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EFFECTS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL RISK FACTORS ON TRANSFER INTENTIONS OF INTERNALLY DISPLACED GOVERNMENT WORKERS, DURING THE SOCIO-POITICAL CRISIS IN THE ANGLOPHONE REGIONS OF CAMEROON

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ABSTRACT

Psychological risk factors constitute a great source of risk in organizations especially during wars and conflicts. Adjustment schemas of employees are usually focused on risk mitigation strategies and transfer intentions to safer work stations is often a pre-disposition of those in distress. These risk factors lead to behavioural change in order to adapt to the prevailing organizational climate. This paper is designed to assess the effects of psychological risk factors on the transfer intentions of Internally Displaced Government workers during the armed conflict in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon. The data were collected through a self-administered questionnaire. The target population of the study is made up of internally displaced government workers resident in non-crisis areas of the francophone regions. A sample of 313 internally displaced government workers was obtained through a stratified random sampling and snow-ball sampling techniques. Results showed a positive correlation between psychological risk factors and transfer intentions. The study concludes with recommendations to the different stakeholders in the conflict in order to end the conflict and maintain the human resources intact. This paper may help the society by curbing the wave of psychological risk factors caused by conflicts in order to create a more conducive working environment that will spare workers from nursing transfer intention. Hence, it is very imperative for the government and the separatist fighters to work out strategies for peace to return and for

government workers to stay and work in their regions.

INTRODUCTION

Psychological risk factors constitute one of the greatest but silent risks factors faced by most workers in many organizations around the world especially those existing in conflict zones. Most attention is predominantly focused on the prevention and mitigation of physical risk factors while relegating psychological risk factors to the background due to the abstract nature of psychological risk factors. Psychological risk is a term used to refer to health conditions or to a feeling or relationship. According to Gonzalez (2022), Psychological risk factors are comprised of personality traits, thoughts, emotions, and attitudes that could make a person more likely to develop a mental health disorder. Psychological risk factors may include aspects such as stress, discomfort, anxiety, threats, depression, injustices, harassment (verbal and moral), verbal violence and others (Chakor, 2010). The situation is even more critical in times of natural and man-made disasters such as the socio-political crisis in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon. The existence of psychological risk factors has negative impacts on workers' health and behaviour, thus causing workers to reflect on a change of behaviour as a means of adaptation and mitigation of its adverse effect. Adaptation and mitigation are also a function of one's state of one's mindset and interest. One of these adaptive means is transfer intention. Transfer intention as borrowed from Mobley (1978) definition of turnover intention can be defined as the probability that an employee will transfer from a particular organizational environment to a suitable one elsewhere. Workers, in order to free themselves from the harshness of psychological risk factors nurse intentions to transfer to other areas that are free from psychological risk factors. The relationship between psychological risk factors is not just a cause-effect relationship. This means that as individuals experience psychological risk factors, they do not immediately nurse intentions to transfer to a risk-free area. Many factors like self-interest, psychological well-being come into play before a final decision is made. Well-being may reflect recognition or fulfillment at work, a psychological condition that results from an event perceived as positive and/or rewarding (e.g., increased salary), organizational transparency or the "atmosphere" in the company (Chakor, 2010). When they come into play they determine the organizational behaviour that has to be adopted by the employee in question. In the context of the armed conflict in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon, psychological risk factors have been observed to be one of the most dangerous risks factors faced by workers. They have been experiencing threats, insults, stress, harassments, fear of the unknown, feeling of insecurity, discriminations and negative stereotypes from both belligerents, which have caused them to adopt a number of adaptive and mitigating measures, which transfer intention is one which is of utmost interest to us in this study.

Review of Literature

2.1: Psychological Risk Factors

The University of Oregon (2000) defines psychological risk factors to include the production of negative states

such as anxiety, depression, guilt, shock and loss of self-esteem and altered behaviour. According to Korneeva, Simonova & Degteva (2013), Psychological Risk Factors in professional activity is the probability of the occurrence of a professional personal destructions and the formation of unfavourable functional states of employees when performing job functions due to prolonged negative impact of social-household and occupational factors in the lack of personal and environmental resource. Sensory deprivations, use of hypnosis, deception or mental stresses are examples of psychological risks. Psychological risk factors like threats, abuses and verbal sexual harassment have been known and proven through researches to bring about transfer intentions among employees, which in most cases, effectively concretize themselves into actual transfers.

All these psychological risk factors have been experienced by employees of the two Anglophone regions during the armed conflicts in these regions and thus, some employees have resorted to relocating to other francophone regions to seek safety. While in those regions with enough security, they are not ready to accept a transfer offer or request for a transfer to relocate to those safer regions to exercise their duties there in total tranquility, serenity and security.

In a study carried out by Worksafe.qld.gov.au (2018), they pointed out that psychological risk factors are those aspects of the work environment and the way that work is organized that are associated with mental disorders and/or physical injury or illness. Among those psychological risk factors that can negatively impact on a worker's health and safety are: work-related stress, work-related bullying and work-related fatigue. They asserted that psychological risk can adversely affect employee's job satisfaction, organizational commitment and cause conflict in the employee's family life. They further mentioned that when psychological risk factors are not effectively managed, they can negatively impact on organizational measures including productivity, absenteeism, transfer intentions and turnover.

In the context of the context of the Anglophone crisis, the following psychological risk factors have been observed on the crisis field; Psychological or mental torture, threats, insults, feeling of insecurity, intimidations, stress, negative stereotypes, discriminations, cyber-bullying, forced nudity and stigmatizations.

