PERCEIVED PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL EFFECTIVENESS AND TURNOVER INTENTION OF KNOWLEDGE WORKERS: A CONCEPTUAL MODEL

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Abstract
Employees’ turnover intention may be contingent upon an organization’s human resource practices. The effectiveness of a performance appraisal practice that may substantially contribute to knowledge worker turnover intention could be simply overlook and arduous to manage. This paper is based on a conceptual model that seeks to examine the effect of perceived performance appraisal effectiveness on the intention to leave an organization among knowledge workers. An assimilated framework is employed to discuss the multifaceted performance appraisal system and turnover issues from past literatures. In addition, the role and significance of career commitment is believed to influence perceived performance appraisal effectiveness-turnover intention relationship. Career commitment is thus included as an antecedent towards turnover intention to strengthen the model. This newly developed model could serve as a management platform in their effort to improve or enhance their current performance appraisal practices towards effectiveness, thus retaining their knowledge workers.

Keywords: KNOWLEDGE WORKERS, PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL, PERCEIVED PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL EFFECTIVENESS, CAREER COMMITMENT, TURNOVER INTENTION
1.0 Introduction

The significant increase of knowledge intensive firms has been conspicuous in the era of knowledge economy. Contemporary firms are now more people-focused (Robertson et al., 2003) and based on intellectual work where knowledge workers represent the largest proportion of the workforce (Alvesson, 2000; Davenport, 2002), especially in advance nations (Drucker, 1999; Helton, 1988). Subsequently, knowledge has become an eminent resource (Drucker, 1994) for a firm’s competitive advantage and sustainable growth, both locally and internationally (Oltra, 2005). This knowledge which is sourced primarily from the mind of knowledge workers, however, is not easily available. Knowledge in its tacit form could only be captured, generated and utilized through formal and social interactive and communicative measures with these workers. Knowledge workers have since become the key essence of knowledge intensive organizations. Not only these organizations encounter challenges in focusing on efficient and effective strategies to search and recruit these qualified workers, but also to uphold their employment within the organizations (Damir et al., 2008). Knowledge workers are prominent workers that are renowned as the most mobile workforce. Organizational survival and success in the knowledge era is profoundly dependent on this brain gain. The above objective could be accomplished through organizations’ Human Resource Management (HRM) practices. One of the efforts is to appreciate a sturdy and efficacious performance appraisal system (Michie and Sheehan, 1999; Gratton et al., 2000). A robust and comprehensive appraisal system would be able to recognize what is of significance to these intellectual workers and their vocation (Kimiz, 2005).

Issues on performance appraisal and turnover intention have been conventional and well-explored in the field of management for many decades. Discussions on performance appraisal systems alone have received consistently much attention from a considerable number of authors, particularly pertaining to the existing divergence between research and practice (Maroney and Buckley, 1992). Despite the profusion of these literatures, none seems to distinctively relate performance appraisal and turnover intention. Indeed, issues on the history, evolution and effect of perceived performance appraisal effectiveness on turnover intention have been disregarded by the researchers (Huselid, 1995; Mor Barak et al., 2001; Rees and Porter, 2004; St-Onge et al., 2009; Yoon and Lewis, 2011; Alexander, 2012; Choi et al., 2012). In support to the above, the effects of such human resource
practice on employees’ behavior (Harley, 2002) are usually being ignored by firms due to the unviable belief that there exists a flaw in human organizational behavior (Pollard, 2003). Besides, Huselid (1995) asserts that organizational performance appraisal-turnover relationship is not to be presumed on individual level since an employee decision to stay or leave an organization is dependent on his or her response towards such perceived performance appraisal practice.

In the present paper, results of past researches are deliberated and synthesized to establish a conceptual framework, as well as to develop an array of propositions that link perceived performance appraisal effectiveness of knowledge workers to their career commitment and the probable effect of this perception on their turnover intention. The framework takes into account all performance appraisal system elements as past researches only focus on one or few performance appraisal elements. Notwithstanding, current studies on turnover intention are more inclined toward organizational commitment, job-related and demographic variables. However, they are not being used within the performance appraisal framework. Another new contribution to the framework is the inclusion of career commitment as a mediator between knowledge workers perceived performance appraisal effectiveness and turnover intention. Since knowledge workers are more career-oriented than organizational-oriented workers and also affected by an organizational Human Resource practices, it is believed that career commitment could be linked to performance appraisal and turnover intention.

