

WORKING CONDITIONS, GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES AND FRINGE BENEFITS AS DETERMINANTS OF LABOUR TURNOVER IN SELECTED INDUSTRIES IN OYO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Many factors are responsible for labour turnover in work organisations ranging from long working hours, violence at work, low wages and income; poor working conditions, grievance procedures, lack of motivation and job satisfaction to inadequate fringe benefits with resultant effects such as low productivity, increase in cost of production, reduction in number of personnel, and so on. It is against this background that this study employs the descriptive survey research design of the ex post facto type to find out the relationship among working condition, grievance procedure, fringe benefit and labour turnover. The population for the study consists of members of labour union and management in selected industries which are basically manufacturing. The Multistage sampling technique was used to select three hundred and ten respondents. The main instrument used to elicit information from respondents is a questionnaire tagged 'Working Condition, Grievance Procedure, Fringe Benefit and Labour Turnover Questionnaire - WCGPFBLTQ with four sub sections. Two hundred and eighty-eight questionnaires were recovered and found usable for the research. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the research hypotheses at 5% level of significance. The findings show that there were positive significant relationships among working condition, grievance procedures, fringe benefits and labour turnover. The study recommends that the management team of the workplace should formulate, implement and adhere to good policies on working conditions, grievance procedure and fringe benefits within their establishments. These decisions will increase productivity, reduce absenteeism, increase job satisfaction and wellbeing of employees.

Keywords: Fringe benefits, working condition, grievance procedure, labour turnover.

Introduction

Many factors are responsible for labour turnover in work organisations ranging from long working hours, violence at work, low wages and income, poor working conditions, grievance procedures, lack of motivation and job satisfaction to inadequate fringe benefits. Labour turnover has led to many problems such as low productivity, increase in cost of production, reduction in number of personnel, and so on.

Turnover occurs for many different reasons; sometimes new and well-paid jobs attract employees and lure them to leave their former jobs (Shamsuzzoha & Rezaul, 2012). Similarly, employees also push to leave jobs due to the dissatisfaction in their present workplaces or by domestic circumstances when someone relocates with his spouse or partner (Campion, 1991). So, many factors are responsible for labour turnover ranging from long working hours, violence at work, low wages and income, poor working conditions, grievance procedures, lack of motivation and job satisfaction to inadequate fringe benefits.

In today's globalised and competitive business world, management and managers should consider it an important task to manage employees' turnover for any organization. Naturally people want diversities in their everyday life, seek for new and high yielding jobs and good working environment in their job places (Philips, 1990). To provide these aforementioned needs to the employees is very difficult. It is crucial for every organization to retain its talented and efficient employees if it wishes to remain

in business. For every organisation that aims at having high productivity and be profitable, the issues of turnover should be taken seriously. Managing turnover successfully is a must to achieve the above goals (Shamsuzzoha & Rezaul, 2012).

2.0 Literature Review

Companies take deep interest in their employees' turnover rate because it is a costly part of doing business (Beam, 2009). Employees' turnover is the rotation of workers around the labour market; between firms, jobs and occupation; and between the states of employment and unemployment (Abassi & Hollman, 2000). Bolch (2001) defines labour turnover as the movement of employees in and out of a business, measures the extent of change in the work force due to accession (total number of workers added to employment) and separation (severance of employment at the instance of workers or employers) during a particular period of time. Bohlander, Snell and Sherman (2001) state that employees turnover refers to the movement of employees out of an organisation. From these definitions, organisations incur personnel costs, direct and indirect expenses: which include the cost of advertising, headhunting fees, human resource costs, loss of productivity, new hire training, and customers' retention, every time they have to replace an employee. Beam, (2009) confirms that these expenses can sum up 30 to 200 percent of a single employee's annual wages or salary, depending on the industry and the job role being filled. Though, employees' turnover been a much studied research interest (Shaw, Delery, Jenkins,

& Gupta, 1998), yet there have been no sufficient reason why people leave organization.

Barrick and Zimmerman, (2005) concur that turnover has become an important criterion and reflects a critical motivated behaviour; one that may provide insight into volitional behaviour. Employees' turnover has negative impacts on the development of employees' technical competence and skills level. It also affects the morale of the remaining employees and the image of the company (The Institute of Singapore Labour Studies, 2001).