According to FREEDOM FROM TORTURE (2020), psychological torture is torture that does not directly cause physical violence or injury to the person's body. A contemporary definition, psychological torture are those processes that "involve attacking or manipulating the inputs and processes of the subconscious mind that allow the person to stay oriented in the surrounding world, retain control and have the adequate conditions to judge, understand and freely make decisions which are essential constitutive ingredients of an unharmed self" (Perez-Sales & Pau, 2017). Although not all psychological torture involves the use of physical violence, there is a continuum between psychological torture and physical torture. The two are often used in conjunction with one another and often overlap in practice, with the fear and pain induced by physical torture often resulting in long-

term psychological effects, and many forms of psychological torture involving some form of pain or coercion.

Many forms of psychological torture attempt to destroy the subject's normal self-image by removing them from any kind of control over their environment, creating a state of learned helplessness, psychological regression and depersonalization. Other forms include; forced nudity and head shaving, sleep deprivation, hooding and other forms of sensory deprivations. A strictly fear-inducing form is the mock execution. Various threats operate on the same fear-inducing principle. Another form of psychological torture is indirect torture, in which a victim is forced to witness the torture of another person, often a loved one. This preys on the victim's affection for and loyalty to a partner, relative, friend, comrade-in-arms, whose real pain induces vicarious suffering in the targeted psychological victim, who is thus loaded with guilt but spared physical harm that might affect his or her ability to comply.

On the theatre of conflict in the Anglophone regions most of these forms of psychological torture have been witnessed. For instance, the images of the Anglophone people has been seriously damaged with most of them being referred to as extremists, separatists, terrorists, secessionists, ambazombie and so on. With the physical torture that has been inflicted on them or other victims, many residents including employees of organizations feel a sense of helplessness, psychological regression and depersonalization. Indirect torture has equally been witnessed on the ground with cases of girls being raped in front of their parents and brothers, women being raped in front of their husbands and children and boys being tortured or murdered in front of their relatives and friends. With these fear is induced in everyone. In case of employees, colleagues have been raped, molested or killed in front of other colleagues and working in such a cruel environment can lead to negative behavioural outcomes like turnover or transfer intentions. While psychological torture may not leave any lasting physical damage indeed, this is often one of the motivations for using psychological rather than physical torture. It can result in similar levels of permanent mental damage to its victims (Khamsi, 2007). This can be the reason why stakeholders think more of material assistance to the detriment of psychological assistance.

Wishnia & Rivera (2019) define threat as a statement made to someone in which the speaker declares that he or she intends to cause the listener harm, loss or punishment. Yourdictionary.com defines verbal threat as, "a statement of intent to harm or punish, or something that presents an eminent danger or harm". Criminal threatening is the crime of intentionally or knowingly putting another person in fear of bodily injury. Threats of harm generally involve a perception of injury, physical or mental damage, act or instance of injury, or a material and detriment or loss to a person (Threat of Harm Law and Legal Definition. 2020). Many people have threatened someone else verbally at one point or another. Parents tell their children to be quiet or else, husbands and wives threaten to leave a relationship and even employees threaten employers to leave the organization and em-

employers threatening to sack employees from an enterprise. Some verbal threats are different. These types are menacing and criminal in nature. But when threats enter a workplace, it is completely a different situation. There are jobs at stake, potential lawsuits to ponder, and two sides to every story. When you over react, you could lose a good worker or a better lawsuit, when you under-react, you could lose lives. The most serious verbal threats are those that are genuine, credible and directed specifically at someone at the workplace. However, evaluating the seriousness of even the most direct threats requires something of a judgment call. For example, threats accompanied by specific plans about how the employee will carry them out are serious. Obviously for an employee to provide that kind of detail suggests that this is not a spontaneous remark; this is someone who has thought this through. Similarly, threats of violence that are directed at, or include, members of the victim's family are not the kinds of statements you would expect from a generally even-kneeled worker. A verbal threat becomes a criminal threat under the following circumstances; The threat indicates that another person will suffer imminent physical harm, the threat is directed towards a witness that is scheduled to testify in a court action, the threat is specific, there is evidence that the threat will be carried out, there is evidence that the threat made is genuine, the threat alters the lifestyle or quality of life of the threatened person.

Specific examples of what could be considered a criminal verbal threat: Sending an email to an ex-partner telling him or her that you are coming to kill him or her and the entire family. Calling someone and telling him or her that you are going to kidnap his or her child. Posting on social media that you have an intention to physically beat or harm someone you do not like.

During the socio-political crisis in the Anglophone regions, a number of threatening telephone messages have been sent to people who are not contributing to support the liberation struggle of former British southern Cameroon by the separatist fighters, threatening to kidnap or kill the concerned parents, their children or other relatives if they do not comply. Many are times that the threats are actually carried out, meaning that they were genuine. Equally, the social media space has been polluted with hate speeches, attacks and counter-attacks between supporters of the central government and supporters of the independence struggle of the British southern Cameroon, with each camp sending deadly threats to the members of the opposite camp. This constitutes a grave risk factor for the residents especially employees living and working in those areas. The situation consequently leads to behavioural disorders that may tend to nurse transfer intentions if the employees perceive the threats to be very genuine, in order to avoid a worst-case scenario.

