

**MAXIMIZING EMPLOYEE TURNOVER AS A STRATEGIC APPROACH TO
EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT: A STUDY OF SELECTED HOSPITALITY FIRMS IN
OWERRI**

DR. IKECHUKWU DIALOKE

Department of Industrial Relations and Personnel Management

College of Management Sciences

Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike

ANYANWU, PASCHAL CHIMA

Department of Business Management

College of Management Sciences,

Evangel University, Akaeze

Abstract: this study focused on examining employee turnover as a strategic approach to management effectiveness. In conducting the study, descriptive survey approach was adopted and data was generated from a five point likert scale. The study covered a population of sixty (60) managers and supervisors of eleven (11) hospitality firms within the Owerri metropolis. Because of the smallness of the data, the entire population was used as its sample; however, out of the 60 questionnaires distributed, only 48 were correctly filled and returned; thereby given a questionnaire return rate of 80%. The data gathered was analyzed with the kruskawalis (H) test. This study haven surveyed literatures and conducted empirical inquiry came to the conclusion that employees turnover can be of both strategic benefit and challenge to management effectiveness. Following the findings and conclusion above, the study recommends that for turnover to yield desired positive result as a tool to enhancing management effectiveness, the followings should be considered; where it is needful to embark on involuntary turnover (disengagement), it must be done in phases in other to give room for the organizational memory to be passed on successfully to the new employee and that firms should endeavor avoid building the business capabilities around one personnel, rather it should be spread across board through open communication and participative management style. This will ensure that when voluntary employee turnover occurs; the firm can overcome the shock by effectively replacing him through internal processes. This will also help to bridge leadership and succession gaps

INTRODUCTION

In an economy like Nigeria where there is high unemployment and absence of resolve and strategic government policy on employment generation, the general believe is that due to the fear of the unknown, people will tend to make all sacrifices to keep their jobs. However, it is evidently clear that in some sectors, people tend to switch jobs at will, while in others; the quest for job security and its associated benefits has drastically reduced the rate at which switch their jobs. Be that as it may, in the hospitality industry, there appears to be high rate of employees' turnover. While this situation may be associated with the growing nature of tourism and hospitality in Nigeria which offers new and better rewarding opportunities, how hospitality and tourism managers has been able to harness the situation and strategically leverage on it to enhance their business management leaves much to be desired.

Employee turnover over in itself creates both challenges and prospect to the organization, while it leads to lose of organizational memory and experienced staff, it also provides opportunity to employ a new set of employees with enthusiasm and may be used as a reasonable to shake up a docile and non-performing work teams The specific impact of replacing an employee varies based on many factors, including the difficulty of filling the position, the amount of training required for a new employees and specific costs, such as recruiter fees or advertisements. In the hospitality industry, it may be necessary to fill some positions every few months or even more frequently. Most of the workers in this industry tend to be unskilled and may change positions often since there are many similar options available. In terms of costs, these positions generally require limited training to reach full productivity, so replacing personnel will not tend to have much impact on the business. On the other hand, hospitality managers most often has been with the same organization for much of their career and tend to be in the position for years, leading to very low turnover in that position.

Statement of the Problem

Management practice requires sustainability if competitive and managerial capabilities must be developed and entrenched in the system. But because individuals and indeed managers are "complete persons", it then implies that when an experienced manager leaves an organization, he leaves with a tremendous amount of skill and knowledge, this can create a knowledge gap, leadership deficit and ultimately can impact the management of the business negatively.

To remain effective, managers must drive their organizations within a competitive cost range. Frequent turnover however leads to increased personnel and overhead cost especially in the areas of recruitment and training of new employees. In most cases time lost are in these processes are not accounted for thereby generating an implicit cost that vitiates the effectiveness of the productive capacity of the management. The problem of this study therefore is to establish how turnover can be leveraged as a strategic leap to enhanced management effectiveness

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to investigate how to maximize employee turnover as a strategic approach to effective management. Its specific objectives include;

- i. Examine the effects of involuntary turnover on management cost control in organizations
- ii. Examine the effects of voluntary turnover on leadership and succession planning in organizations

Research Questions

- i. What are the effects of involuntary turnover on management cost control organizations?
- ii. What are the effects of voluntary turnover on leadership and succession planning in organizations?

