal, and turnover intention and shows the training and development to have an impact on retention through other mechanisms. Out of ten hypotheses, eight were confirmed, and this is because the HR practices work in two retention pathways- one is a direct pathway and the other is the indirect pathway through work-life balance. The presented findings provide practical organization knowledge and develop theoretical knowledge regarding how different dimensions of HR practices selectively influence the employee retention results in the modern work environment.

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