The term stigma is derived from the Greek stem *stig*-(mark or tattoo) plus *ma* (which denotes an action). Taken literally, a stigma is a mark. Stigmatization is the act of treating someone or something unfairly by publicly disapproving them (Cambridge Dictionary, 2020). It is also, “the assignment of negative perceptions to an

individual because of perceived difference from the population at large; it may occur on the bases of physical appearance (including race or sex), of mental or physical illness, or of various other qualities” (Miller-Keane, 2002). Link & Phalen (2001) ultimately grounded in social, economic, and power structures argue that stigmatization comprises a fourfold process: distinguishing between persons, linking those differences to negative stereotypes, creating social distance based on the marked trait and losing status with consequent discrimination. In the scene of the crisis in the Anglophone regions, instances of stigmatization have been observed with separatist fighters stigmatizing certain people and labeling them as “traitors” or “blacklegs” especially those who do not share in their ideologies, who may later be targets of torture and/or execution. Equally, government forces have on many occasions accused some inhabitants of the Anglophone regions as terrorists or “ambazonians” and have proceeded to summarily torture and execute them. Stigmatization is one of the greatest tools that is effectively used by both warring factions in the Anglophone regions.

Cyber bullying is the use of electronic communication to a person, typically by sending messages of an intimidating or threatening nature (Oxford Dictionary definition). It is also defined as “an aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual using electronic forms of contact, repeatedly and over time against a victim who cannot easily defend himself or herself” (Sourander & Klomek, 2010). This constant aggression causes a psychological state of fear and defenselessness, as the cyber aggressors are usually invisible and unknown to permit the victim to see and defend himself or herself. In the wake of the armed conflict in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon, there have been multiple reports of threats through telephone calls from purported separatist fighters demanding individuals to contribute money in order to support the ongoing struggle for the liberation of British Southern Cameroon. Some cyber victims who never complied with the cyber bullies have ended up being kidnapped for ransoms. The phenomenon appeared only a few years ago as the use of electronic devices such as the computer and mobile telephones by young people increased. Exposure to cyber-bullying is associated with psychological complaints like depression, burnout, anxiety, aggression, psychosomatic complaints and musculoskeletal health complaints. Bullying does not only affect those directly involved but also bystanders as they too experience higher levels of stress (Canadian Centre for Occupational Health & Safety, 2020).

Discrimination is the unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people especially on the grounds of their races, ages, sexes or disabilities. Discrimination constitutes a serious psychological risk factor especially during the armed conflict in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon. There have been several reports of grave discrimination between Anglophones and francophones in those regions and between supporters of the central government and supporters of liberation struggle of former British southern Cameroon, especially by government forces during their raids in residential areas in search of suspected separatist fighters. When they go

about burning houses in villages, they try to identify those of francophones or those of the supporters of the government and spare them. The same report has been made of the Anglophone separatist fighters who at times order francophones to relocate back to their regions of origin and some who are suspected of being informants to the government forces are kidnapped and killed or liberated after payment of a heavy ransom. Discrimination results from stigmatization, which is a personal attitude and belief that negatively labels a group of people. Stigmatization creates fear and consequently leads to discrimination which discourages individuals and their families from getting the help they need (CCOHS-Canadian Centre for Occupational Health Safety, 2020). Due to discrimination, most of the inhabitants have found it needless to report cases of aggressions to the forces of law and order and have found it instead necessary to escape for their dear lives because of the lawlessness reigning in those regions. This calamitous situation has led to so many workers escaping to regions free from the armed conflict but they are not willing to accept or request transfers to their areas of refuge.

Negative stereotypes are traits and characteristics, negatively valence and attributed to a social group and its individual members. It should be recalled that one cause of the conflict in the Anglophone zone is the negative stereotypes that were attributed to Anglophones by their francophone counterparts such; “les biafras”, “les anglofous”, “les gens qui reflechissent a gauche”, “les bamendas”, “les enemies dans la maison” and many others. These stereotypes have very negative and derogatory connotations in reference to the Anglophone social group in Cameroon. According to social cognition (Devine, 1989; Fiske and Taylor, 1991), a social group is represented in memory as a network of discrete nodes, constituted by category, connected through associative links to the stereotypic characteristics generally attributed to this category. These traits could be both positive and negative. However, when favouritism for one’s own group (in-group) and derogation of other groups (out-group) are involved, the links between the category and negative traits prevail: these negative traits strongly associated to a category correspond to negative stereotypes (Lepore & Brown, 1997). In this sense, negative stereotypes could be considered as the cognitive component of prejudice, which is defined as a general negative evaluation of a social group. Negative stereotypes are also related to discrimination, that is, to negative behaviours directed towards individuals because of their group membership. This phenomenon has a very serious incidence on the psychological wellbeing of victims as they are exposed to psychological issues of low self-esteem, discriminations, aggressiveness (as it is the case with Anglophone separatists), frustration, depression, lack of self-confidence and others. This is perfectly reflected in the situation in which the workers and inhabitants of the Anglophone regions find themselves in. Anglophones have been labeled all sorts of derogatory names that have partly led to the critical socio-political crisis that we have in the Anglophone regions today. This situation has forced so many workers to leave the Anglophone regions and to relocate to francophone regions for safety, but a discussion with some of those employees show that they are not willing to request or accept transfers to those safer regions, despite the security threats in their regions of origin. Empirical literature

has shown a great link between the psychological risk factors and transfer intentions.

In a study carried out by Ofori-Ntow, Kwaku and Osei-Bonsu (2020), they found out that psychosocial risk resulting from work demands and stress has an effect on organizational outcomes, including transfer or turnover intentions. Their study found out that, psychosocial risk was statistically significant in predicting turnover which is closely associated to transfer intentions. They found that, psychological wellbeing moderates the relationship between psychosocial wellbeing and turnover intentions, an indication that high levels of psychological wellbeing experienced from work as a result of lower psychological risk will reduce transfer intents. Therefore, employees perceive psychological risk as a major contributor to transfer intention and to a greater extent, turnover intentions. Workers of the Anglophone regions involved in an armed conflict go through a lot of psychological risks as cited above, emanating from both separatists fighters and government forces in the course of exercising their duties. This has caused most of them to flee away and to seek for refuge in non-crisis regions. Though as they have escaped to other regions for safety, they are not ready to request for or accept transfers to those regions.

