

The Effects of the Psychological Contract Breach and Emotional Exhaustion on Turnover Intentions among Millennials: The Moderating Role of Perceived Job Meaningfulness

Track: Human Resource Management

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Abstract

This paper explores the factors that influence job turnover intentions among millennial workers, such as the psychological contract breach and job burnout in the form of emotional exhaustion. More specifically, our contribution resides in how the perception of possessing a meaningful job moderates the effects of the psychological contract breach and emotional exhaustion on the job turnover intentions among millennial employees. In fact, we posit that the perception of having a meaningful job will moderate negatively, or ameliorate, the job turnover intentions among the workers of the millennial generation, irrespectively whether they present psychological contract breach or emotional exhaustion.

Introduction

Nowadays, the importance of the millennial generation in the market place has increased dramatically owing to the progressive retirement of the baby boomer workers (Ng & Gossett, 2013). Consequently, it is important that organizations and managers understand their characteristics so as to face the challenge of attracting, motivating and retaining them (Twenge, 2010).

Empirical evidence suggests that millennials are difficult to motivate and have higher intentions to leave organizations (i.e. Cennamo & Gardner, 2008; Lub, Bijvank, Bal, Blomme & Schalk, 2012). Turnover intention is the most important single predictor of actual turnover (Hom, Mitchell, Lee and Griffith, 2012) and represents a significant problem to most firms. If turnover realizes, it may lead to numerous consequences, such as insufficient workforce, additional costs associated with recruiting and training new employees, and a decrease in organizational performance and productivity (i.e. Mobley, 1982; Tziner & Birati, 1996; Uludag, Khan & Guden, 2011).

Some of the most salient reasons that explain the previously exposed propensity to leave among millennials are the common unrealistic high expectations (Dencker, Joshi & Martocchio, 2008) and the employee's emotional exhaustion (Cheng & Gursoy, 2016). The unrealistic expectations, expressed as the break of psychological contracts, could lead to the perception that the employer is not fulfilling his established promises during the selection process, which in turn, reduces the employee's organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and increases their intentions to turnover (Robinson, 1996; Morrison & Robinson, 1997). Similarly, emotional exhaustion is related positively with high turnover intentions (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001), becoming among the most significant forecasters of employees' satisfaction toward their work and job turnover intentions (Cheng & Gursoy, 2016).

Particularly, the concern of personnel retention is more salient in military organizations, since it is crucial for them to possess always highly trained, qualified and prepared enlistees in the ranks (Dupré & Day, 2007). More importantly, according to Driskell & Olmstead (1989), the military industry has higher than average costs of turnover and requires longer training in order to operate, repair, and maintain increasingly complex equipment under adverse operational conditions, requiring mastering basic skills and specific job skills.

In this article, we aim to explore the importance of these two factors in the context of millennials enrolled in military organizations. More importantly, given that previous research (Yang & Guy, 2006; Rawlins, Indvik, & Johnson, 2008; Park & Gursoy, 2012; Smith & Galbraith, 2012) suggests that younger generations prefer to work in assignments that are meaningful and fulfilling for them, we are interested in exploring whether the perception of having a meaningful job reduces these intentions to turnover. Hence, our contribution not only focuses on a new context to explore established relations, such as the breakup of the psychological contract and emotional exhaustion on turnover intentions. On the contrary, we further explore whether having a perceived meaningful job moderates these relations. While job meaningfulness have been theoretically argued to be important for millennials, to the best of our knowledge its impact on these relations have not been empirically examined. Moreover, we expect that while meaningfulness is important among millennials, this factor may be more salient in the context of military careers. Hence, if meaningfulness effectively moderates this relation, this effect should be showed in the chosen setting. Our research also has managerial implications since our findings will help to develop strategies leading to a better recruitment, retention, and reduction of job turnover intentions among young millennial employees and their associated consequences.

We apply our research in Latin America. Despite its growing economic importance and openness to trade and investments, there are relatively few studies that focus in the region, as compared with those made in advanced economies or in other emerging markets such as Asia (Cuervo-Cazurra, 2016). Within this context, we believe that Peru represents an ideal setting for this study. Over the last decade, it has been one of the region's fastest growing economies, with an average of GDP growth rate of 5.9% and with a relatively low inflation (2.9%) as well. This economic growth has been able to reduce the poverty rate from 55.6% to 21.8% over one decade, which is reflected by the strong growth in employment (The World Bank, 2016). Given this dynamic environment, Peru provides a suitable context for this study given the increased perception of job opportunities in the market place. Therefore, Peru represents a good fit to evaluate career mobility and turnover intentions of the millennials in the job market and more specifically, in the armed forces. The article proceeds as follows, first, we will address the literature review of the particular characteristics of the millennials and our constructs of interest such as turnover intentions; the psychological contract breach; job burnout expressed in emotional exhaustion; and

meaningfulness. Then we will expose our primary hypotheses, research methods, measures and findings. Finally, we will present our discussion, make some conclusions and address the limitations and avenues for future research.