2.0 Literature Review
2.1 Knowledge workers of the new millennium
There exists no specific definition for knowledge workers in theory and practice. Generally, they are merely workers who are highly knowledgeable within their non-transferable field of expertise. Knowledge workers are associated with “knowledge work” that largely warrants for their mental strength rather than their physical strength (Karreman et al., 2002). Their intellectual contribution in its intangible nature is difficult to monitor until the physical output becomes visible. Knowledge workers are capable of creating and transforming knowledge as and when necessary to solve intangible, ambiguous and complex tasks in vigorous and unpredictable environments (Bryan and Joyce, 2005). In order to deliver complicated results, knowledge that is applicable in making decisions and
actions will be shared with others (Dove, 1998; Davenport and Prusak 2000; Davenport et al., 2002; Scott, 2005; Damir et al., 2008). According to another field expert, this shared knowledge that are converted from intuition into explicit knowledge can further be turned into new opportunities for firm’s success and growth (Paul Yeung; cited in Zalina, 2005).

The broader perspectives of literatures conclude that knowledge workers refer to highly-educated and -experienced workers. Drucker (1994) portrays knowledge workers as highly educated workers with formal education who develop new products or services. Conversely, other researchers (Dove, 1998; Nickols, 2000) affirms less importance on formal education as knowledge could be engendered from field experiences, as well as one’s experiences through accessibility and usage of personal, organizational and external knowledge (Nickols, 2000). Ultimately, anyone who uses any form of recorded knowledge to be a more productive worker could be considered a knowledge worker (Stuhlman Daniel, 2006; Createc, 2006), regardless whether he or she is a professional or non-professional. Nevertheless, what kind of a knowledge worker an individual is depends on the type of knowledge that he or she produces or possesses (Ritter, 2003, cited in Zalina, 2005). Generally, they are all renowned experts within their own field through the ownership of knowledge (Davenport, 2005) and their use of mental power and scientific methods of rationalizing knowledge enables the creation of firm’s value. They are also acknowledged for their abilities to generate, manipulate and orchestrate any information for any analytical and application purposes (Bryan and Joyce, 2005; Davenport, 2005; Drucker, 1999; Horwitz et al., 2006).

Despite having the ability to choreograph signs and conceptions, knowledge workers experience more swift skill obsolescence. These competencies are fundamental for organizations in gaining competitive advantage over competitors and have become increasingly imperative for their long-term success (Depres and Hiltrop, 1995). Knowledge workers are workers of immense intellectual curiosity who work most productively and creatively to satisfy their curiosity. Their other typical distinctive personality traits include considerable resentment at bureaucracies and disapproval of administration (Root-Bernstein, 1989). Besides, they are multitalented, accommodating and with sturdy analytical skills, they are proficient in leveraging, as well as building knowledge to engender effective action. They are also versatile with high tolerance for
uncertainty (Moi Kok Wah, 2008). Furthermore, knowledge workers are highly independent and mobile workers who favor autonomy, use of examples and knowledge sharing among organizational members. Their core concern is organizational productivity rather than the process itself (Horwitz et al., 2003).

Knowledge workers prefer organizations that consistently nurture and strengthen their competencies, while having job-related and leadership structures that focus on promoting empowerment and self-management. Similarly, a substantial number of Research and Development (R&D) job designs offer autonomy and desirable leadership style. The job designs that are more associated with collegial relationships, information-sharing, delegation of responsibilities and stimulating upward and horizontal communication would fulfill knowledge worker needs for autonomy, achievement and personal growth. Apart from possessing strong communication skills and high intellectual attributes, knowledge workers have a strong sense of identity, are self-directed and proactive (Rosenbaum, 1991; Knowledge Workers Forum, 2006). Complemented with self-motivation and self-discipline, they are able to make judgments, organize and manage their work with success. A worker with proactive approach persistently confronts the norms that would place a higher value on work, teams and organizations. Self-driven and proactive qualities encourage active participation and work practices sharing culture among team members. As a consequence, the emergence of more effective collaborative and innovative teams results in substantial, dynamic and remarkable organizational improvements.