In another study carried out by Leka and Jain (2010), it was reported that, psychological risks go hand in hand with the experience of work-related stress. Work-related stress is the response people may have when presented with work demands and pressures that are not matched to their knowledge and abilities and which challenge their ability to cope (WHO, 2003). In addition, the issue of burnout has also gained prevalence as a result of exposure to a poor psychosocial environment and the resulting work-related stress experience according to their research findings. Burnout can be defined as a state of physical, emotional and mental exhaustion that results from long term involvement in work situations that are emotionally demanding (Schaufeli & Greenglass, 2001). Psychosocial risks, work-related stress, violence, harassment, bullying (or mobbing) are now widely recognized major challenges to occupational health and Safety (EU-OSHA, 2007). They indicated that poor psychosocial working conditions have a detrimental impact on both affective and cognitive outcomes such as anxiety, depression, distress, burnout, decision-making (including transfer to a new location or workplace), and attention (Cox, Griffiths & Rial-Gonzalez, 2000). Standfeld and Candy (2006), examined the relationship between psychosocial risk factors and mental disorders by conducting a meta-analysis of published longitudinal studies. In their results, job strain, low social support, high psychological demands, effort-reward imbalance and high job insecurity were identified as strong predictors of mental ill-health and subsequently a predictor of employee transfer or turnover intention. In perspective, a sane working environment, void of job strains, high psychological wellbeing and others should be encouraged in order to curb the rate of workers intending to be transferred to new workplaces. Therefore, a work environment characterized by stress, insecurity, psychological torture, threats, insults, negative stereotypes, conflicts, depression, discrimination, cyber bullying, intimidations, stigmatization

and many others, will instead render fragile the employee's psychological wellbeing, leading to poor employee commitment, lower output and worse the intention to either transfer to another location of the same organization or to leave the organization completely. This is a brief summary of how the working environment in the Anglophone regions involved in a deadly conflict looks like.

With the above psychological risks faced by workers of the Anglophone regions involved in the separatist armed conflict, their working environment has become so less conducive to the extent of driving them out from their organizational environment to seek for refuge in the non-crisis regions. But even as they are seeking for refuge in the francophone regions that are considered as safer, some of them are not willing to request for or accept a transfer proposal to stay and work in their host regions.

The separatist fighters of the Anglophone regions have been using telephone calls to intimidate their victims while those residing abroad and who are in support of the "liberation struggle" use the social media through the internet (especially Facebook and whatsapp messages) to cyber-bully their opponents. The same situation has also been reported of government supporters who are aggressing supporters of Anglophone separation using electronic devices. They have equally ended up reporting their victims to the government forces who ended up being arrested and detained or killed. This situation has caused untold psychological effects on the victims like, constant fear of the unknown, feeling of insecurity, stress, anxiety, depression and many others and has caused the victims to seek for refuge in other regions not affected by the conflict. Despite escaping for safety to those non-crisis regions, some of the victims have not yet seen the situation as being very critical to warrant them to request for transfers from those affected regions. Hence they are not willing to be transferred from the crisis regions and still hope to return there and continue working as soon as the tension will subside. This constitutes the gap between the ideal and the reality of this study.

2.2: Transfer Intentions

According to Wendel (2020), it is the intention to switch jobs within or between organizations. It is an intention to change a job or jobsites within the same organization. Dale-Yoder (n.d) defines it as an intention to shift an employee from one job to another without special reference to changing responsibility or compensation.

Literature on transfer intentions seems to be inexistent or scanty. As such, the literature on this section will be borrowed from employee turnover intentions and will be related to employee transfer intentions. This is because employee turnover intentions are to the private sector as well as employee transfer intentions are to the public sector. Turnover intentions refer to employee's desire or attempt to leave the organization (Morin, Meyer, Belanger, Boudrias, Gagne & Parker, 2016). Therefore, transfer intention can be referred to as employee's desire or attempt to transfer or leave from one organizational location to a more conducive one. According to Shipp et al.

(2014), higher turnover intention rates may imply that employees are dissatisfied, unengaged, distracted or unproductive. The assertion also holds for transfer intentions. High rates of transfer intentions may be an indication that employees are dissatisfied with working environment or with the working conditions. It can also mean that employees feel they are unproductive or unengaged in their present post. Calisir et al. (2011) found that job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job stress and role ambiguity are significant determinants of turnover intention. All the above factors can equally be significant determinants of transfer intentions in the context of our study. In this study, job stress can be considered as the most significant determinant of transfer intention. Aytac et al. (2016) also found high turnover intention among employees who had experienced workplace violence. According to this study, employees of the private sector who had experienced workplace violence tend to nurse turnover intentions, while employees of the public sector who had experienced workplace violence will instead nurse intentions to transfer to a different workplace of the same organization. Firth, Mellor, Moore & Loquet (2004) also established that relationship between managers and employees also influence turnover intention. This same relationship between managers and employees can also influence transfer intentions, as most employees have nursed transfer intention as a result of a strained between them and their managers. In the context of our study, the exposure of government workers to psychological risk factors have led them to nurse transfer intentions which is determined by other factors such as self-interest, psychological wellbeing, organizational commitment and many others.