Literature review

Generations in the work place and Millennials

Under the cohort perspective theory (Ryder, 1965), generation is defined as a demographic cohort, being an observable group of people born in the same interval of time and experiencing the same event within the same time interval. Further, the social forces perspective (Mannheim, 1952), conceives generation as a group of individuals born within the same historical and socio-cultural context, experiencing the same formative events and develop unifying commonalities as a result. More related to the working environment, Dencker et al. (2008) argued that there is a shared generational identity among members of the same generation that shape common job-related expectations. Smola & Sutton (2002) mentioned that differences do exist among generations in regard of work values and that these differences are affected in a higher degree by generational events instead of the aging process. Currently, there are members of three different generations in the market place such as the baby boomers, the generation X and the millennial generation (Smola & Sutton, 2002). The millennial generation, also called generation me, generation next or generation Y, is the last generation to enter the workplace and is composed by people who were born between the years 1981 and 1999 (Bolton, Parasuraman, Hoefnagels, Migchels, Kabadayi, Gruber, Komarova, Solnet, 2013). Given the progressive retirement of the baby boomer workforce (Twenge, 2010), the workplace is changing rapidly. Within this context, the importance of the millennial generation in the workplace has increased dramatically (Ng & Gossett, 2013). As a result, Twenge (2010) proposes that it is crucial to understand how to hire, motivate and retain millennial workers, since it has been suggested that millennials are regarded as hard to motivate and have greater intentions to leave their jobs than their predecessors (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008; Lub et al., 2012). Also, among other salient differences that the millennial generation workers present are their unrealistic great work expectations, which are reflected in the desire of rapid career advancement with a fulfilling life outside work at the same time (Ng, Schweitzer & Lyons, 2010). In fact, they want more promotions and earnings with minimal effort and no association with personal results, showing their narcissistic personalities and entitled behavior, which means expect something for doing nothing (Twenge, 2006; Alsop, 2008). In addition, Rawlins et al. (2008), found that members of the millennial generation are less willing to accept low entry positions and do not consider hard work as a mechanism to ascend the corporate ladder, believing that just having an undergraduate degree is enough preparation to immediately take managerial roles, reflecting their unrealistic high job expectations. Similarly, De Hauw & De Vos (2010), found that millennial expectations concerning job content, training, career development and salary remain high during times of economic recession, suggesting that the unrealistically high job expectations are largely rooted within the generation Y. Besides, some other characteristics that the

millennial generation shows are greater self-confidence, narcissistic personality, sadness, anxiety, and lesser desire for social endorsement (Twenge & Campbell, 2008; Twenge & Foster, 2010; Gentile, Campbell & Twenge, 2010). Millennials also value more leisure, but less work centrality in their lives as well (Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman & Lance, 2010; Park & Gursoy, 2012). Owing to the previously exposed characteristics, millennial workers should bring to the workplace high necessity for compliment, trouble with criticism, unrealistically high job expectations, and more significantly, higher intentions to leave organizations and job hopping (Twenge & Campbell, 2008) than previous generations. On the other side, previous research suggest that millennials allocate value to more meaningful job assignments like civil orientation (Corporate Leadership Council; 2005; Ertas, 2015; Greenberg & Weber, 2008; Strauss & Howe, 2000). Further, Twenge, Campbell & Freeman (2012) found that millennials score high in voluntarism and community service.

Job Turnover intentions

The construct job turnover intentions have been defined as the behavioral intent in the form of the worker's perceived probability of terminate employment, which in turn reflects the motivations to stay or to leave the organization (Parasuraman, 1982). In particular, behavioral intention, which in this case is expressed in the form of turnover intentions, is considered to be the most immediate and strongest predictor of actual job turnover (Mobley, Griffeth, Hand & Meglino, 1979; Parasuraman, 1982; Van Breukelen, Van der Vlist & Steensma, 2004; Huffman, Adler, Dolan, & Castro, 2005; Hom et al. 2012). Furthermore, Lum, Kervin, Clark, Reid & Sirola (1998) argued that turnover intention is not contingent on job market dynamism and represents an attitude of the employee towards his organization. Following the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991), the actual performance of an action or behavior (e.g. actual turnover) is a function of the intention to perform that behavior (e.g. turnover intentions). The planned behavior theory encompasses three components anticipating behavior intents, such as the attitude regarding that behavior, the subjective norm associated with the behavior, and the perceived behavioral control toward the behavior (Van Breukelen et al., 2004). According to Ajzen (1991), the attitude toward the behavior is the degree of the individual's appraisal of the behavior in question; the subjective norm denotes the degree of social pressure to perform the behavior; and the perceived behavioral control refers to the degree of the perceived easiness or difficulty to perform the behavior. Nevertheless, previous research has also shown the importance of other precursors of job turnover, such as organizational commitment and organizational support (Griffeth, Hom & Gaertner, 2000; Hom et al., 2012). Among these alternative precursors, psychological contract breach and job burnout expressed in the form of emotional exhaustion have received significant attention. For instance, Zhao, Wayne, Glibowski, & Bravo (2007) argued that psychological contract has been regarded as one of the most significant frameworks to understand the employee-employer relationships in the workplace. Further, Swider and Zimmerman (2010) found that emotional exhaustion partially mediates the effect of the big five personality traits on turnover intention. Later, Hom et al. (2012) mentioned that personality

traits are important distal antecedents to actual turnover. It is important to study job turnover intentions because workers who have intentions to leave their organizations often emotionally dissociate themselves from the job atmosphere, have more propensity to not working in their full potential and are less effective (Dupré & Day, 2007). Besides, there are also other significant negative outcomes associated with job turnover behavior such as insufficient workforce, a decrease in organizational performance and productivity, and additional costs associated with recruiting and training new employees (Mobley, 1982; Guthrie, 2001; Uludag et al., 2011). In this regard, according to Tziner & Birati (1996), these additional turnover costs are composed by the direct costs, which the organization incurs by the replacement process; the indirect costs and losses, which are linked with interruptions in the production, sales and delivery of good and services; and the financial value of the projected effect on performance as a consequence of the decrease in morale of the remaining workforce. In addition, Guthrie (2001) found that job turnover and employment practices affect the firm's productivity. In the particular case of the millennial workers, Twenge & Campbell (2008) and Cennamo & Gardner (2008), concluded that millennials present higher intentions to leave their organizations than previous generations. In fact, Lub et al. (2012) posit that organizations nowadays are facing difficulties when it comes to hire, stimulate and keep their employees because millennial personnel present lower commitment and higher intentions to leave their job than their predecessors.