Hypotheses

H₀₁: involuntary turnover does not have significant effect on management cost control in organizations

H₀₂: voluntary turnover does not have significant effect on leadership and succession planning in organizations

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURES

Employee Turnover Defined

Turnover is defined as the ratio of the number of organizational members who have left during the period being considered, divided by the average number of people in that organization during the period (Ongori 2007). Turnover levels vary between organizations. Successive chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) surveys of employee turnover show that the highest levels are typically found in retailing, hotels, catering and leisure, call centres and among other lower paid private sector services groups. Turnover levels also vary from region to region. The highest rates are found where unemployment is lowest and where it is unproblematic for people to secure desirable alternative employment. Rankin (2006) explains that turnover can be classified in three ways: employer controlled (dismissals, redundancies and early retirements); employee led (due to dissatisfaction of varying kinds); and employer and employee uncontrolled (maternity leave, retirement, and so). Turnover fluctuates with economic cycles, for example, during recession, turnover often falls. Turnover may disguise underlying problems (such as dissatisfied staff or lack of new talent), so it is important to manage underlying factors relating to turnover, even though turnover itself may not always be a problem. The most obvious impact of turnover is that of increased costs. These falls into four tangible categories: separation costs, temporary replacement costs, recruitment and selection costs, induction and training costs. Ongori (2007) noted that turnover can be self-perpetuating in that it affects the morale of those who stay. Inefficiency is one of the causes of turnover, because of the disruption caused by resignations. There is a further intangible category, that of the skills and knowledge which are lost to the organization when an employee leaves. This is difficult to quantify and assess, and again has implications for information-sharing as well as for effective motivation.

According to Ongori (2004), Employee turnover has been defined as the rotation of workers around the labour market; between organizations, jobs and occupations; and between the states of employment and unemployment). Employee turnover can be voluntary or involuntary. Woods (cited by Ongori 2007) noted that each time a position is vacated, either voluntarily or involuntarily, a new employee must be hired and trained and this replacement cycle is known as employee turnover. Morrell, Loan-Clarke and Wilkinson (2001) refer to employee turnover as voluntary cessation of membership of an organization by an employee of that organization. Price (2004) indicated that employee turnover is “the entrance of new employees into the organization and the departure of existing employees from the organization.

Employees can move between organizations, start new ones or leave an organization for good. Employees resign for many reasons. Sometimes it is the attraction of a new job or the prospect of a period outside the workforce which pull them while on other occasions they are pushed (due to dissatisfaction in their present jobs) to seek alternative employment. It can also be as a result of both 'pull and push' factors. It is, however, paramount to investigate why people leave although it is important to appreciate that the reasons people give for their resignations are frequently untrue or only partially true. Individuals are likely to be reluctant to voice criticism of their managers, colleagues or the organization generally, preferring to give some less contentious reasons for their departure. Using an external provider to conduct exit interviews will help employers capture more accurate data about why people are leaving, since individuals are more willing to tell the truth when there is reassurance for their anonymity. An alternative approach is the use of confidential attitude surveys, which include questions on intention to leave and questionnaires sent to former employees on a confidential basis around six months after their departure. Some employee turnover positively benefits an organization. This happens when a poor performer is replaced by a more productive employee, and can happen when a senior retirement employee allows the promotion, or acquisition of 'fresh blood', younger more productive and high performing employees into an organization or promotion to a higher position (Abassi and Hollman 2000). In most instances the bulk of employee turnover is represented by voluntary turnover.

Types of Employee Turnover

The different types of turnover are discussed in the following section.