2.3: Background and Orientation of the Study

Psychological risk factors undoubtedly constitute one of the greatest risks that has been faced by government workers of the Anglophone regions of Cameroon during the socio-political crisis. This accounts for its interest on researchers in Occupational health and safety (OHS). In this study, emphasis has been laid on psychological risk factors but this does not in any way minimize the gravity of physical, economic and social risk factors that have equally been experience by government workers during the socio-political crisis in the Anglophone regions. This therefore calls for the improvisation of adaptive and mitigating measures of which transfer intention is the main focus in this study. The existence of certain realities like self-interest and psychological well-being greatly affects the employee's organizational behaviour, making it in a way that an experience of psychological risk factors may not directly lead to nursing of transfer intentions. In many organizations, especially those in conflict zones, psychological risk factors have been experienced as a result of exposure to hazardous working environment. This is in view with Masoma et al (2014) when they affirm that the jobsite environment is the key to understanding of the mechanisms that underlie work motivation, satisfaction, employees' turnover, job loyalty and job performance. This portrays a high need for employees to exercise in stress-free environment and for the management to ensure that workers are carrying out their duties in a safe environment. Equally, Lukan, Bol-liger & Clays (2022) affirms that chronic workplace stress is known to be associated with health-related out-

comes like mental and cardiovascular diseases. These have been proven to have direct links with psychological risk factors. This study suggests that faced with psychological risk factors employees of the public sector will naturally request or accept transfer proposals to safer areas, but the existence of factors like meaning of work, self-interest, organizational commitment and psychological well-being can influence the outcome of the expected organizational behaviour (Ntow et al. 2020; Anoux-Nicolas et al. 2016 & Wang et al. 2017). The existence of psychological risk factors have been known to have a negative consequences on the organizational performances and wellbeing of employees in the organizations of the Anglophone regions and the question in this research has been to verify if the experience of directly leads to nursing of transfer intentions by the government workers of the Anglophone regions.

Empirical observation shows that government workers after exhausting their levels of resilience due to continuous induction of psychological risk factors have resorted to seek refuge in stress-free environment, but some are still not ready to request or accept transfers to those stress-free areas where their safety is guaranteed. This means that despite the risks experienced, they are not nursing transfer intentions. Hence, they are still ready to continue working in those risky areas. Whereas, it has been proven that psychological risk factors have negative output on organizational performance and a positive consequence on transfer intentions, research in this area of transfer intentions is still very scanty. It is undoubtedly true that some research has been carried out in risk factors and turnover intentions, but it has been observed that in the public sector, instead of employee's turning over, they prefer to transfer. Literature on employee transfer intentions remain virtually inexistence. As such, much research work is needed to be carried out in this particular domain.

2.4: Research Theory and Model

The Social Exchange Theory (Homans, 1958) has been used to explain the relationship between Psychological risk factors and transfer intentions of government workers. It is a sociological and psychological theory that studies the social behaviour in the interaction of two parties that implement a cost-benefit analysis to determine risks and benefits. According to Roecklein (2018), the theory involves economic relationships; it occurs when each party has goods that the other party values. In this study, government workers have their skills that are valued by the government while the government has wages that are valued by the workers. Social Exchange theory posits that if the costs of the relationship are higher than the rewards, such as a lot of effort or money put into a relationship and not reciprocated, the relationship could collapse. On the contrary, if the benefits are higher than the cost, the relationship could be upheld and maintained (Emerson & Cook, 1976). Social exchange suggests that these calculations occur in romantic relationships, friendships, professional relationships and ephemeral relationships as simple exchange of words with a customer at the cash register (Mcray & Jeni, 2015). Based on the postulates of this theory government workers of the Anglophone regions have abandoned their duty posts

because of psychological risk factors which they cannot bear anymore as compared to their earnings from those duty posts. This means that they have analyzed and found that their cost of working in those duty posts is higher than their reward from those duty posts. It could be expected of those workers to request for transfers to safer areas. On the contrary, some of those workers are not nursing intentions of transferring to safer areas after abandoning their duty posts to seek refuge in those areas where their safety will be guaranteed. This implies that in this relationship, the cost is higher than the benefits but the relationship has still been upheld and maintained. The interest of this study is therefore to arrive at results that will help us to affirm that despite the existence of other factors, psychological risk factors can have effects on transfer intentions of government workers, which can help them to mitigate the negative consequences of psychological risk factors.

3. Research Methodology

3.1: Design and Participants

In this study, a quantitative research design has been applied. The study was carried out on internally displaced government workers from the Anglophone regions residing in the francophone regions of Centre, Littoral and West regions who have abandoned their duty posts in the Anglophone regions as a result of the psychological risk factors they have been experiencing during the socio-political crisis in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon. Data for this study was collected from a sample of three hundred and thirteen (313) internally displaced government workers of both sexes (Males =144; 46% and females=169; 54%), from the Anglophone regions of Cameroon who are resident in the francophone regions of Centre Region (43; 13.7%), Littoral Region (64; 20.4%) and West region (206; 65.9%) precisely in the towns of Yaoundé, Douala, Bafoussam, Nkongsamba, Bafia, Foumban, Foumbot, Mbouda, Santchou, Penka Michel, Loum and Melong. Due to the fact that participants were spread all through the national territory and the researchers did not know them personally and their settlement areas, the research sample was obtained through snowball and stratified random sampling techniques.

3.2: Data Collection Measures

A questionnaire of nineteen (19) items formulated from the two variables of the study drawn from Herman Burr 3rd version of COPSOQ (2019) and Roodt (2004b) “Intention to stay” questionnaire on transfer Intention. It is made up of closed ended questions rated on the Likert scale (1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=neutral, 4=Agree and 5=Strongly agree) was used to collect data from the respondents. Questionnaire items included indicators of psychological risk factors like feeling of insecurity, discrimination, stigmatization, stress, threats, pressure etc. The items of both subscales had a strong cronbach Alpha of .812 for Psychological risk factors and .898 for transfer intentions, an indication that they could very well measure the phenomena they intended to

measure. Participants' consents were sought for before the administration of the questionnaire to them. Participants were also given assurance of the confidentiality of the information received from them and that it will only be used for academic purposes. Research data was treated with the use of SPSS version 21 using the various statistical tests.