Psychological contract breach

The psychological contract lays under the foundation that in the employee-organization relationship exists reciprocal obligations and expectations between both parties (Rousseau, 1989). A salient characteristic in this contract is that those reciprocations rely on the employee's interpretation of the promises, but not in every situation those agreements are acknowledged by the employer (Morrison & Robinson, 1997). More specifically, psychological contract breach is the employee's perception that the employer has not fulfilled the obligations of the psychological contract in a proportionate way with the person's contribution (Morrison & Robinson, 1997). Therefore, the perceived breach is the result from the comparison between the actual job situation outcome and the desired or expected one (Weiss, 2002). Social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) has been used to explain how the psychological contract functions and affects behavior of employees in their job assignments. According with Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), workers and firms engage in exchanges in where each party reciprocates the contribution of his counterpart. When employees perceived a psychological breach, they adjust their contributions in their employee-employer relationship (Blau, 1964). Zhao et al. (2007) found that psychological contract breach generates a sentiment of anger and frustration towards the organization and erodes the trust relationship that otherwise would be in place. In this line, Meyer and Allen (1991) argued that a psychological breach generates negative attitudes in the form of lower emotional attachment, lower identification and lower involvement with the organization. In turn, these negative attitudes influence the employee's adjustment process by reducing their inputs to reach perceived equilibrium. Lub

et al. (2012) found that this adaptation entails a reduction of the employees' personal efforts, associated for instance, with negative outcomes such as lower trust in the organization; lower job satisfaction; lower job performance; lower sense of obligation; lower organizational commitment; and more importantly, present higher intentions to turnover (Robinson, 1996; Morrison & Robinson, 1997; Zhao et al., 2007; Rigotti, 2009).

Job Burnout and Emotional Exhaustion

Maslach, Jackson & Leiter (1996) defined burnout as a crisis in the relationship with work, being in a state of exhaustion in which workers are cynical about the value of their occupation and unconvinced about their capacity to perform it. Its components are expressed in three elements such as emotional exhaustion, cynicism and professional efficacy (Maslach et al., 1996). Emotional exhaustion relates to any source, both emotional and physical, leading to the worker's fatigue (Cheng & Gursoy, 2016), and it refers to the feelings of being tired and without reserves of emotional and physical resources (Maslach et al., 2001). Cynicism relates to apartness and indifferent attitude to work in general (Cheng & Gursoy, 2016) and it is manifested in excessively detached, callous and negative attitudes concerning the job (Maslach et al., 2001). The third dimension of the construct, which is professional efficacy, encompasses both the interpersonal and non-interpersonal parts of professional accomplishment (Cheng & Gursoy, 2016) and it is expressed in the hesitant feelings of incompetence toward the own effectiveness and productivity to develop the duties at work (Maslach et al., 2001). Previous research has suggested that among the three main dimensions of Burnout, emotional exhaustion is the most significant (Cropanzano, Rupp & Byrne, 2003; Knudsen, Ducharme & Roman, 2009; Schaufeli & Taris, 2005) and precedes and shape the other burnout dimensions (Kristensen et al, 2005; Leiter, 1993; Lings, Durden, Lee & Cadogan, 2014). In fact, Shirom (1989) has argued that emotional exhaustion is the component that best capture the meaning of burnout. Emotional exhaustion also has showed stronger relationships with relevant criterion than the other two components of burnout (Cropanzano et al., 2003). For instance, in their meta-analysis, Lee and Ashforth (1996) found that emotional exhaustion was highly correlated with turnover intentions ($r=0.44$). In the context of Conservation of Resources Theory (Hobfoll, 1988; 1989), emotional exhaustion is contingent on two sides: on the one side, the personal resources that individuals may possess (i.e. motivation) and job characteristics that employees value in their effort to attain job related goals (i.e. participation in decision making) (Hobfoll, 1989). On the other side, resource demands or stressors that tend to deplete resource stocks previously accumulated. When employees perceived that their resources possessed are not enough to deal with work demands, emotional exhaustion is likely to emerge (Wright & Cropanzano, 1998). According with Lings et al. (2014), role overload, role ambiguity and role conflict are stressors that may generate emotional exhaustion. Role overload is present when job related demands are greater than individual's capacity to undertake the task (Conley & Woosley, 2000). Role ambiguity happens when individuals have neither a clear decision capacity nor the required know how to perform a job (Singh, Goolsby

& Rhoads, 1994). Role conflict appears when job expectations and resource demands are not in line generating disagreements (Lings et al., 2014).

Meaningful work

Meaningful work is understood as a job experienced as particularly significant and with a positive meaning for individuals, in which that positive meaning has a growth and purpose oriented focus, rather than a pleasure oriented focus (Steger, Dik and Duffy, 2012). Rosso, Dekas & Wrzesniewski (2010) developed a bi-dimensional model concerning how work becomes meaningful, which is one of the first efforts to develop an integrated theoretical framework in meaningful work (Steger et al., 2012). Through meaningful work in this model, the worker makes efforts to make good to the self and the group; and the fruits of this work enhance both the self and the group as well (Steger et al., 2012). According to Rosso et al. (2010), in the first dimension workers lead their actions to form meaningfulness in two manners: toward the self or toward others. The second dimension shows how workers unfold the differences on their primary motives for such elections: an agency desire (involving differentiating, creating or asserting) concerning the own individual or others; or a desire of communion (involving uniting) concerning the own individual or others. Meaningfulness is important to study because when employees perceive their work as meaningful, they present higher general well-being, have higher job satisfaction, have higher organizational commitment; and ultimately, the perceived meaningful job reduces the worker's propensity of job turnover (Arnold, Turner, Barling, Kelloway, & McKee, 2007; Steger et al., 2012).

