



Research Article

EMPLOYEE TURNOVER INTENTION: A PREDICTIVE STUDY OF ORGANIZATIONAL POLITICS, LEADER-MEMBER-EXCHANGE AND JOB INSECURITY

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 10<sup>th</sup> November, 2016

Received in revised form 21<sup>st</sup> December, 2016

Accepted 30<sup>th</sup> January, 2017

Published online 28<sup>th</sup> February, 2017

Key words:

Turnover, organizational politics, leader-member exchange, and job insecurity

ABSTRACT

This study examined Employee Turnover Intention: a predictive study of organizational Politics, leader-member-exchange and job insecurity in private sector organizations. The participants comprised of 453 workers; 204 males and 249 females selected randomly from the banking sector. The age of the participants ranged from 25 years to 43 years with a mean age of 37.74 years and standard deviation of 3.08. The participants were selected through a simple random sampling whereas the banks were selected through a systematic technique. Employee Turnover Intentions developed by Paille, Grima & Bernardeau, (2013), Perceptions of Organizational Politics Scale (POPS) developed by Kacmar & Ferris in (1991), Leader-member exchange (LMX) developed by Liden & Maslyn, (1998) and Job Insecurity Scale by Hellgren, Sverke, & Issakson, (1999) were used as instruments for data collection. Predictive design and multiple linear regressions analysis were the design and statistics employed in analyzing the data. Data analyzed confirmed that only organizational politics and job insecurity predicted employee turnover intention among employees in the banking industry at  $\beta (1, 453) = .127^*$ ,  $p < .05$  and  $\beta (1, 453) = .139^*$ ,  $p < .05$  respectively. In view of the nature of job mobility in the banking industry, it is recommended that ethnic sentiments which fuel the current politics in the industry be checked through management by objectives. It is also recommended that the banking sector should down play the high prevalence rate of contract staffing which increases job insecurity and trigger employee turnover intentions.

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INTRODUCTION

Lately, the rising number of both voluntary employee turnovers in the organized private sector in Nigeria as evidenced by movement of employees across homogenous organizations in search of better working conditions has become a concern for stakeholders which is gaining momentous research interest. This is as a result of several factors which could directly link certain organizational outcomes to personal outcomes (Rubel & Hung-Kee, 2015). For instance in the Nigeria banking sector, this trend (cross-carpeting from one bank to another) has become customary especially with the threat of massive retrenchment facing most contract employees in the sector working under unfavourable conditions in many instances.

Boerner, Eisenbeiss and Griesser (2007) opined that most of these organizational outcomes may have unfavorable implications which most times threaten the career dreams of the employees and are the primary stressors which have spurred the employees either to withdraw their services permanently or nurse the intention. For example, in the Nigerian banking sector, there is a lot of ethnic politics among members especially as regards who ascends the management ladder. Authors' observation suggests that promotion to the

top management hierarchy likely favours employees coming from the owner's ethnic region or religion with fewer or no positions left for actual merit. This also is suspected to be the major cause of human relationship crisis in most of the organizations with turnover intentions at the mind of the employees.

Employee turnover intention or employees' intention to quit the organization is voluntary thought to leave the organization or terminate his allegiance or commitment to the course of the organization (Okafor, 2011). Employee turnover intentions also involve the intentional exhibition of those actions that are not in congruence with the organizational vision which normally invoke organizational sanctions and punishments (Ohana, 2010). Paille, Grima and Bernardeau (2013) defined employee turnover intentions as subjective estimation of an individual employee regarding his or her probability of leaving an organization in the near future; it is considered to be a deliberate and conscious desire to leave the organization within a certain period of time. Earlier, Roodt (2004) defined employee turnover intentions as employee's personal evaluation regarding his or her continuance commitment and future to the organization. In the mind of the current authors, turnover intentions or intentions to quit the organization may be referred as practical evaluation of positive or negative

outcomes of one's job satisfaction and motivation on a current job. It is also the negative evaluation of a worker's organizational commitment within a given period of time.