4. RESULTS

This section presents findings on effects of Psychological Risk Factors and transfer intentions if internally displaced government workers. The findings are presented on tables

Prevalence of psychological risk factors among workers

Table 1: Prevalence of psychological Risk Factors (%) **N=313**

Variables	SD	D	N	A	SA	M	SD	R
Perceived as a blackleg by separatists	5,1	5,8	11,5	38,7	39,0	4.00	1,09	5
Perceived as terrorist by Government forces.	9,6	13,7	19,5	30,7	26,5	3.50	1,27	7
Threats of civil servants by separatists	2,9	5,4	6,7	40,3	44,4	4.19	1,01	4
Perceived as separatist by Government forces	15,3	16,6	20,4	27,2	20,4	3.20	1,35	8
Feelings of insecurity at work	3,8	3,8	5,1	39,9	47,3	4.23	,98	1
Feeling of insecurity at home	3,5	4,8	5,8	41,2	44,7	4.18	,99	2
Feeling of insecurity of the family	2,9	3,5	8,3	44,7	40,6	1.16	,92	3
Risk of administrative demands/pressure.	4,8	8,0	8,0	14,1	29,4	3.84	1,08	9
Risk of stress from unusual work demands	5,8	10,9	19,5	40.9	23.0	3,64	1,12	6

Table 1 above shows the prevalence of psychological risk factors among 313 government workers during the socio-political crisis in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon. From the table, we observe that the 2 columns of Disagree (SD & D) have scored a total percentage of 14.01%. This shows that only 14.01% (around 44 participants out of 313) did not face psychological risk factors during the socio-political crisis in the Anglophone regions. The columns of Agree (A & SA) have scored a total percentage of 70.33% (about 221 participants out of 313). This is an indication of a high prevalence of Psychological risk factors among the internally displaced government workers during the socio-political crisis in the Anglophone regions. 15.66% (about 48 participants out of 313) were neutral on the issue of facing psychological risk factors or not.

Table 2: Prevalence of transfer intention (%) **N=313**

	SD	D	N	A	SA	M	SD	R
Often considered transfer from my job site	9,3	16,3	11,2	37,7	25,6	3.53	1,28	1
Search for job information out of the region	11,5	16,6	21,7	30,7	19,5	3.30	1,27	7
Intends to transfer to needs satisfying workplace	6,7	15,0	18,2	34,8	25,2	3.56	1,20	3
Desire transfer to service that meets aspirations	5,4	12,8	19,2	40,3	22,4	3.61	1,12	2
Desire a workplace that upholds personal values	7,0	12,1	23,3	38,3	19,2	3.50	1,14	6
Dreamt of a workplace that suits me	6,4	16,9	18,8	37,7	20,1	3.48	1,17	5
Transfer to a job site that ensures my wellbeing	15,0	18,8	17,6	23,0	25,6	3.25	1,40	8
Thought of transfer due to the crisis	15,3	13,4	12,5	37,1	21,7	3.36	1,36	4
I plan transfer in the next 12 months	16,3	16,9	19,8	27,2	19,8	3.17	1,36	9
Likely look for transfer in the a new workplace	15,0	17,9	22,7	24,3	20,1	3.16	1,34	10

Table 2 above shows the prevalence of Transfer Intentions among government workers during the socio-political crisis in the Anglophone regions. Table 2 shows that participants for Disagree (SD & D) scored a total percentage of 26.46% (About 83 participants out of 313). Participants who Agree (A & SA) having intentions to transfer due to the numerous Psychological risks faced scored a total percentage of 55.03% (About 172 participants out of 313). This shows that, there is relatively a high prevalence of transfer intentions due to psychological risks factors experienced during the socio-political crisis in the Anglophone regions. About 18.51% were neutral as to if they intend to transfer as a result of psychological risk factors faced during the socio-political crisis.

Testing of Hypothesis

This section aims at presenting the results obtained after testing the correlation between the study variables in order to confirm or reject the research hypothesis. The research hypothesis is:

Psychological risk factors have a significant impact on the transfer intentions of internally displaced employees during the sociopolitical crisis in the Anglophone regions.

Table 3: Model Summary Psychological risk factors and Transfer Intentions

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics	Durbin-Watson
					F	
					Change	Sig. F Change

1	.281 _a	.079	.076	8,20781	.079	26,704	1	311	.000	1,966
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- a. Predictors: (Constant), Psychological Risk
- b. Dependent Variable: Transfer Intention

Psychological Risk factor has been entered into the model to estimate its influence on transfer intentions of internally displaced civil servants, ($R=.281$; $R^2=.079$; $Adj=.076$; $p < 0.01$). The value of R is .281 and represents the simple correlation between Psychological risk factors and transfer intentions. On the other hand, the value of R^2 is .079 indicating the degree of influence of the predictor variable on the outcome measure, which implies that Psychological risk factors can account for the variations in transfer intentions of civil servants. Taking into consideration the fact that many factors could be responsible for transfer intentions of civil servants, the model which includes only Psychological risk factors implies that 05% can explain the variations in intentions of internally displaced civil servants. This also means that 95% of variations in Transfer intention cannot be explained by the predictor, and that there are other variables that can affect transfer intentions of internally displaced civil servants.

The significance of the outcome of the model has been presented to assess how well the regression model could predict an outcome compared to the error within the model on Table 4. The most important aspects of the table are the F-ratio and the associated significant value of the F-ratio.