Hypotheses development

In our first hypothesis, we argue that since millennials have unrealistic job expectations there is a high probability that they perceive a psychological contract breach and as a consequence they present higher intentions to leave. When employees perceive the existence of psychological contract breaches, they develop negative attitudes towards their companies. Zhao et al. (2007) mentioned that employees developed anger, frustration and distrust towards their employers. Following Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), in the presence of those breaches employees will adjust their contributions in the form of lower commitment, lower sense of obligation and lower identification with their organizations (Meyer & Allen, 1991). These negative attitudes and lower sense of obligation with their organizations generate higher intentions to turnover among employees (Rigotti, 2009; Robinson, 1996). Despite psychological contract breaches can be a wrong interpretation of employees, they nonetheless affect their contributions in the worker-employer relations (Morrison & Robinson; 1997). In the context of millennials this situation is more salient. Not only millennials have higher intentions to leave their organizations and to present higher job hoping than previous generations (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008; Twenge & Campbell, 2008; Lub et al., 2012), but also previous research have suggested that they have unrealistic high job expectations (Dencker et al., 2008; Twenge & Campbell, 2008; Ng et al., 2010; De Hauw & De Vos, 2010). For instance, Ng et al. (2010)

mentioned that millennials have a strong drive for rapid advancement, but with a fulfilling life outside their jobs. This entails minimum effort to develop their tasks, but they expect rapid promotions and high earnings. (Twenge, 2006; Alsop; 2008). Therefore, these high work expectations in millennial employees could lead to the perception that employers are not accomplishing their established promises within the psychological contract. As a consequence, we expect that millennials reduce their contributions toward their organization and consequently present high intentions to leave their organizations (De Hauw & De Vos, 2010; Lub et al., 2012). Therefore:

Hypothesis 1. The perceived psychological contract breach is positively related with turnover intentions among millennials.

In addition to psychological contract breach, we also considered the role that emotional exhaustion plays in shaping turnover intentions. In our second hypothesis, we argued that since millennials face work stressors in their work places that they can't deal appropriately, they generate emotional exhaustion towards their working relations. Hence, due to their emotional exhaustion we expect that millennials have high tendency to withdraw their current positions. As mentioned, emotional exhaustion is a core component of burnout (i.e. Knudsen et al., 2009), captures its core meaning (Shirom, 1989) and is strongly related with turnover intentions (Lee & Ashforth, 1996) and even with actual turnover (Wright & Cropanzano, 1998). Emotional Exhaustion emerges when employees are subject to work stressors that drained their resource stock (Wright & Cropanzano, 1998). Among the most important role stressors are role overload, role ambiguity and role conflict (i.e. Lings et al., 2014). Role overload appears when job demands are greater than employee's perceived capacity to undertake them (Conley & Woosley; 2000). Twenge and Campbell (2008) have found that millennials have problems with criticism and high need for compliment. Both problems limited the capacity of adaptation and reaction of millennials towards job demands. Further, the high value that millennials attach to leisure (Twenge et al., 2010) further prevents them to acquire the required skills to perform the task. In this situation, emotional exhaustion is likely to occur. Moreover, millennials tend to have lower resistance to the lack of clarity associated to their job positions. In the absence of clear directions, employees face high levels of ambiguity that generate high levels of emotional exhaustion. Finally, role conflict creates emotional exhaustion because generates tension between the employee inner attitudes and the need to perform in a given position. In the context of millennials, this situation may be present from the recruiting process. For instance, Rawlins et al. (2008) have mentioned that millennials present negative attitudes towards the acceptance of low entry positions. This inner feelings and their need to perform at that level generates tension that causes emotional exhaustion. Hence, millennials have a high propensity to face role stressors from their entry positions in the job market place. When millennial workers present emotional exhaustion, they are considerably less satisfied with their work and have more job turnover rates (Cheng & Gursoy, 2016). Further, they blame

their work as the cause of their strain because the job demands do not compensate properly their efforts. Therefore, we hypothesize:

Hypothesis 2. Emotional exhaustion is positively related with turnover intentions among millennials.

Previous research has mentioned that job meaningfulness is important for millennials (Rawlins et al., 2008; Park & Gursoy, 2012; Smith & Galbraith, 2012). In the following two hypotheses we hypothesize whether and how job meaningfulness can ameliorate the impact of psychological contract breach and emotional exhaustion in turnover intentions in the context of millennials. Millennials look for jobs which are meaningful and fulfilling for them (Rawlins et al., 2008; Park & Gursoy, 2012; Smith & Galbraith, 2012). In fact, Park & Gursoy (2012) argue that millennial workers are less likely to leave their organizations when they perceive that their jobs are positive in meaning for them. Further, according to Rawlins, Indvik, & Johnson (2008), millennials want to make a difference in the world in the way that they want to be involved to find solutions (government, the roads, disaster relief, healthcare, etc.), they want to be involved in a corporate culture socially and environmentally responsible. Millennials also want to make a positive impact, they want to work in organizations that have values aligned with them, and they are looking for a sense of purpose and importance in their work (Rawlins et al., 2008). According with our first hypothesis, under the presence of psychological contract breach, millennials will develop negative attitudes in the form of lower commitment, lower sense of obligation and lower identification with their organizations. However, as argued by Monnot & Beehr (2014), jobs that enhance meaningfulness will have associated positive outcomes. If millennials perceive that they have a meaningful job, they will attach a sense of purpose and contribution not only to themselves but also to their communities. This higher order benefit will generate a sense of obligation towards their current positions that reduces their intentions to leave. The decision to withdraw would affect not only to themselves, but more importantly it will jeopardize the positive impact that they want to achieve in the community. Therefore, we expect that in the context of millennials, perceived meaningfulness will attenuate the impact of psychological contract breach on turnover intentions. Hence:

Hypothesis 3. Having a perceived meaningful work moderates negatively the relationship between the perceived psychological contract breach and turnover intentions among millennials.