Although an employee may leave an organization for several reasons as suggested by later assertions, usually the conditions of work in line with the attached motivation from the organization are the leading factors of this behavior. It is recognizable though that an employee may equally express his or her intention to leave the organization on the grounds of personal issues such as family and domestic consideration, lost of interest on the job, entrepreneurial intentions, ill-health, temporal or permanent disability, other internal factors beyond the control of the employee, unforeseen contingencies such as; natural disaster, threat of war and insecurity, rise and fall of business commodities or services, redundancy created by the use of science and technology etc, however, they are rarely the case for the daily turnovers usually recorded industry wide. The perceptions employees hold about their employing organizations and their subjective evaluations of other mechanics of organizational outcomes particularly those of motivation; significantly determine turnover intentions and actual turnovers (Owolabi, 2012).

Kamau and Nzube (2014) opined that outside the aforementioned factors that affect individual employee directly, there are other factors that affect the organization which may involuntarily trigger quitting behaviours. Some of these include but are not limited to: change in organizational leadership, change of industry policies, and change of political government leadership and general inadequacy of organizational resources both human and capital to remain effective in industry competition.

Be that as it may, many studies (for instance, Ngethe & Namusonge, 2012) supported the theoretical foundations of earlier studies of work motivation by classical theorists notably; Vroom, Herzberg and Aldler. These studies have suggested that the major reason for turnover intentions revolve around justice system concerning the reward, recognition and welfare system such as: salaries, allowances and fringe benefits, work overload, promotion, opportunity for growth, retirement benefits etc. which are primarily the employees' expectations from the organization (Zaman, Ali & Ali, 2014). However, it is apparent that the pay system alone is no longer the only reason while employees nurse turnover intentions; some other factors which border on organizational interaction among members such as leader-member exchange and worker to worker interaction have emerged as new areas capable of motivating turnover behaviours.

In the mind of the authors, most private organizations in Nigeria are marred with internal and external politics to the detriment of the employees because organizational politics necessarily affect the growth of the employees and reduce their chances of development which anchor on availability of resources and cooperation and support of the organization in the execution of job tasks. Critical factors of appraisal of most private organizations reveal that organizational politics, job insecurity and poor leader-member exchange are the current subjective challenges facing modern day organizations other than the traditional objective wellbeing/welfare conditions. The later has gained momentum in recent times spurring several research interests in the area like: Moorman (1991); Neihoff and Moorman (1993); Roodt (2004); Ishaku

(2005); Jeon (2009) and Paille, Grima & Bernardeau (2013). Unfortunately, bad as the situation is, many employees have suffered critical setbacks in their careers such as denied promotions, forced and targeted transfers, denial of leave and other formal work rotation entitlements, denial of accrued benefits like performance bonuses, salary increment and so on as direct consequences of these organizational outcomes. As observed, most employees are no longer willing to continue with a particular organization or pledge their full allegiance if they suspect that such similar treatment is coming their way. The end result regrettably may lead to unsolicited turnover intentions and ultimately voluntary employee turnover.

In consideration of the above scenario, and in admission of the volatile nature of the current labour market in organized private sectors in Nigeria, the current researchers suspect that most of these unsolicited employee turnover may accrue on the backdrop of these subjective organizational outcomes mostly organizational politics, poor leader-member exchange and the threat of job insecurity.

## **LITERATURE**

Employee turnover intention which is also regarded as intentions to leave or quit an organization in line with Cho, Johanson & Guchait (2009) is described as subjective estimation of an individual regarding his/her probability of leaving an organization in the near future arising from employee contract content. Turnover intention also refers to an individual's evaluation of the possibility that he or she will leave his or her work organization at some point in the near future. In other words, turnover intentions are the inner thoughts of the employees regarding voluntary exit from their work organizations. Such intentions are identified as the immediate precursors of actual turnover as theorized by Employee contract engagement theory propounded by Levinson, Solley, Mandl, Munday and Price, (1962) which posits that all manner of employees exchange their services with the organization in return for monetary and non-monetary rewards and when these rewards are no longer satisfactory or guaranteed, there may be an intent to leave the organization. Also, Argyris (1960) as cited in Roussaeu (1989) later termed this breach of psychological contract on the side of the employers as one of the causes of employees' turnover intention. The situation is also captured in Roussaeu (1989)'s Psychological Contract which emphasized that psychological contract consist of mutual obligations created during employment relationship and strengthened through interactions between the employees and their employers or their privies or representatives. Both theories insist that when this contract is no longer mutual, its binding force is loosened, employee turnover intention is nursed. However, Fritz (2008) using Employee Attitudinal Theory, viewed turnover differently. Fritz (2008) propounded that optimistic and pessimistic reaction of people within their environment is what may lead to either success-satisfaction or failure-dissatisfaction evaluation of the organization which either motivates continuance commitment or turnover behaviour. This kind of evaluation whether positive or negative can motivate various forms of employee turnover behaviour including turnover intentions especially in the presence of organizational politics.