Table 4: ANOVA summary table

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1798,974	1	1798,974	26,704	.000 ^b
	Residual	20951,480	311	67,368		
	Total	22750,454	312			

- a. Dependent Variable: Transfer Intention
- b. Predictors: (Constant), Psychological Risk

Generally, 95% confidence interval (5% level of the significance level) has been chosen for the study and the p-value should be less than 0.05. In the above table, it is .000. From the data F is 26.704, while a value greater than 1 for F-ratio yield efficient model. This is significant at $p < 0.01$, indicating that there is less than a 0.1% that F-ratio can happen by chance alone. Therefore, it could be concluded that our regression model significantly predicts transfer intentions of civil servants than the mean value of transfer intentions.

Table 5: Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	95,0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
(Constant)	21,671	2,634		8,227	,000	16,488	26,854
1 Psychological Risk	,383	,074	,281	5,168	,000	,237	,529

a. Dependent Variable: Transfer Intention

Psychological risk factor was entered into the model as a significant determinant of transfer intention of civil servants, $B=.383$; $\beta=.281$; $t(310)=5.168$, $p < 0.01$. From the results the B-value represent a change in the outcome associated with a unit change in the predictor. Results suggest that an increase in the value of psychological risk factor will lead to a corresponding increase in transfer intention of civil servants by 0.281 units. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis of a significant effect is accepted considering that psychological risk factor makes significant contributions to transfer intentions of IDP civil servants in the Anglophone Regions Cameroon within the context of the Socio-political crisis in Cameroon.

5. DISCUSSION

This research study has as a goal to examine the effects of psychological risk factors on the transfer intentions of internally displaced government workers during the socio-political crisis in the Anglophone regions. From the research findings, we discover that there is actually a high prevalence of psychological risk factors (70.33%) among the internally displaced government workers, coming as a result of the experiences they lived during the socio-political crisis. As a consequence of high prevalence of psychological risk factors, findings equally show a relatively high prevalence of Transfer Intentions (55.03%) among internally displaced government workers. This relative prevalence of Transfer Intentions despite high prevalence rate of psychological risk factors brings us back to the research problematic, as through this result, we discover that many internally displaced government workers have experienced Psychological risk factors that have caused them to abandon their duty posts in the crisis regions but are still not ready to be transferred to their host regions in the non-crisis regions. These results were predicted by Worksafe.qld.gov.au (2018) in their view which states, “when psychological risk factors are not effectively managed, they can negatively impact on organizational measures including productivity, absenteeism and turnover”. Transfer intentions can equally be included in this list. Ofori-Ntow, Kwaku & Osei-Bonsu (2020) go a long way to confirm this assertion by stating that, “psychosocial risk was statistically significant in predicting turnover” which is closely associated to transfer intentions. These results also concord with the findings of Link & Phalen (2001) in which psychological risk factors are ultimately grounded in social, eco-

conomic, and power structures arguing that stigmatization comprises a fourfold process: distinguishing between persons, linking those differences to negative stereotypes, creating social distance based on the marked trait and losing status with consequent discrimination. These views are contradicted by Levine (2002) as he thinks that, “while early adversities can be severe impediment, there is a myriad of accounts of people who have been born into lives of abject destitution, yet have grown into stable, productive and generative adults”. He goes further to add that, “by the same token, these same risk factors can contribute to the enhancement of one’s life, and increase the chances of resilience and leading fulfilled lives”. Levine (2002) advocates for the fact that workers should consider risk factors as fortifying elements that will lead to resilience and fulfilled life. This can be the reason why some workers are not willing to be transferred from the crisis regions as they think that they can lead fulfilling lives but in the crisis regions after developing resilience towards adversities.

From the findings of hypothesis testing, the model summary shows the value of R^2 at .079 which indicates the degree of influence of psychological risk factors (predictor variable) on Transfer Intentions (outcome measure). This implies that psychological risk factors can account for variations in transfer Intentions of internally displaced government workers.

From the ANOVA summary Table, the significance level was fixed at 5% and the P value should be less than 0.05. The P value being significant at .000 indicates that there is .000 chances that transfer intentions can happen by chance. It can therefore be concluded that the regression model on the ANOVA table is significantly predicting the transfer Intentions of Internally displaced government workers. Thus, Psychological risk factors have a significant effect on Transfer Intentions of Internally Displaced government workers.

In the coefficient table, the beta value which shows the change in the outcome associated with a unit change in the predictor shows that the $\beta=.281$, suggesting that an increase in value of psychological risk factor will lead to a corresponding value of .281units. This equally confirms that psychological risk factors have a significant effect on the Transfer Intentions of internally displaced government workers.

6. Conclusion

Psychological risk factors have been identified among other risk factors, as the silent killer among employees exercising in high risk environments. It has generated some negative organizational behaviours. This has been affirmed by EU-OSHA as they put it, Psychological risks, work-related stress, violence, harassment, bullying (or mobbing) are now widely recognized major challenges to occupational health and Safety (EU-OSHA, 2007). Following the results obtained from this study, we can conveniently assert that government workers actually experienced serious Psychological risk factors during the sociopolitical crisis in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon, which in turn provoked thoughts of transferring to different locations that are deemed safer. This, as Ofori-Ntow, Kwaku & Osei-Bonsu (2020), found out that psychosocial risk resulting from work demands and stress has an effect on organizational outcomes, including transfer or turnover intentions. In order to main-

tain stability and increase productivity in an organization, the human resource should be stable and well-managed. Consequently, the figures obtained above are so significant that they cannot be neglected. As a result, this research has been carried out to ascertain the existence and degree of this phenomenon and for proper measures to be taken by the different stakeholders. The findings from this study stand to contribute a substantial body of knowledge in the field of Occupational Safety and Health (OSH). This knowledge can be applied to make the working environment safer by the different stakeholders like managers, government officials and employees themselves. This goes in line with the views of Silva et al. (2004) that employees' awareness on the basic safety, workplace hazards, associated risks, response strategies and use of safety measures, techniques, processes and safety culture can lead to a conducive working environment.