We previously argued that emotional exhaustion positively impacts intentions to turnover. However, in this final hypothesis we argued that if millennials perceive that their jobs are meaningful, the previously described relationship will weaken. The value associated to job meaningfulness and its associated higher order value via social benefits may generate that millennials reduce the value that they attach to leisure activities and develop their capacities to deal with job demands. Therefore, they increase their capacity to deal with role overload by developing their competences. Further, they may clarify the role expectations by focusing on the social good that they perceive. In this sense, they reduce role ambiguity. Finally, they

are better prepared to deal with role conflict because there is an intrinsic alignment between their inner attitudes towards social good and the attached value that their job positions have. Therefore, we expect the following relationship:

Hypothesis 4. Having a perceived meaningful work moderates negatively the relationship between emotional exhaustion and turnover intentions among millennials.

Research methods

In order to test our research hypotheses, we applied a face-to-face survey consisting on 33 (Likert scale) items, which was distributed to 233 millennial cadets of the Peruvian Air Force Academy (EOFAP) from the 1st to the 4th year of study. Data was collected from a single source on a single point moment. To address whether our study is affected by common method variance we used both procedural and statistical procedures (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). On the procedural side, we allow participants to be anonymous respondents and we assured them that there were no right or wrong answers (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Further, we structured our instrument by including first our independent and moderating variables and then our dependent variables (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986). On the statistical procedure, we used the Harman's one factor test. If common method variance is present, only one factor will emerge. Nevertheless, this was not the case. Therefore, we believe that common method variance was not a problem for our study. Given that in this research we focused on interaction effects, we mean centered our independent and moderating variables to reduce multicollinearity (Aiken and West, 1991). This method has no effects on the correlation among the variables, but it is useful to a better estimate of the interactions (Robinson & Morrison, 2000).

Research setting

We test our hypothesis in a sample of millennials cadets of the Peruvian Air Force Academy (EOFAP). We believe that Peru and its Air Force Academy represent an ideal setting to test the relations explored in this manuscript. At the country level, Peru is one of the most dynamic economies in Latin America. According with The World Bank (2016), Peru not only is one of the fastest growing economies in the region but also has high employment growth. As a result, Peruvians will face less mobility restrictions, since they will have more job opportunities available in the market place. Previous research has argued that job scarcity or scarce job opportunities actually deter leaving (Hom and Kiniki, 2001). Given its dynamism, Peru has an attractive job market that makes the country an interesting laboratory to test mobility intentions. At the industry level, the Air Force is one of the most sensitive industry segments to evaluate turnover behavior. In fact, Driskell & Olmstead (1989) argued that turnover costs in the military forces are higher the average since longer training is required in order to master the necessary skills to operate, repair and maintain increasing complex equipment under adverse operational conditions. Further, Dupré & Day (2007), mentioned that the concern of personnel retention is more noticeable in the military forces because it is essential to keep highly skilled and trained personnel in the lines permanently. Hence, turnover intentions represent a more

salient problem to be addressed given the non-negligible costs associated to this particular setting. Turnover intentions represent the most important single predictor of job mobility (Hom et al., 2012). Previous research in the military setting have found that stated job turnover intentions are an important predictor of actual turnover behavior (Van Breukelen et al., 2004 and Huffman et al., 2005).

Measures

Dependent Variable

Our dependent variable is Job turnover intentions. Job turnover intention is the strongest predictor of actual turnover (Hom et al., 2012). In order to assess turnover intentions, we used the scale developed by Boshoff and Allen (2000). The reliability of the three – item measure reached the 0.7 cut-off point (Cronbach's $\alpha=0.7$) suggested by Nunnally (1970). Hence, turnover intention was calculated as the mean of the three items ranging from 1 to 5.

Independent Variables

Our independent Variables are Psychological contract breach, Emotional exhaustion and Meaningful work. To capture perceived psychological contract breach, we used the five item scale developed by Robinson & Morrison (2000). For internal consistency, we kept three items (Cronbach's α is = 0.833). Perceived psychological contract was calculated by the mean of these three items. Since emotional exhaustion is the component that best capture the meaning of burnout (Shirom, 1989), our analyses focuses solely on this dimension. Therefore, in order to measure emotional exhaustion, we used 5 items (7 point Likert scale) of the Maslach Burnout Inventory – General Survey (MBI-GS), developed by Maslach et al. (1996) and translated to Spanish by Moreno, Rodríguez & Escobar (2001). This scale is the most prevalent to measure burnout (Alarcon, 2011). We dropped one of the 5 emotional exhaustion items to increase the reliability of the scale (Cronbach's α = 0.813). Emotional exhaustion was calculated by the mean of the four remaining items. Meaningful work was captured by the measure proposed by Bunderson and Thompson (2009). They based their scale on the previous work of Spreitzer (1995), Wrzesniewski, McCauley, Rozin and Schwartz (1997) and Pratt and Ashforth (2003). To measure Meaningful work, we used the 5 items considered in their scale (Cronbach's α = 0.887). Meaningfulness was represented by the mean of the items included in the measure.