Subsequently, career development is pursued in a very distinct manner among knowledge workers as compared to conventional workers. They value their self-respect and self-satisfaction derived from a job well done (Bandura, 1991) and their motivation might relate more to the intellectual stimulation of the job than its security. Hence, they are more occupationally motivated rather than organizationally motivated. Heavy reliance on symbols of personal and professional excellence make the non-monetary rewards to become critical factors in recognizing their achievement and innovation. Due to the strong association with occupational commitment, high turnover is inevitable and rampant among these workers (Despres and Hiltrop, 1995), unless their organizational values and goals match their professional values and goals (Lee et al., 2000). Other key contributing factors to knowledge worker nomadic behavior include better salaries (Abassi and Hollman,
2000), lifestyles and new environment (Julian and Anita 2000). While craving for latest and best designs, simulation tools and measurement equipments, they do have access to the latest information or knowledge within the field of their domain and persistent determination in the experimentation of something new and challenging. Closeness with professional peers and networks disclose opportunities to pursue their lifelong learning interest (Despres and Hilltrop, 1995; Julian and Anita, 2000; Zalina, 2005) and make them highly competitive in planning to resign and find alternative employment (Mitchell et al., 2001). McGregor et al. (2004) further discover that these knowledge workers are significantly independent of their employers and typically do not expect to be employed longer than what is stipulated in their employment contract.

2.2 Performance appraisal elements and effectiveness

Performance appraisal has increasingly becoming common and serves as a vital human resource practice in today’s organizations. The practice that was once concentrated on control and maintenance based approach have somehow progressed towards an approach that is more engaged with growth, motivational and developmental concerns (Dutra, 2001, cited in Ubeda and Santos, 2007; Obisi, 2011). The effectiveness of an appraisal system depends on how well its purposes are understood, accepted and strived to be achieved by users. A favorable performance appraisal would have positive effects on employee attitudes, behaviors and organizational efficiency (Gardner, 2008; Salleh et al., 2013). For example, higher employee performance and productivity attainment is derived through the performance appraisal capability in reflecting, measuring and evaluating an individual employee’s behavior (DeVries et al., 1981; Sarita, 2012), collaboration, teamwork, knowledge reuse, and knowledge sharing competencies and accomplishments (Kimiz, 2005) over a specific period of time. However, these positive outcomes are a function of the employees’ perception on the overall performance appraisal effectiveness (Benson et al., 2010). Past studies by and large separately focused on the six performance appraisal components as the source of perceived performance appraisal effectiveness variation among these critical organizational stakeholders.

2.2.1 Performance appraisal objectives

As surveys show, the general objective of performance appraisal is primarily to improve an organizational efficiency. However, this efficiency is expected to be achieved through settings of a wider range of organizational objectives (McGregor, 1957; Mamoria, 1995,
Atiomo, 2000, cited in Obisi, 2011) that reflects the source of perceived performance appraisal variation (Scholtes, 1993). Due to confusion as to the true purpose of a system that attempts to achieve too many objectives, the system has the tendency to fail in meeting any of its objectives (Reneker and Steel, 1989). This appraisal system imperfection eventually allows the continuity of an appraisal that relies solely upon human information processing and judgment. Likewise, these vast conflicting objectives of an appraisal system has received increasing attention in HR literatures for so many years (Strebler et al., 2001), despite an orthodox appraisal that is expected to motivate employees through well-defined objectives with provision for training and development needs (Bach, 2005). Performance appraisals exist to merely assist an organization to make decisions on an employee, rather than to help him/her make personal decisions on his/her performance. By and large, what is typically communicated by the management is not what is actually rewarded.

Other harsh criticisms of impediments that are inherent in the appraisal process include mismatching of individual and organizational goals, individual goals or personal aspirations with future development that are not linked to long-term organizational goals or business strategies (Deming, 1986; Wilson and Western, 2000; Freeman, 2002) and disregard for institutional goals and objectives (Edwards and Calvin, 1998). By having a performance appraisal policy on paper is no guarantee that it will be followed accordingly (St-Onge et al., 2009). Thus, many of performance appraisal defects are intractable (Rees and Porter, 2004; Latham et al., 2005).

2.2.2 Performance criteria
A second source of perceived performance appraisal variation originates from organizational performance appraisal criteria which are useful variables to measure individual work place behavior. In most organizations, what gets measured and rewarded is what employees do (Evans, 2003; Greene, 2002). Employees need to see performance criteria that are explicitly links to key results in their department and organization (Evans, 2003), upon which ratings to be obtained. Emphasis should be rested more on the quality of job performance because it acts in an anticipated manner (Lawler, 1967; Greene, 2002). Other criteria should include the particular types of behavior that are contingent upon the
important job functions. According to an earlier researcher (Grant, 1955), the sufficient number of performance criteria to be considered is somewhere around three to five factors.