Organizational politics is the management of one's influence in order to obtain in ends not sanctioned by the organization

or to obtain sanctioned by ends through non-sanctioned means (Hatch & Cuncliff, 2006). The important point to emphasize about organizational politics is that it affects the legitimacy of both the outcome and the method used to achieve them. Political activities may be classified by political outcomes and political methods, organizational approvals and disapproval. Therefore, political atmosphere be it positive or negative may be capable of influencing the career paths of unsuspecting employees (Bayochem, 2012). Though organizational politics may abound, it is the belief of many including the current researchers that some workers motivated by certain factors may however survive the Machiavellian politics which may have become the order of the day whereas the vast majority may not cope with it with an option of turnover. Organizational politics also affects a number of organizational factors such as members' citizenship behaviour, affective commitment and employees' hard work (Angelo, 2008). It further creates distrust among employees and encourages favoritism (Neihoff & Moorman, 1993). It also creates a vacuum for organizational sabotage and other counterproductive workplace behavior to thrive for instance, stealing, damage to organizational properties, procrastination at work, general ineffectiveness and other forms of deviance. In consideration of the weight of organizational members' distrust, poor citizenship behavior, commitment, favoritism, sabotage and other counterproductive workplace behaviours arising from organizational politics, it is apparent that the threat of extinction faces many organizations with inherent organizational politics. This is because the consequences of these negative outcomes those that emanate from organizational politics are incongruent to the goals of the organization namely: profit maximization, effectiveness and efficiency.

Another intervening variable integrated in this study is the effects of human interaction articulated as leader-member exchange. Leader-member exchange refers to the relationship that usually exists as a direct consequence of the contact between superiors and their subordinates in the-day-to-day activities of the organization. Paille, Grima & Bernardeau (2013) opined that it is perceived value for the subordinate's contributions, guidance and care for their wellbeing shown from the superiors to their subordinates. The current researchers equally see it as positive and negative effects of the interactions between organizational owners and their employees, between management/supervisors and their subordinates and among employees entrusted to lead their units or teams and those they lead.

The importance of human interaction is sufficient in the understanding that prevailing human interaction in any organization helps to shape the organizational climate (Paille, Grima & Bernardeau, 2013). Woolcock and Narayan (2000) opined through social capital development theory that every member of the organization is in dire need of members' goodwill and sense of accommodation in order to be motivated adequately to exhibit extra-role behaviour. Without this, the working environment may not be conducive enough for employees to offer their best to the organization which may ignite employee turnover intention. Also, Engel (2011)'s Four Supervisory Theory which identified; traditional, innovative, supportive and active supervisory styles as variations of supervision style used to achieve

varying interpersonal interaction among organizational members. Depending on which style a leader uses, their subordinates tend to react to them in congruence to the effects of the style of the supervision. Some of these styles may be dissatisfactory and may affect employees' long term commitment. Also, Social exchange theory by Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005) which described exchange as "gives" and "gets" relationship between employees and their leaders. When the leaders value and care for the contributions and welfare of their subordinates; the employees in turn reciprocate the gesture with extra-role behaviour and commitment rather employee turnover intention. On this, Gunalan and Ceylan (2015) argued that being supported by the supervisor has a positive impact on employees' attitudes in the workplace whereas being unsupportive may yield several negative outcomes such as anxiety.

They authors in consideration of the above, are inclined to assert that employees are prone to exchange their commitment for the support they receive from their organizations especially if they feel that the organization's superiors show support by demonstrating concern for their welfare at work. Gunalan and Ceylan (2015)'s model posits that when the supervisor encourages his or her subordinates or recognizes and promotes their efforts or contributions towards improving the work process, the supervisor instills the perception of support in them which strengthens the positive qualities of employees. The dynamics of this relationship and how it creates bonds of attachment or disloyalty between the employees and their superiors is what the current researchers consider as proximal causes and consequences of employees' commitment and turnover intentions among other organizational factors. There is concern that the prevailing situation may create an atmosphere of job insecurity a may be orchestrated by politics and poor human relations among employees.