Control Variables

Given that the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1988; 1991) have been one of the most researched models to explain intentions and actual behaviors (Armitage and Conner, 2001), we included single items measures to capture each of its components: Attitude toward the behavior, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen 1988; 1991). To control for attitude toward the behavior, we included the reverse code of the following question "*I would be very happy if I would stay the rest of my career in this organization*" (Allen & Meyer, 1990). To control for subjective norms, we

considered the following question “*if you decided to resign your organization, would your close environment (friends/family) support this decision*” (Liñán & Chen, 2009). To control for perceived behavioral control, we included the following question “*As soon as I finish my studies, I would not have problems to find a job easily*” (De Hauw & De Vos, 2010). Previous research has further suggested that perceived organizational support negatively impacts turnover intentions (Hom et al., 2012). To control for these effects, we included the 8 item (7 point Likert scale) questionnaire developed by Eisenberger et al. (1997). We dropped one of the 7 perceived organizational support items in order to increase the internal consistency of the scale (Cronbach’s $\alpha = 0.866$). Perceived organizational support was calculated by the mean of the seven remaining items. Finally, we decided to control the following: age, gender, military grade of studies, and number of free weekends by month.

Findings

Table 1 and 2 shows descriptive statistics and correlation coefficients from our research sample. We proceeded to analyze Variance Inflation Factors (VIFs) in order to verify if there were multicollinearity issues. However, this was not the case since our scores are significantly lower than 10, which represents the standard cut off (Hair, Anderson, Tatham & Black, 1998).

**** Place Tables 1 and 2 about here ****

In Table 3 we show the findings of our regression models developed in order to test our hypotheses. Model 1 presented the results associated with our control variables. While the theoretically driven controls reach significance with the appropriate signs, the demographic driven controls fail to do so. Consistently with previous research, attitudes toward the behavior ($p < 0.001$), subjective norms ($p < 0.001$) and perceived behavioral control ($p < 0.1$) were positively related with turnover intentions. On the contrary, as expected, organizational support is negatively related with turnover ($p < 0.001$). Models 2 and 3 represent the main effects of psychological contract breach and emotional exhaustion on our dependent variable (turnover intentions) among millennials. Models 4 to 6 represent the impact of our moderator (having a meaningful job) on the previous relationships.

**** Place Table 3 about here ****

We predicted in Hypothesis 1 that the perceived psychological contract breach is positively related with job turnover intentions among millennials. Our results fully support this hypothesis in Model 2 ($p < 0.01$). Similarly, we predicted in Hypothesis 2 that emotional exhaustion is positively related with job turnover intentions among millennials. Our results marginally support this relation in Model 3 ($p < 0.10$). Our following analysis was to address the impact of our moderator variable (having a perceived meaningful job) in the previous relationships. Hypothesis 3 predicted that having a perceived meaningful work moderates negatively the relationship between the perceived psychological contract breach and job turnover intentions among millennials. We test this hypothesis in models 4 and 6. In model 4, we found statistical significance for this

interaction effect ($p < 0.01$). Nevertheless, the effect somehow weakens when we include the two interaction effects in model 6. The interaction effect between psychological contract breach and job meaningfulness reach marginal significance in this model ($p < 0.1$). Taking these results together, we consider that our third hypothesis is supported. Similarly, we predicted in Hypothesis 4 that having a perceived meaningful work moderates negatively the relationship between emotional exhaustion and job turnover intentions among millennials. We reach statistical support for this hypothesis in Models 5 ($p < 0.01$) and 6 ($p < 0.01$). Overall, our results provide evidence either fully or partially supporting our four hypothesized relationships. Nevertheless, in one case, our findings in one interaction effect lower its significance when all our interaction effect are considered together.

Discussion and conclusions

In this article, we analyze the impact of psychological contract breach and emotional exhaustion on turnover intentions among millennials. As expected, our results are in line with previous research and support these relationships. Given their unrealistic high job expectations, there is a high probability that millennials experience psychological contract breaches that affect their intentions for turnover. Further, millennials are easily exposed to job stressors such as role overload, role ambiguity and role conflict that in turn affect their turnover intentions. More interestingly, we assess whether and how perceived job meaningfulness moderate these relations. Previous research has theoretically suggested that job meaningfulness is important to millennials. In this article, we empirically test its importance in the context of military careers. The military career is the most suitable setting to test this construct given the sense of purpose and community service associated to it. Actually, the military career represents the extreme setting in which we should expect that job meaningfulness plays an important role. If our results have failed to reach significance even in this extreme context, the proposed importance of job meaningfulness for millennials would be seriously questioned. Our results suggest that job meaningfulness is indeed important for millennials, since it ameliorates the impact of both psychological contract breach and emotional exhaustion in turnover intentions. As we can see in figure 1, at low levels of job meaningfulness, the higher the perceived psychological contract breach, and the higher the intentions for turnover. However, when job meaningfulness is high, changes in perceived psychological contract breach have a minimum effect on intentions for turnover. These results suggest that when employees perceived that their job are meaningful, they also attach to their jobs a sense of purpose and contribution to the society. This higher order benefit ameliorates the negative attitudes associated with psychological contract breach such as lower commitment, lower sense of obligation and lower identification with their organizations, reducing their impact on turnover.

**** Place Figure 1 about here ****

Similarly, as we can see in figure 2, a moderating effect is present. At low levels of job meaningfulness, the higher the emotional exhaustion, the higher the intentions for turnover. Nevertheless, at high levels of job meaningfulness, the

impact of emotional exhaustion on intentions for turnover almost disappears. Our results suggest that the perceived higher order value would change the incentives among millennials by reducing the importance of leisure activities in order to deal with role overload. Further, job meaningfulness will reduce both the impact of role ambiguity and role conflict by aligning their inner attitudes towards social good and the value that their positions have.