- ❖ *Voluntary Turnover:* Voluntary turnover is initiated by the choice of the employee. If at any point in time, an employee leaves an organization at their own discretion, it is referred to as voluntary turnover (Dess and Shaw 2001). Shaw, Delery, Jenkins and Gupta (1998) state that an instance of voluntary turnover or an exit from the organization reflects an employee's decision to leave an organization, whereas an instance of involuntary turnover, or a discharge, reflects an employer's decision to terminate the employment relationship. Mitchell and Lee (2001) noted that voluntary turnover can be affected by a lack of job satisfaction, job stress as well as alternative opportunities. Voluntary turnover can be predicted and, in turn, be controlled.
- ❖ *Involuntary Turnover:* According to Ferguson and Ferguson (1986) involuntary turnover includes retirement, death and dismissal. They further state that turnover initiated by the employee, such as resigning to take care of a terminally ill family member or accompanying a spouse to another area should also be considered as involuntary as it includes reasons over which the employee has no control. Ongori (2007) explains that there are some factors that are, in part, beyond the control of management, such as the death or incapacity of a member of staff. Other factors have been classified as involuntary turnover in the past, such as the need to provide care for children or aged relatives. Today such factors should not be seen as involuntary turnover as both government regulation and company policies create the chance for such staff to come back to work, or to continue to work on a more flexible basis (Simon and Hamer 2007).
- ❖ *Avoidable and Unavoidable Turnover:* In order to determine the intervention needed to address the issue of employee turnover, it is vital to distinguish between avoidable and unavoidable turnover (Morrell, Loan-Clarke and Wilkinson 2001). Unavoidable turnover results from life decisions that extend beyond an employer's control, such as a decision to move to a new area or a job transfer for a spouse. Avoidable turnover can be prevented by organizations by hiring, evaluating and motivating their employees more effectively. According to Morrell et al.

(2001), the phenomenon of turnover is psychological, organizational and costly, hence, there is presently no accepted model for understanding the process of turnover as a whole, although a variety of factors are used to evaluate the causes of employee turnover. These include personal factors, job content factors, work environment factors and external factors.

Causes of Employee Turnover

The above models discuss certain processes and causes of employee turnover while the next section reviews the causes in greater detail.

- *Extrinsic factors:* Extrinsic factors are factors that reflect the context of the job. These are controlled by someone or things external to the employee. They include job satisfaction, pay, the job, career promotion, management and fairness.

a) *Job satisfaction* - Job satisfaction can be an important indicator of an employee's feeling about his or her job and a predictor of work performance. Rain, Lane and Steiner (1991) state that job satisfaction is correlated to life satisfaction, which means that people who are satisfied with life will tend to be satisfied with their job and people who are satisfied with their job will tend to be satisfied with their life. According to Spector (1997) there is a strong link between job satisfaction and employee turnover. If the job satisfaction level is generally low, the employee turnover will be high. Hence, it is clear that more attention should be paid to turnover by institutions because people who dislike their jobs will try to find alternative employment. Satisfied workers will be more productive and stay with the organization longer, while dissatisfied workers will be less productive and will have a greater tendency to quit the work.

Rothman and Coetzer (2002) state that employees want to achieve correspondence with the environment. This is when an individual is fulfilling the requirements of the environment, and the environment is fulfilling the requirements of an individual. It means that individuals will be satisfied with the job when their expertise, abilities, knowledge and skills are utilized by the organization and when the organization grants opportunities of advancement and rewards.

b) *Pay* - The primary objective of an employee is usually to earn income for a better life. Money is an extrinsic reward and can be used to influence an employee's behaviour. Extrinsic rewards are granted by another individual and can include salary and fringe benefits amongst others. Money is important, but it is not the ultimate tool for motivation (Rounok and Parvin 2011). Heneman and Judge (2000) noted that despite the fact that there is ample proof of a relationship between turnover rates and pay levels, other factors need to be considered, such as fairness in the administration of pay, differences in the importance of pay and the outcomes of performance pay systems. Where wage policies are poorly designed and where salaries are not competitive, turnover is higher (Burgess 1998). According to Spector (1997) fairness in administration of pay results in satisfaction with pay while Atchison (1999) argues that pay increases, only temporarily solve the problem of low levels of satisfaction.