Allen and Meyer (1990) discover that all three components of commitment (affective, continuance, normative) were a negative indicator of turnover. However, employee's turnover contributes to the potential benefits and disadvantages for organisations. The positive benefits include displacement of poor performance, infusion of new knowledge and technology, reducing labour costs when facing stiffer competition, enhancing promotional opportunities for the remaining staff. The negative effects cover economic costs, productivity losses, impaired service quality, increased administrative burden to loss of morale among the remaining staff (Griffeth & Hom, 1994). In essence, employee's turnover costs have negative financial implication as well as loss of knowledge possessed by departing employee.

According to business dictionary 'working conditions refer to working environment and all existing circumstance affecting labour in the workplace, including: job

hours, physical aspects, legal right and responsibility organisational culture workload and training' (Ali, Ali & Adan, 2013). This paper will adopt the physical aspect of this definition as the operational definition for this research.

Conducive work environment ensures the wellbeing of employees which always enable them commit themselves to their roles with dedication that may translate to higher productivity (Akinyele, 2007) and employees' satisfaction with resultant effect of wanting to stay at their workplaces. Robbins (2001) notes that working conditions will influence job satisfaction, as employees are concerned with a comfortable physical work environment. In turn, this will render a more positive level of job satisfaction. Ajala (2012), Arnold & Feldman (1996) show that factors such as temperature, lighting, ventilation, hygiene, noise, working hours, and resources are all parts of working conditions. The worker would rather desire working conditions that will result in greater physical comfort and convenience. The absence of such working conditions, amongst other things, can impact poorly on the worker's mental and physical well-being (Baron & Greenberg, 2003).

In recent years, employees' comfort on the job, determined by workplace conditions and environment has been recognized as an important factor for measuring their productivity and employees' turnover. The working environments are very important to the organisation. If the employees have negative perception of their working conditions, they are likely to be absent,

have stress-related illness, and their productivity and commitment tend to be low. On the other hand, organisations having friendly, trusting and save environment, experience greater productivity, creativity (Kreisler, et al, 1997), commitment and higher retention of staff. Employees feel that poor working conditions provoke negative performance, since their jobs are mentally and physically demanding. Thus, Robbins (2001) is of the view that working conditions influence job satisfaction, as employees are concerned with comfortable physical work environment. Consequently, the physical environment as a tool can be leveraged both to improve business results (Mohr, 1996) and employees' well-being (Huang, Robertson, & Chang, 2004) which in turn is related to absenteeism, retention, adoption of new methods and technologies (Ali, et al, 2013).

Traditional reasons for grievances at the workplace are discipline, discharge and contract interpretation (Coleman, 1988). Discipline and discharge are the most frequent reasons why cases are disputed at the workplace. Grievance, according to Doyle (1999); Salamon, (2000), is an allegation of violation of provisions in terms and conditions of employment as indicated in the collective agreement. Both Doyle's and Salamon's definitions assume that individual employees are a party to any collective agreement negotiated on their behalf, regardless of whether they are members of the bargaining unit or not. Occurrence of grievance at the workplace makes employee dissatisfied and willing to look for job somewhere else.

Since grievance is any dissatisfaction regarding work and workplace filed by employee formally to his immediate supervisor (Rose, 2004), there is the need for every organisation to establish a grievance checkmating procedure/solving procedure so as to afford employees the ability to register their dissatisfactions with the intent of obtaining fair hearing and resolution of raised grievances. Thus, grievance solving procedure is often lauded as one of the most significant innovations in industrial relations (Gordon & Miller 1984, Loewenberg 1984, Lewin & Peterson 1988). Grievance solving procedure is the process specified in the collective agreement for the resolution of disputes arising during the life of the agreement (Doyle, 1999). Four primary roles of the grievance procedure have been identified namely: compliance role by ensuring that both parties adhere to and respect the collective agreement; judicial and adjudicative role by interpreting the collective agreement and rules of behaviour; administrative role by applying the rules of the contract and offers guidance in the administration of the collective agreement; and forum for 'fractional bargaining' where one party attempts to secure concessions it could not obtain at the bargaining table (Lewin & Peterson, 1988; Thomson, 1974). Therefore, grievance procedures enable individual employees or union officials to challenge management over a wide range of wage and working conditions (Lewin, 1983). The implication is that employees become satisfied and committed to their work if these roles are operational at their

workplaces (retention of labour). So, an effective grievance procedure should be communicated to employees and supervisors through the Personnel Policy and/or Employee Handbook.