** Place Figure 2 about here **

This article is not without limitations. We have obtained our data from a single source in a single moment of time. While we have done reasonable effort to control for common method bias (Podsakow & Organ, 1986), future research should obtain data from different sources at different moments to fully address this concern. Further, given the cross-sectional nature of our data, we cannot establish cause-effect relationships. Future research should consider a proper design to address this concern. Probably the use of longitudinal research is needed to elucidate the causal nature of these relations. This article has several contributions. We analyze whether and how job meaningfulness impact on millennials decision making in their workplace. Millennials present higher intentions of turnover that represents non negligible costs for organizations. While previous research have suggested that job meaningfulness is important for millennials, to the best of our knowledge there have not been reported empirical findings that support this claim. By evaluating the impact of meaningfulness in this extreme setting, we contribute to the millennial literature by supporting this previously exposed proposition. More importantly, we contribute with this stream of research by analyzing the mechanisms by which job meaningfulness matter. While psychological contract breach and emotional exhaustion have a strong positive impact on turnover intentions, in the presence of perceived job meaningfulness this impact almost disappears. Further, we contribute with the literature in emerging markets. While previous research has discussed the impact of our predictors on job turnover, scant research has been conducted in emerging markets and in Latin America in particular. Given the importance of relational ties and trust within the region (i.e. Khanna & Palepu, 2000), the significance of job meaningfulness could be more salient than in more developed economies. This represents an area of future research. Rosso et al. (2010) proposed that there are four pathways to explain job meaningfulness. Each of these pathways have different impact on the self and on the community. Given this variation, the impact of meaningfulness on turnover intentions but also in other important outcomes such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job performance, etc. deserve further study. Therefore, it is also an avenue for future research. The article also has managerial implications. While millennials value monetary rewards, in this article we find that non-hedonic wellbeing (i.e. job meaningfulness) has a strong effect to reduce the intention to withdraw. Therefore, managers are better off when they aligned the attached social value of their organizations and their corresponding positions with the one of millennials. If this alignment occurs, millennial employees will develop positive attitudes towards their organization that motivate them to find alternatives toward job stressors.

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Table 1
Descriptive Statistics and Variance

	N	Min	Max	Mean	St. Dev	VIF
1. Turnover intentions	232	1,00	5,00	1,8017	,81352	
2. Gender	233	,00	1,00	,8326	,37412	1,165
3. Year 1	233	,00	1,00	,1330	,34036	2,411
4. Year 2	233	,00	1,00	,3262	,46982	2,519
5. Year 3	233	,00	1,00	,2876	,45360	1,770
6. Age	233	17,00	24,00	20,66	1,492	1,954
7. Average N° free weekends/month	230	1,00	4,00	2,94	,825	1,263
8. Attitude toward behavior	233	1,00	5,00	2,2146	1,08133	1,391
9. Subjective norm	233	1,00	5,00	2,81	1,155	1,366
10. Perceived behavioral cont.	233	1,00	5,00	3,56	,968	1,140
11. Organizational support	229	1,00	7,00	4,8185	1,14517	2,028
12. Psych. contract breach	233	1,00	5,00	2,9120	,87947	1,492
13. Emotional exhaustion	229	1,00	7,00	3,9683	1,52764	1,448
14. Job meaningfulness	233	1,00	5,00	4,1253	,68588	2,491

Figure 1
Moderating effect: Job meaningfulness, psychological contract breach and turnover intentions.