c) *The Job* - Sharma and Bhaskar (1991) noted that the actual job done by employees and the nature of the job given to the employee has a direct influence on job satisfaction. The work itself can motivate employee behaviour. If the conditions for the work are attractive and creative and the responsibilities are constantly renewed by the management, employees will be motivated (Rounok and Parvin 2011). Also, employees are often satisfied when more responsibilities and more challenging work are given (Culpin and Wright 2002). Firth, David, Mellor, Kathleen, Moore, Claude and Loquet (2007) explain that there are several reasons why people quit from one organization to go to another organization. The experience of job related stress (job stress),

the range of factors that lead to job related stress (stressors), lack of commitment in the organization, and job dissatisfaction cause employees to quit from an organization.

d) Promotion - Saporta and Farjoun (2003) explain that promotion can reward individual behaviour by providing security, status, and skill development. Promotion can also benefit an organisation by helping it reach its productivity and performance goals. Particularly, promotion can contribute to retaining employees and motivating them to perform, thus reducing costs of training, recruitment and selection and turnover.

e) Management - Supervisors, managers and HR specialists have an important impact on employee turnover. When employees are supported by their managers they are less likely to leave an institution. The length of time that employees stay in an organization is largely determined by the relationship between employees and their managers (Dobbs 2001). Autonomy is also valued by most employees and decreases turnover.

- *Intrinsic factors*: The intrinsic motivating factors are factors that influence people in a certain way such as responsibility, autonomy, interesting and challenging work and opportunities for advancement (Armstrong 2006). The intrinsic factors discussed below include job fit, personality, age, gender and marital status.

a) Job fit - It has been proven, many times over that job fit positively effects performance, eliminates costly mistakes in hiring, reduces turnover, and can even be used to attract talent. Poor job fit has been associated with job dissatisfaction, higher levels of job-related stress, and intentions to leave an organization. Grobler, Carell, Elbert, Hatfiled, Marx Van der Schyf (1998) stated that the process of selecting is about the fit between the applicant and the job. The levels of job satisfaction will increase if there is a good fit between the applicant's personality and the job. It is important that there is a good fit between what an applicant wants and what an organization needs.

b) Personality - The person-organization fit essentially argues that people are attracted to and selected by an organization that match their values, and they leave an organization that is not compatible with their personality. At the time of hiring it is important for an organization to select employees who fit better with the organization's culture, which should in turn result in higher employee satisfaction and reduced turnover (Robbins 2005). House, Shane and Herold (1996) pointed out that dispositional variables are seen as personality attitudes, characteristics, preferences, motives and needs that lead to the tendency to respond to a situation in a predetermined way. The authors also conclude that attitude towards work are determined by individual attributes. According to Weiss and Cropanzano (1996) personality might affect the experience of emotional happenings at work which, in turn, may influence job satisfaction.

c) Demographic factors - The most significant demographic factors that play a role in employee turnover include variables such as age, gender, race, marital status and education. A brief discussion of the factors follows.

(i) *Age* - Kotze and Roodt (2005) explain that the age of an employee plays an important part in an employee's commitment. Age was identified as a variable that could influence the push and pull factors in the decision to leave. Older people are generally more satisfied with their jobs than younger people (Martocchio 1989). Nevertheless, according to Okpara (2004), there is a relationship between age and job satisfaction. Older employees are more content and satisfied with their jobs for reasons which include commitment to family (Martocchio 1989).

(ii) *Gender* - Kotze and Roodt (2005) found that in addition to age, employee gender posed significantly different perceptions in relation to organizational support, change and transformation, remuneration and the propensity to leave. Empirical evidence from the study of

Blomme, Van Rheede and Tromp (2010) shows that gender could be a moderator between the psychological contract and turnover intentions.

(iii) Marital status - Chambers (1999), noted that married employees are generally more satisfied with their jobs. Robbins *et al.* (2003) postulates that marriage imposes increased responsibilities that make a job more valuable and important, therefore married employees are less likely to leave their jobs. The causal connection between marriage and job satisfaction, however, remains unclear as it is possible that unmarried employees might also report high levels of job satisfaction, given that turnover is dependent on different factors.