The importance of job security is that its implications are known to have several negative employee and organizational outcomes as noted by Joe-Akunne, Oguegbe and Aguanunu (2014). Job insecurity is best appreciated in lieu of the meaning of job security which is positive expectations about job continuity (Hellgren, Sverke & Issakson, 1999). It also includes desirable job features such as; promotion opportunities, current working conditions, and long-term career opportunities. On the other side, job insecurity refers to "an employee's negative reaction to the changes concerning their jobs" and uncertainty regarding the future of the employee or the continuity of a particular job (Sverke & Hellen, 2002). Job insecurity is usually characterized by powerlessness to maintain desired continuity in a threatened job situation (Ashford, Lee & Bobko, 1989). Ashford's (1989) Dual component theory refers threat-control mechanism which an employee feels on the job as a job stressor. It constitutes severity and powerlessness and can be high if the control is less or less if the control is high which can be likened to Lazarus (1984) Stress theory of job insecurity which opined that a stressor can be threatening or not depending on evaluation process either primary or secondary. Individuals may tend to confront the source of the stressor and if it becomes uncontrollable, they may harbour turnover intention. The stressors are threats to person's job such as; disaster, systematic retrenchment, disease, injury etc.

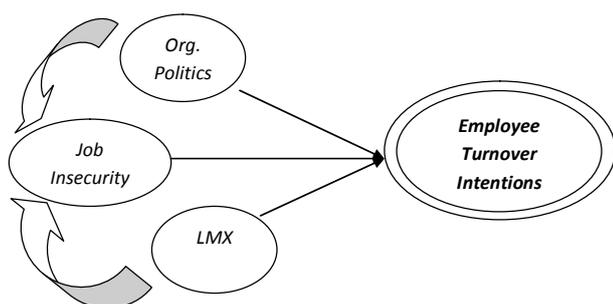
The extent of coping with the stressors may be evaluated as insecurity with direct implication to turnover behaviour.

Furthermore, Ismail (2015), lack of job security (i.e. job insecurity) leads to attitudinal reactions such as: intention to quit; reduced dedication, job stress, employee anxiety and reduced satisfaction. Roskies & Louis-Guerin (1993) maintained that workers in the 1950s may have sold their soul to the corporation, but the recompense for self-denial was lifetime employment and a guaranteed standard of living. From the concepts of these definitions, it could be harnessed that job security gives employees a sense of belonging in the organization and helps to foster optimal performance from the employees without which organizational efficiency may be compromised. Whereas on the other hand, job insecurity creates a vacuum in the employee and creates the mindset that they do not necessarily belong here. Hence, it may be source and cause of anxiety leading to thoughts to leave the organization.

Consequently, in line with the above critique regarding the employee outcome of institutionalized politics in the organization, poor leader-member relationship and threatening problems of job insecurity, the researchers suspect that these variables may predict higher incidence of employee turnover. It is further believed that these organizational factors may further become hazardous in the presence of certain organizational situations and circumstances hence; there is need for hypothetical testing of the following statements:

1. Organizational politics will significantly predict employee turnover intentions in the organized private sector.
2. Leader-member exchange will significantly predict employee turnover intentions in the organized private sector.
3. Job insecurity significantly will predict employee turnover intentions in the organized private sector.

### **Conceptual Model**



**Fig. 1**

A conceptual model of the study highlighting the expected predictive relationship between the independent variables (organizational politics, leader-member exchange (LMX) and job insecurity) and the dependent variable – employee turnover intentions.

### **METHOD**

Participants in the study were two hundred and fifty-three (453) workers drawn from the banking sector in Anambra State, Nigeria. The total number of participants comprised one hundred and forty-nine (249) females and one hundred and

four (204) males within the age range of 25 yrs and 43yrs with a mean age of 37.74yrs and standard deviation of 3.08 for all participants. The method of sampling was simple random sampling technique.