However, researchers explicate that the vital aspects of the work performed in each functional area and focus on the strengths and weaknesses of the individual that are due to the changing organizational environment and nature of jobs and roles (Wiese et al., 1998) are not “built in” to the practice of performance appraisal (Ebrahim et al., 2006). For example, in the era of knowledge economy, demands of knowledge production frequently place a premium on teamwork and flexibility (Wilson et al., 1994). Fairness perceptions are intensified when employees are held to performance standards that entail greater commitment and ownership of knowledge sharing activities (Rousseau and Shperling, 2003). Unfortunately, the greatest emphasis of performance appraisals in organizations is on individual responsibility for performance and least on team-based compensation system (Ebrahim et al., 2004; Zobal, 1998; Abosch and Reidy, 1996). Attitudes, and not just behaviors, that are pivotal for ongoing knowledge creation and dissemination also need to be an integral part of performance appraisal criteria (Liebowitz and Beckman, 1998). Attitudes that align with principles of teamwork, collaboration, and stakeholder involvement should be appraised and rewarded.

2.2.3 Performance measurement/standard

An effective performance appraisal exhibits the performance standard that is agreeable between the rater and ratee (Bobko and Collela, 1994), and rating scales are able to provide descriptive and concrete definitions of the rating constructs, rather than being expressed in absolute terms (Ghorphade et al., 1995; Martey, 2002). Lucid, precise performance standards, rather than vague or no standards, will improve the overall accuracy and effectiveness of an appraisal process (Kane and Russell, 1998). Any effective measuring instrument needs to provide relevant and sufficient measurement criteria to accurately describe significant behaviors required for successful job performance (Henderson, 1980). These measures must be amenable to scaling and be able to be weighted. Measuring knowledge workers productivity (Bosch-Sijtsema et al., 2009) is difficult due to the complex and dynamic nature of knowledge work (Laihonen et al., 2012). It all depends on the nature of jobs that vary from routine to nonroutine (Pepitone, 2002; Laihonen, et al., 2012; Scott, 2005), their organizational and contextual factors, such
as culture, strategy, leadership, fellow workers support, compensation structures and physical surrounding (Chan, 2007) and the quality of human resources that reflects skills and competencies (Davenport, 2005). Results-based measures are deficient in tapping aspect of performance as cooperation (Ghorpade et al., 1995) and less helpful for employee development (Cardy and Dobbins, 1994; Fisher et al. 1996).

The ineffectiveness of performance appraisal (Becker et al., 2001) in appraising workers contributions to departmental goals (Ebrahim et al., 2004) are due to irrelevant, ambiguous and undefined measuring dimensions (Green, 1999; Martey, 2002); and lack of a performance appraisal system that effectively integrates all the key performance indicators in support of the organization’s aims and objectives. Additionally, many appraisal systems are much too subjective (St-Onge et al., 2009; Benson et al., 2010). There has been little progress in improving the performance rating distortion (Ilgen et al., 1993; Cleveland and Murphy, 1995). Organizations intentionally allow their appraisal systems to function ineffectively, perhaps indefinitely to avoid an open conflict because of its capability in stirring strong feelings and conflict in the organization (Rendero, 1980). Often, the goal of the rater is not to evaluate the performance of the employee, but to keep the employee satisfied and not to deleteriously influence employee morale. The manager also has to be concerned about his/her own image. Employees receive negative ratings reflects poorly on the manager (Kumari, 2012). It is unlikely that any managerial problem has so successfully resisted solution than arriving at an acceptable, useful and valid method of appraising performance. Organizations attempt to train the rater to improve observational skills (Edwards and Calvin, 1998; Kumari, 2012), though the training efforts are usually disappointing as their effects on appraisal accuracy dissipate over time (Latham, 1988; Cleveland and Murphy, 1992).