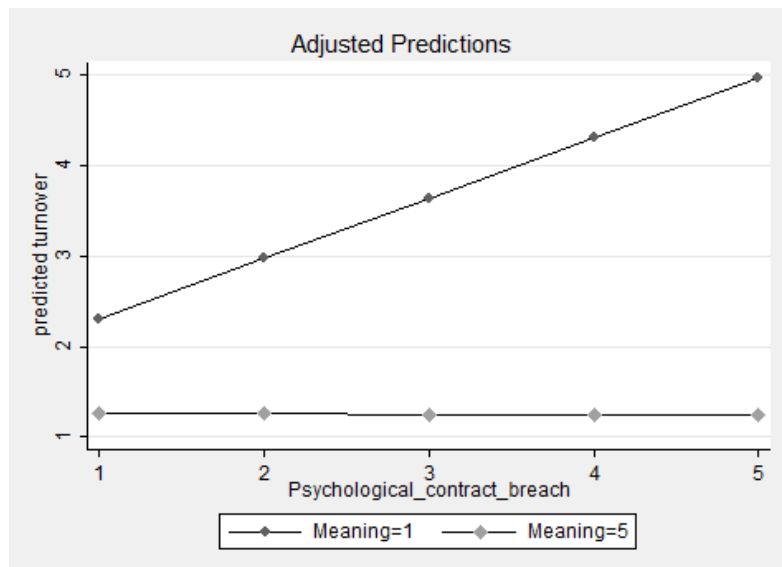


Table 2
Correlation table

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1. Turnover intentions	1,000															
2. Gender	-,044	1,000														
3. Year 1	-,044	,031	1,000													
4. Year 2	,138*	,071	-,265**	1,000												
5. Year 3	-,130*	,046	-,248**	-,435**	1,000											
6. Age	-,055	-,045	-,475**	-,281**	,120*	1,000										
7. Average N° free weekends/month	-,072	,276**	,087	,118*	-,072	-,083	1,000									
8. Attitude toward behavior	,439**	-,109	-,042	,040	-,057	,057	-,188**	1,000								
9. Subjective norm	,290**	-,016	,022	,265**	-,121*	-,190**	-,151*	,109	1,000							
10. Perceived behavioral cont.	,087	,115*	,098	-,073	-,041	,018	,148*	-,038	-,005	1,000						
11. Organizational support	-,445**	-,015	,137*	-,087	,058	-,020	,223**	-,344**	-,313**	,042	1,000					
12. Psych. contract breach	,406**	-,054	-,099	,065	-,089	,041	-,186**	,267**	,218**	-,046	-,547**	1,000				
13. Emotional exhaustion	,322**	,014	-,004	,175**	-,034	-,178**	-,206**	,196**	,425**	-,109	-,391**	,247**	1,000			
14. Job meaningfulness	-,676**	,069	,149*	-,201**	,083	-,004	,115*	-,490**	-,205**	,040	,541**	-,407**	-,260**	1,000		
15. Emotional ex.*Job mean.	-,265**	-,114*	,059	-,142*	,035	-,004	,095	-,160**	-,124*	-,106	,247**	-,130*	-,166**	,149*	1,000	
16. Psy. cont. breach*Job mean.	-,543**	-,075	,079	-,122*	,077	-,019	,040	-,323**	-,135*	-,191**	,416**	-,294**	-,108	,633**	,342**	1,000

**p<0.01; *p<0.05

Figure 2
Moderating effect: Job meaningfulness, emotional exhaustion and turnover intentions.

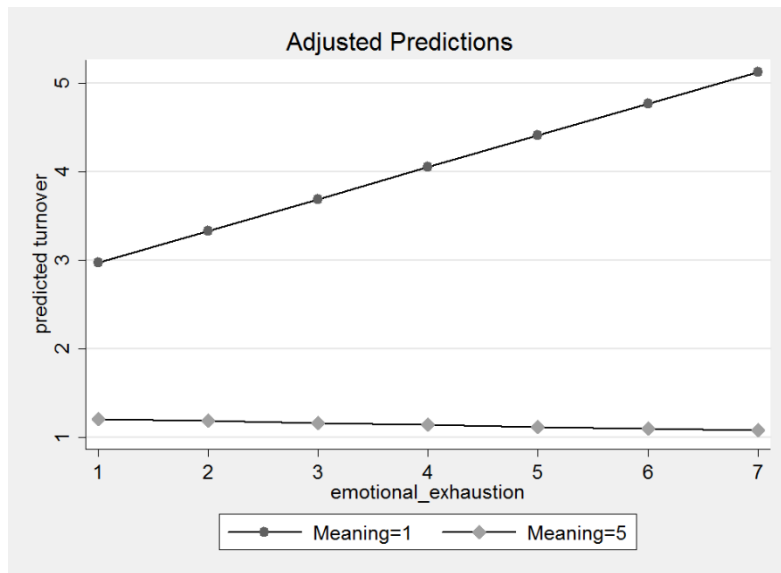


Table 3
Regression results

	Model 1 Turnover Int.	Model 2 Turnover Int.	Model 3 Turnover Int.	Model 4 Turnover Int.	Model 5 Turnover Int.	Model 6 Turnover Int.
Constant	2,276**	1,983**	2,127**	1,644**	1,692**	1,710**
1. Gender	,969	,957	,989	,832	,830	,825
2. Year 1	-,077	-,070	-,097	-,051	-,049	-,069
3. Year 2	,127	,125	,129	,109	,109	,109
4. Year 3	-,151	-,127	-,162	-,111	-,128	-,127
5. Age	,207	,203	,208	,174	,174	,173
6. Average N°free weekends/month	,005	,013	-,032	-,172	-,215*	-,210
7. Attitude toward behavior	,151	,148	,152	,128	,129	,128
8. Subjective norm	-,135	-,108	-,148	-,152	-,170	-,165
9. Perceived behavioral control	,131	,129	,132	,111	,111	,110
10. Organizational support	-,037	-,038	-,032	-,035	-,040	-,040
11. Psychological contract breach	,042	,041	,042	,035	,035	,035
12. Emotional exhaustion	,076	,083	,082	,064	,075	,074
13. Job meaningfulness	,060	,059	,062	,052	,052	,051
14. Psychological contract breach * Job meaningfulness	,251***	,238***	,243***	,096**	,089**	,089**
15. Emotional exhaustion * Job meaningfulness	,045	,045	,045	,041	,041	,041
16. Subjective norm	,114***	,105**	,082*	,077**	,078**	,077**
17. Perceived behavioral control	,044	,043	,046	,039	,038	,038
18. Organizational support	,085*	,087*	,101**	,070*	,083**	,065
19. Psychological contract breach	,047	,046	,048	,041	,040	,041
20. Emotional exhaustion	-,204***	-,140***	-,184***	,028	,033	,040
21. Job meaningfulness	,045	,049	,047	,046	,047	,046
22. Psychological contract breach * Job meaningfulness		,181***		,115**	,119**	,117**
23. Emotional exhaustion * Job meaningfulness		,061		,053	,053	,053
24. Subjective norm			,068*	,069**	,057*	,064**
25. Perceived behavioral control			,035	,030	,029	,029
26. Organizational support				-,520***	-,643***	-,553***
27. Psychological contract breach * Job meaningfulness				,086	,073	,086
28. Emotional exhaustion * Job meaningfulness				-,144***		-,109*
29. Psychological contract breach * Job meaningfulness				,055		,057
30. Emotional exhaustion * Job meaningfulness					-,079***	-,063**
31. Psychological contract breach * Job meaningfulness					,028	,029
N	225	225	221	221	221	221
R2	,344	,370	,354	,555	,557	,565
Adjusted R2	,313	,337	,320	,525	,527	,533

* p < 0.1; ** p < 0.05; *** p < 0.01