The social Exchange Theory (Homans, 1958) to establish the link between psychological risk factors and transfer intentions of internally displaced government workers of the Anglophone regions of Cameroon has demonstrated coherence in this study context. It has displayed the gap between the ideal and the reality in this context. The relationship between the organization and the employee in high risk environment is bound to collapse as the theory posits. This has been observed with most internally displaced government workers but others have maintained this chaotic relationship due factors such as self-interest, wellbeing, commitment and others. For the good of the organizations of the public sector in the Anglophone regions, it is necessary to sanitize the working environment in order to ensure workers' safety and to maintain a healthy working environment that will help to stabilize the human resources of the organization. Equally, using the Herman Burr 3rd version of COPSOQ (2019) and Roodt (2004b) "Intention to stay" questionnaire on transfer Intention with reliability index of .812 for Psychological risk factors and .898 for Transfer Intentions were deemed valid according to George & Mallery (2003). This showed that the items that were formulated based on the above standard scales actually measured what they were intended to measure and also based on empirical observations, psychological theory, previous research works and continuous researches. This is an indication that information gathered to test the relationship between Psychological risk factors and transfer intentions of employees is trustworthy and can be conveniently be generalized to include other sectors of this theme.

With the outbreak of the socio-political crisis in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon, the awareness of the importance of working in a safe organizational environment has been on an increase and has offered an opportunity for the different stakeholders to go back to the drawing board in order to sanitize the organizational environment and ensure workers' safety. Although this study sample was drawn only from the Centre, Littoral regions, the results can be conveniently generalized to reflect the situation of internally displaced government workers in the other five francophone regions. Thus, in order to save the public sector in the Anglophone regions in particular and Cameroon as a whole government and managers should create an enabling environment that will boost the morale of workers and push them to be more committed and productive. Also, to avoid a

phenomenon of paying workers for no work done, government workers should accept to even be temporarily transferred to the non-crisis regions where they could work in order to merit what they are being paid for. This is also recommendable especially as most learners (in case of government teachers) have all escaped to the non-crisis regions. In doing this, a balance will be struck between, having a favourable environment that can facilitate healing from psychological trauma and working at the same time in order to merit the wages paid to them.

7. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES

Although this research study has made some useful contributions in the area of Occupational Health and Safety, there is no doubt that it encountered some difficulties that had the potential of negatively influencing the outcome of the study. There was limitation in terms of scope of research as the study was limited only to the internally displaced government workers residing in the Centre, Littoral and West regions. This has made it difficult for the results of the study to be generalized to include the internally displaced government workers residing in other non-crisis regions. Moreover, the study too was limited only to the internally displaced workers of the public sector, leaving out those of the private sector. This might have negatively affected the results of this study in one way or the other. It will therefore be a plausible idea for a similar research to be carried out with workers of the private sector. Equally, the study concentrated only on the internally displaced government workers who are resident in the non-crisis francophone regions leaving out the internally displaced government workers who left the hinterlands and are still residing in the towns of Bamenda, Limbe, Nkambe and Buea that are still in the crisis regions, who have but a different story to tell. Also, this research study was limited but to the internally displaced workers. It will be good that another research be carried out with refugee workers in neighbouring Nigeria who have also fled away from the socio-political crisis in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon. In terms of methodology, the study applied only a quantitative approach in the collection of data through the use of a questionnaire as the sole data collection instrument. Through its rigorosity, it had the potential of limiting the participants' responses, leaving out the qualitative approach. This made it difficult for the results of this study to be triangulated and effectively implemented on the ground. Again, these results were collected from internally displaced government workers who have engaged in some income generating activities that are consuming most of their time and also a potential source of stress. This might have made the participants not to have a thorough reflection on the items of the questionnaire before answering. Researchers even had to go through strict protocols to obtain authorization to meet participants. It is obvious that the responses from the participants might have suffered from social bias. This current research concentrated only on the effects of psychological risk factors without including the physical, social and economic aspects of risk factors. This might have negatively affected the outcome of this research study in one or the other.

In terms of weaknesses of the present study on the Effects of Psychological Risk Factors on the Transfer Intentions of the Internally Displaced Government Workers during the Socio-political crisis in the Anglophone

regions, a number of weaknesses were observed in the course of conducting this research and these weaknesses have to be seriously taken into consideration for the orientation of future research endeavour. Future research studies necessitate an expansion in terms of scope of study. This is to say, future researches should expand to other five francophone regions and to the neighbouring countries like Nigeria where refugee government workers will be met. Also, future researches on this theme should be expanded to include internally displaced workers of the private sector. It will be very useful for a broad-based study to be carried out to include all the other aspects of risk factor like the physical, social and economic risk factors. In future researches, it will be necessary to consider a mixture of approaches in order to have very reliable results that could be generalized to include other aspects of this theme. Future researches should use both quantitative and qualitative approaches with questionnaires, interview guides, observations and Focus Group Discussions as the main data collection instruments. In doing this, this approach will be able to capture in qualitative terms the perspectives and divergent experiences and opinions of participants will can be documented and easily documented. It should be understood that carrying out an effective research study is an expensive venture which necessitates enormous financial resources. So, enough financial resources should be allocated for future research studies involving internally displaced workers. This will enable researchers to carry out an effective research and collect relevant data and reliable results that will be more representative on the risk factors faced by internally displaced workers for necessary appropriate solutions to be proposed and implemented.

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