2.2.4 Sources of appraisal
Source of appraisal have consistently rely on subordinate-superior unilateral flow of information since the immediate superior may have sufficient stance to pass judgments on the subordinate’s performance (Long, 1986; Storey, 1987; Ebrahim, 2005). This trend in today’s matrix and flatter organizational structures has somehow moved towards multiple sources (Fletcher and Baldry, 2000; Costigan et al., 2005) that may come from supervisor, subordinates, peers, self, customers, suppliers, or other related sources (Byrne, 1993;
McCarthy and Garavan 2001; Ebrahim et al., 2003). Multi-source or 360-degree feedback (Henderson, 1980; Ebrahim, 2005), along with self-appraisal, is suggested for perceived unfair appraisal practice or to correct errors from individually-based superiors’ ratings (Deming, 1986) and teamwork assignment (Waldman, 1997; Barnes, 1997). Most recent studies claim this method brings about maximum employee motivation as well as providing the supervisor with a clear comprehensive and precise account on employee's contribution to the organization objectives (Amsler et al., 2001). Likewise, ratings by unfamiliar raters are discouraged so as avoid the “halo effect” ((Drenth, 1984).

An effective performance appraisal is believed to be the ones with informal and formal feedback from a variety of sources. However, the number of appraisal sources used depends on organizational cost-benefit appraisal analysis. Managers who do not use “self-appraisal” cite it as not rigorous and accurate due to employees poor objectivity and reliability on providing information on own ability, desire for self-enhancement (DeNisi and Shaw, 1977; Levine et al., 1977; Ebrahim 2005), as well as appraising themselves positively (Mohrman et al., 1989). Besides, they do not trust employees. On the contrary, “self-appraisal” essential contribution towards individual developmental needs is indisputable in numerous cases (Parry and Sinha, 2005; Van Der Heijden and Nijhof, 2004).

2.2.5 Performance appraisal feedback

Cleveland et al. (1989) signifies that performance appraisal specifically provides quality feedback on strengths and weaknesses in determining training needs, transfers, assignment and potential for growth. These could be achieved through improved communication on three key areas pertaining to what and how observations on performance are made; why and how they are discussed and what determines the level of performance in the job (Edmonstone, 1996). Individuals want, and seek, timely, useful and accepted feedback on their performance that can help individual make great progress toward optimal performance (Coens and Jenkins, 2001). Regardless of the rating given, the superior and his subordinate through an open effective communication should make an effort to identify areas where improvement can be made for effective performance (Ritter and Nunnally, 2002). This informal relationship should be made common activity or as frequent as possible so as to have a performance appraisal system that reaches valid conclusions.
In an extensive review of the literature on the application of feedback in organizations, Earley et al. (1990) distinguished two types of feedback: outcome feedback and process feedback. The former concentrates on providing information on specific performance outcomes, and the latter provides information on the manner in which an individual implements a work strategy. The researchers found that process feedback interacted with goal-setting more strongly than outcome feedback in determining the quality of task strategies developed by workers, their efforts to obtain information beneficial to improving their performance, appraisal satisfaction and perceived appraisal accuracy (Lam and Schaubroeck, 1999). Despite the benefits offered by the performance appraisal feedback, there emerge another major and growing concern expressed by employees on unqualified manager and their failures to provide complete, appropriate or constructive feedback about employee’s job performance and improvement areas (Rao, 1984, cited in Obisi, 2011; Kavanagh, 1997). They were not even aware of the feedback objectives and had not been provided with guidelines and instructions on how to complete the forms (Martey, 2002). While the ideas of providing training to them are theoretically sound, the evidence that the organizations concerned are taking major corrective action to eliminate these concerns is rather weak. Practically, the amount of time for this exercise is too demanding.

2.2.6 Frequency of performance appraisal

A large proportion of organizations conduct appraisal on a yearly basis (Freemantle, 1994; Ebrahim 2003), though most employees believe that objectives could not be realized by an annual performance appraisal. Besides, both employees and supervisors might not be able to remember what happened throughout the year due to their selective memory. As studied by Boice and Kleiner (1997), evidence strongly suggests that performance reviews should be performed on a frequent and ongoing basis to avoid surprises at an annual review. Moreover, a study by Geetha (2013) further alleges that employees are unhappy when there is no periodical or routine feedback from their superiors. Besides, frequent performance appraisal has become a common activity in exceptional organizations (Quinn et al., 1996a).