Consequences of Employee's Turnover

Past studies on employee turnover and the widespread interest in the field can be ascribed to the negative consequences of employee turnover associated with separation cost. Separation costs are the costs that an organization incurs with regard to employees leaving the organization and the subsequent hiring and replacement of such employees. According to Blake (2006), employee turnover is one of the largest and main costs to organizations. Yet, most organizations also see this as an unknown cost.

Direct Costs of Employee Turnover: The direct costs of turnover can be divided into two areas: separation costs and replacement costs. Separation costs include severance pay, the costs of exit interviews and fees for outplacements and litigation costs in the case of involuntary separation (Mitchell *et al.* 2001). Replacement costs, on the other hand, include advertising, recruitment, selection, induction and training, travel and relocation costs. According to Hawkes (2001) the cost components, such as recruiting, interviewing, hiring, processing, orienting, training, supervision and overtime paid to other associates to cover for the person who left, represent the direct costs of turnover.

In Hinkin and Tracey's (2000) opinion indirect costs are higher than direct costs. However, it is difficult to quantify and to attach a financial value to indirect costs but they are real. Indirect costs include increased workloads, reduced productivity, low employee morale, and overtime expenses for existing employees. Loss of productivity is one of the largest costs of turnover (Hinkin and Tracey 2000).

Indirect cost of Employee Turnover: Indirect costs of employee turnover include:

- lost productivity associated with the interim period before a replacement can be placed in the job, the time a co-worker spends away from his or her work to help fill the gap and low employee morale;
- the cost of formal and informal training to get the new employee 'up to speed';
- severance pay or litigation costs from involuntary turnovers; and
- low employee morale, and overtime expenses for existing employees.

The costs incurred by employee turnover are one of the most wasteful expenditures in any organization. In a few cases the employer has control over why the employee is leaving the organization but in many cases the employer has no control over it (Ongori 2007).

Theoretical Review

A significant amount of research has been done over the years to investigate aspects of employee turnover, such as the causes and retention strategies. As a result, different models or designs have been promulgated such as the unfolding model, which focuses on decisional aspects (Ongori 2007). A discussion of the following theories/models of employee turnover, namely, the image theory, the unfolding model, and the theory on embeddedness follows.

a) *The image theory* - The image theory was created by Beach (1990) and explains the way in which an employee processes information when making a decision through different images. The fundamental principle of this theory is that individuals leave an organization after having assessed the reason for quitting. Beach (1990) suggests that individuals do not have the cognitive ability to effectively analyze all incoming information. Hence they quickly compare it with more heuristic-types – in other words, they learn from their own decision-making alternatives. The image theory suggests that decision-makers use three knowledge arrangements (images) to arrange their thinking about decisions. These are (a) value image (b) trajectory image (c) strategic image. According to this theory, some incoming facts (for example, a job offer) are compared to these images.

b) *The Unfolding Theory* - Mitchell and Lee (2001) described an unfolding model of voluntary turnover which claimed that existing models of employee turnover were too simplistic and inconclusive. Furthermore, Lee, Mitchell, Wise and Fireman (1996) state that the unfolding model views incoming information as shocks (pregnancy, alternative job offers, and so on). This theory suggests that internal or external shocks will lead the individual to leave an organization, because the situation (shock) compels the employee to leave. The shock referred to represent significant distinguishable events that disturb an employee's status quo and forces an employee toward deliberate judgments about their jobs or perhaps forces an employee to quit (Mitchell and Lee 2001).

c) *Embeddedness Theory* - According to Feldman and Ng (2007) embeddedness refers to a number of forces that creates a feeling in people that they cannot leave an organization. Embeddedness implies that a number of forces link an employee in a psychological and social web that includes the job-related environment as well as non-work environment. The more connected the person is in the web the more that person is attached to the job and the organization. In addition, the decisive aspects of job embeddedness are referred to as links, fit and sacrifice, which are critical both on and off the job. The three aspects are links to other people or activities; they fit with the other aspects in their lives and the easiness with which links can be broken, particularly if they have to move to another location.