### **Measurements**

Employee turnover intention was measured using a 3-item questionnaire developed by Paille, Grima & Bernardeau (2013). The authors first reported a cronbach's alpha  $r = .90$ . The response format was in 5-point likert scale of strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1). In order to use the scale in the study, Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient analysis was carried out by the recent authors and their analysis revealed an alpha reliability coefficient of .79 on the scale. Also, Perceptions of organizational politics were measured using a 12-item questionnaire developed by Kacmar & Ferris in (1991). The authors originally reported a cronbach's alpha  $r = .93$ . The response format was in 5-point likert scale of strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1). In order to use the scale in the study, Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient analysis was carried out by the recent authors and their analysis revealed an alpha reliability coefficient of .77 on the scale. Leader-member exchange (LMX) was measured using an 11-item questionnaire developed by Liden & Maslyn, (1998). The original authors reported a cronbach's alpha = from .78 to .92. The scale was used to measure value and wellbeing between subordinates and their superiors. The response format was in 5-point likert scale of strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1). In order to use the scale in the study, Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient analysis was carried out by the recent authors and their analysis revealed an alpha reliability coefficient of .76 on the scale. Job insecurity was measured using a 7-item questionnaire developed by Hellgren, Sverke, & Issakson, (1999) adopted originally from 18-item job insecurity scale by Ashford, Lee & Boko (1989). The authors originally reported a cronbach's alpha of .74 and .75 respectively for the two subscales; importance and probability. The response format was in 5-point likert scale of strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1). In order to use the scale in the study, Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient analysis was carried out by the recent authors and their analysis revealed an alpha reliability coefficient of .83 on the scale. The design adopted for this study is correlation (predictive) design while the appropriate statistics used in analyzing the data is multiple linear regression analyses testing the relationship among variables of the study.

### **RESULTS**

The result as presented in table 2 above confirmed that hypothesis one which stated that organizational politics will significantly predict employee turnover intentions in the organized private sector is accepted at  $\beta (1, 453) = .127^* p < .05$ . This statistical evidence as shown in the linear regressions table above confirms that employee turnover intention increases as organizational politics increases.

The result as also presented in table 2 above showed that hypothesis two which stated that leader-member exchange will significantly predict employee turnover intentions in the organized private sector is rejected at  $\beta (1, 453) = .441 p < .05$ . This statistical evidence as shown in the linear regressions table above confirms that no significant changes is

observed of employee turnover intentions as leader-member exchange increases or decreases.

**Table 1** Shows descriptive statistics, mean, standard deviations and number of participants for all variables.

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Organizational Politics	51.4165	1.65004	453
Leader-Member Exchange	37.3163	1.08543	453
Job Insecurity	62.6048	3.27264	453
Turnover Intentions	7.6050	1.70142	453

**Table 2** Multiple linear regression analysis for predictive effects of Organizational politics, Leader-member exchange and Job insecurity on Turnover intentions Coefficients (a)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)					
1 Organizational politics	.9627	6.540	.213	1.472	.144
Leader-member exchange	.133	.193	.127	.189	.017
Job insecurity	.076	.119	4.16	.587	.068
	.112	.178	3.35	.128	.003

a Dependent Variable: Employee turnover intentions

Also, in consideration of data analyzed and presented in table 2 above, hypothesis three which stated that job insecurity will significantly predict employee turnover intentions in the organized private sector is accepted at  $\beta (1, 453) = .139^*$ ,  $p < .05$ . The statistical evidence provided above confirms a linear relationship between job insecurity and employee turnover intentions which increases or decreases as one increases or decreases.

**Implication of the Study**

From the findings of this study it is clear that once the motivational constructs present in any organization is no long assured by the organization, the primary essence of the employee contract has suffered a major blow and hence continuance commitment of the employee may not be guaranteed consequently. These motivational constructs may be in the form of job security, opportunity to grow with will require fairness in accessing and obtaining sanctioned organizational ends with minimal politics and a good interactive atmosphere between organizational members in order to foster, trust, understanding and cooperation needed to excel in one’s career. Without the presence of these motivational constructs in the organizational policies, it may be difficult to guarantee eventual success of that organization. In view of the support rendered by the above statistical evidence, the current researchers conclude that where findings connotes similar organizational climate with expected human attitude. The findings are accepted as empirical evidence highlighting that differences in economic and organizational climatic in certain organizations have a lot personal and organizational outcomes.

**CONCLUSION**

Having evaluated the predictive influences of organizational politics, leader-member-exchange and job insecurity on employee turnover, it is obvious the current organized private sector in Anambra State Nigeria is not devoid of the antecedents of labour mobility and employee turnover. In the

wake of the fact that the negative outcomes of job insecurity and organizational politics are far reaching, with re-current organizational problems, it expected that this study is timely. It is therefore important that stakeholders take significant steps towards re-organizing the organizational policies to effect changes especially those that will reduce the prevalence of these negative organizational factors such as turnover behaviour with considerable review on its antecedents such as: organizational politics, leader-member-exchange and job insecurity.

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