Other appraisals vary from annually with interim reviews, to annually with monthly/quarterly reviews and annually with six to eight weekly reviews. Nonetheless,
Fisher (1994) explains that the frequency of performance appraisal is an arduous dimension to argue due to the ambiguity of the distinction between an appraisal meeting and a regular daily discussion about work between a superior and a subordinate. In general, the problem of frequency has always been one of the major limitations of any formal approach to performance appraisal. Too long an interval between each appraisal might result in its contents losing relevance and risk artificiality, whereas, too short an interval might result in the process becoming too time-consuming (Freemantle, 1994). Evidently, the actual time period varies in different organizations and with different aims (Boice and Kleiner, 1997). However, a typical frequency would be bi-monthly or quarterly.

3.0 Hypotheses development: performance appraisal, career commitment and turnover intention

3.1 Perceived performance appraisal effectiveness and intention to quit

Intention to withdraw or quit an organization simply refers to an employee’s perceived probability of staying or leaving an employing organization. Turnover intention has been recurrently prescribed in literatures as the most immediate predictor to eventual turnover (Allen et al., 2003; Lum et al., 1998). The focus of this attitudinal element of turnover intention makes sense since it highlights the various elements of behavior and the motivation to leave that covers many inevitable reasons for actual turnover. Turnover is costly (Mitchell et al., 2001; Adhiranayanan & Gurunathan, 2011; Cascio & Bordreau; 2011) and maybe difficult to quantify when irreplaceable knowledge assets or institutional memory are lost. These costs do not stop here. Each time an employee leaves the firm, productivity is presumed to drop due to the learning curve involved in understanding the job and the organization. In addition, research proves that, after losing key employees, organizations experienced damage reputation, customer relationship, had lost best practices information and lost significant income (Warren, 1999). Ultimately, in most cases, the involvement of superiors included positions all the way up to and including the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) becomes inevitable. This demonstrates that turnover issues impact the firm by utilizing the precious time of senior managers. This is in addition to other expenses including loss of training and retraining time, loss of human and relational
capital. Ultimately, organizational success is not viable through personnel replacement activities (Smith and Rupp, 2004).

Turnover intention has brought about the importance of perceived performance appraisal effectiveness. The relationship between perceived performance appraisal effectiveness and turnover intention has since become the most renowned issue in the field of management research. One of the common objectives of performance appraisal is to retain the topmost performing employees through quality performance appraisal that leads to fair compensation amounts, high motivation and better career prospects (Zimmerman, 2009; Abdullah et al., 2011). Hence, the intensity of performance appraisal effectiveness perception is fundamental in encouraging an employee to stay within one’s employment (Griffeth et al., 2000; Smith and Rupp, 2002; Benson et al., 2010). An employee with a low intensity of perceived performance appraisal effectiveness could oppose the best interest of an employee. The employee will feel that his or her contributions are not effectively appraised or recognized, and thus will posit a negative organizational attitude. In view of being underrated, the employee willingness to be in employment will weaken. Hence, the following proposition is established:

P1. Low intensity of perceived performance appraisal effectiveness will be associated with higher levels of turnover intention relative to those with high intensity of perceived performance appraisal effectiveness.

3.2 Performance appraisal, career commitment and intention to quit
Career commitment concept that was first introduced by Blau (1985) simply refers to one’s inspiration to stay in one’s chosen career (Blau, 1985; 1989). It focuses on a uni-dimensional measure which involves one’s identification and involvement in one’s occupation or career, along with one’s effort in the pursuit of supporting one’s career goals (Blau, 1985; Colarelli and Bishop, 1990; Goulet and Singh; 2002). The conceptualization of career commitment was later extended into a multidimensional measure of accumulated investments and cost of pursuing another new career (“continuance”), attachment to a career (“affective”) and feelings of obligation to remain in one career (“normative”) commitment (Meyer et al., 1993; 2006; Meyer and Herscovitch; 2001). Subsequently, these measures closely concur with another alternative multidimensional concept that
measures one’s strong feeling of attachment to one’s career (“career identity”), one’s strength to withhold one’s career against commotion (“career resilience”) and clear understanding of one’s career path (“career insight”) (London, 1983; Carson and Bedeian, 1994).