METHODOLOGY

In conducting this study, descriptive survey approach was adopted and data was generated from a five point likert scale. The study covered a population of sixty (60) managers and supervisors of eleven (11) hospitality firms within the Owerri metropolis. Because of the smallness of the data, the entire population was used as its sample; however, out of the 60 questionnaires distributed, only 48 were correctly filled and returned; thereby given a questionnaire return rate of 80%. The data gathered was analyzed with the kruskawalis (H) test. The kruskawalis test is

given as; $T = H = \frac{12}{N(N+1)} \sum_{i=1}^k \frac{R_i^2}{n_i} - 3(N+1)$. The decision rule is to reject the null hypothesis

if $H^0 \geq \chi_{(k-1)}^2$, where k is the degrees of freedom.

RESULTS

SPSS OUTPUT FOR HYPOTHESIS ONE

NPAR TESTS

/K-W=ITandMCC BY RANKS(1 5)

/STATISTICS DESCRIPTIVES

/MISSING ANALYSIS.

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
ITandMCC	15	9.6667	5.51189	.00	20.00
RANKS	15	3.0000	1.46385	1.00	5.00

Kruskal-Wallis Test**Ranks**

	RANKS	N	Mean Rank
ITandMCC	1.00	3	3.83
	2.00	3	11.00
	3.00	3	4.00
	4.00	3	14.00
	5.00	3	7.17
Total		15	

Test Statistics^{a,b}

	ITandMCC
Chi-Square	11.901
df	4
Asymp. Sig.	.018

a. Kruskal Wallis Test

b. Grouping Variable:

RANKS

Discussion: from the SPSS output above, $H \geq \chi^2_{(k-1)}$ (i.e $0.05 > 0.018$), we therefore reject the null hypothesis in line with the rule and conclude that there is a significant link between involuntary turnover and management cost control

SPSS OUTPUT FOR HYPOTHESIS TWO

NPAR TESTS

/K-W=VTandLSP BY RANKS(1 5)

/STATISTICS DESCRIPTIVES

/MISSING ANALYSIS.

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
VTandLSP	15	9.6667	4.70056	3.00	19.00
RANKS	15	3.0000	1.46385	1.00	5.00

Kruskal-Wallis Test

Ranks			
	RANKS	N	Mean Rank
VTandLSP	1.00	3	2.83
	2.00	3	8.50
	3.00	3	6.17
	4.00	3	14.00
	5.00	3	8.50
	Total		15

Test Statistics^{a,b}

	VTandLSP
Chi-Square	10.183
Df	4
Asymp. Sig.	.037

a. Kruskal Wallis Test

b. Grouping Variable:

RANKS

Discussion: from the SPSS output above, $H \geq \chi^2_{(k-1)}$ (i.e $0.05 > 0.037$), we therefore reject the null hypothesis in line with the rule and conclude that there is a significant link between voluntary turnover and leadership and succession planning in organizations

Conclusion

The quest to cut cost often leads management into arbitrary disengagement of employees without proper gauge of its strategic implications on the effectiveness of the management. This study haven surveyed literatures and conducted empirical inquiry came to the conclusion that employees turnover can be of both strategic benefit and challenge to management effectiveness.

Recommendations

Following the findings and conclusion above, this study recommends that for turnover to yield desired positive result as a tool to enhancing management effectiveness, the followings should be considered

- i. Where it is needful to embark on involuntary turnover (disengagement), it must be done in phases in other to give room for the organizational memory to be passed on successfully to the new employees
- ii. Firms should endeavour to avoid building their business capabilities around one personnel, rather it should be spread across board through open communication and participative management style. This will ensure that when voluntary employee turnover occurs, the firm can overcome the shock by effectively replacing him through internal processes. This will also help to bridge leadership and succession gaps

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