Performance appraisal may be seen as a viable organizational tool that may be used to motivate, direct and develop subordinates. According to Smith and Rupp (2004), performance-based rewards and understanding work-effects linkage would successfully engage knowledge workers. Knowledge workers enjoy the most positive work environment on all measures, which include perceptions of appraisal effectiveness (HR professional, 2001). High intensity of perceived performance appraisal effectiveness should result in extrinsic rewards such as higher salaries (Day and Allen, 2004) or advancement (Allen, 2006) as well as intrinsic rewards such as self-satisfaction (Locke and Latham, 1990; Greenhaus and Parasuraman, 1993). These rewards would enable employees to direct their energies in directions appropriate to their careers. With higher levels of career commitment, individuals may make significant investments in their careers to pursue their high career goals, regardless of the setbacks (Colarelli and Bishop, 1990; Aryee et al., 1994; Mohamad et al., 2006; Connie et al., 2009). They would also engage themselves with organizational training and job enrichment programs to attain new or higher skills and knowledge. This career advancement path, along with their morale and optimism would thus negate their turnover intentions (Lobburi, 2012; Abdullah et al., 2012; Thwala et al., 2012).

Conversely, employees with low intensity of perceived performance appraisal effectiveness allege that instead being a means of measuring subordinates; the appraisal role is solely a powerful channel of managerial control (Edmonstone, 1996; Weise et al., 1998). The performance appraisal systems which tend not to incorporate employees personal aspirations with their future development have been cited by several authors (Freeman, 2002; Wilson and Western, 2000; Long, 1986). Evidently, there exist conflicting values and goals between organizations and these professionals (Lee et al., 2000). Due to the divergent needs of stakeholders, the appraisal process itself is often a source of unmet expectations (Murphy and Cleveland, 1995). Usually, what is articulated by the management is not what is valued and rewarded. Most often than not, they feel that
their contribution is not effectively appraised and recognized. Considering perceptions of the appraisal effectiveness may contradict employees’ beliefs about their contributions, we would expect them not to persistently manage and pursue their career growth successfully. As a consequence, employees would exhibit lower levels of career commitment (Anna, 2008; Barbara, 2012) and have no interest to prolong their tenure. Since, perceived performance appraisal effectiveness is expected to have a positive impact on career commitment that will negatively affect turnover intention, we make the following propositions:

**P2.** Low intensity of perceived performance appraisal effectiveness will tend to be associated with lower levels of career commitment relative to those with high intensity of perceived performance appraisal effectiveness.

**P3.** As a consequence, employee turnover intention level will be higher.

*Figure 1:* Conceptual model depicting the indirect (through career commitment components) associations of performance appraisal and turnover intention
4.0 Concluding thoughts and proposals for future research

Generally, there have been a tremendous number of written literatures on performance appraisal, career commitment and turnover intention. This study in particular attempt to fill the gap in the existing literatures on the direct impact of career commitment on the relationship between perceived performance appraisal effectiveness and turnover intention. Our study takes into account the complete framework of performance appraisal system, rather than each one of its components, while the focus on career commitment is split into the strength of one’s attachment, resistant, and development/planning towards his career or profession. There exists evidence suggesting that the intensity of perceived performance appraisal effectiveness will somehow affect a knowledge worker general level of career commitment through expected extrinsic and intrinsic organizational compensation, benefits and rewards. Employees with high intensity of perceived performance appraisal are therefore highly committed to their career, and thus posit a low turnover intention. Thus Improving performance appraisal practices to enhance career commitment should be an important objective for those responsible for reducing turnover intention. Hence, organizations should pay more attention on how to effectively appraise and recognize their knowledge worker contribution. The conceptual model that is mapped out aspires to be dynamic since it can be adapted across knowledge and non-knowledge-based industries.

The model rest upon the employer-employee concerns, expectations and perceptions in today’s contemporary organizational setting. Indirectly, the model also argues on the challenges faced by any organizations for continuous and iterative human resource practices on managing and retaining their knowledge workers. Hence, there should a fit on the part of organizational values, norms, culture and beliefs towards these concerns, expectations and perceptions. It is therefore crucial to recognize that businesses ultimate success is dependent upon the attitudes and behaviors of these knowledge staff and they are in need of strong supporting structures. Although this study makes progress to increase understanding of how perceived performance appraisal effectiveness affect directly and interactively turnover intention, future work should include moderation effects of psychological contract and organization benefits in career-related research. It is also noteworthy to consider both organizational and career commitments concurrently for future performance appraisal-turnover intention research. The propositions set out above will then be the starting point for developing empirical research work for further
organizational understanding of the issues and planning of interventions. It would be a significant contribution to the field of human resource management literatures.
References