According to Daud, Yahya, Isa and Noor (2011), citing Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart and Wright, (2003), too many grievances may indicate a problem though few grievances can also instigate problem(s) within the organisation. In their view, a very low grievance rate may suggest fear of filing a grievance, a belief that the grievance procedure is not effective or a belief that representation is not adequate. Therefore, the widely recognised benefit of grievance procedure is that it serves as a conflict management and dispute resolution mechanism. It provides a peaceful means of reducing the pressures and fears of employees and settle workplace disputes without stoppage of work or resort to economic sanctions (Staudohar, 1977; Lewin, 1983; Lewin & Peterson, 1988) with resultant effect of retaining employees at their workplace.

Furthermore, businesses all over the world are confronted with the difficulties of providing competitive compensation and benefit packages for employees in a cost effective way (DiFiore, 2000; Simmons, 2001). They also try to attract and reduce turnover rate of employees (Sturman, 2003). Fringe benefits plans refer to that part of the total compensation package (other than the pay for time spent on work) that is provided to the employee in whole or in part by payments from the employer (Milkovich, Newman & Milkovich, 2005).

The narrow definitions of fringe benefit packages include employer-provided retirement, health, welfare and fringe benefits (Lee, Hsu & Lien, 2006). Employers may also provide services or facilities that many employees find valuable. These benefit packages are designed to increase in value over time thus encouraging employees to remain with their employer (Gomez-Mejia, Balkin & Cardy, 2001). However, benefit plans enhance satisfaction, sustain loyalty, retain frontline workers, improve service quality and discourage employees from leaving (Griffeth & Hom, 1994; Bennett, Blum, Long & Roman, 1993; Dawn, 1993). Fringe benefits have been found to explain the unique turnover variance (Miller, Hom & Gomez-Mejia, 2001).

Fringe benefit packages are voluntary offerings by the firm. Employees think of benefits as substitutes for wages, they are willing to exchange wages for more benefits (Elham, Hossein & Ahmad, 2012). Most of the fringe benefits packages are service offerings such as employee assistance programmes (EAPs), counselling services, child and elder care, food services, travel, on-site health services, and so on. Properly administered “fringe” benefits are effective, albeit potentially expensive, way to attract and recruit employees (Messmer, 2006). When fringe benefits are operational at the workplace, the employee is retained and this results to decrease in employees’ turnover. The key to positively influence employees is for the employers to offer benefits that employees view as important (Weathington, & Tetrick, 2000).

3.0 Research Hypotheses

Three hypotheses are tested in the study.

Ho1: There will be no significant relationship between working condition and labour turnover in selected industries in Nigeria.

Ho2: There will be no significant relationship between grievance procedure and labour turnover in selected industries in Nigeria.

Ho3: There will be no significant relationship between fringe benefits and labour turnover in selected industries in Ibadan.

4.0 Methodology

4.1 Research Design: this study employs the descriptive survey research design of the *ex-post facto* type.

4.2 Population: The population for the study consists of members of labour unions and management in selected manufacturing industries. The industries are Macmillan Nigeria Publishers Limited Ibadan, Askar Paints Nig Ltd, Eleyele, Ibadan, and African Universities Press, Ibadan.

4.3 Sample and Sampling Techniques: The Multistage sampling technique was used for the study. First, simple random sampling technique was used to select three industrial firms in the Eleyele industrial Zone of Ibadan. Secondly, cluster sampling technique was used to cluster the staff into two; management and labour union. The next sampling was the total modules of all management staff that

are involved in negotiation and the total labour union executives. A further selection of employees through random sampling was done to allow the collation of employees' views. A total of three hundred and ten (310) respondents were selected as sample for the study.

4.4 Instrumentation: The main instrument used to elicit information from respondents is a single questionnaire tagged 'Working Condition, Grievance Procedure, Fringe Benefit and Labour Turnover Questionnaire- WCGPFBLTQ' with four sub sections whose level of agreement on each item was measured using a four point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA=4), Agree (A=3), Disagree (D=2) and Strongly Disagree (SD=1).

Section A: Working Condition Scale (WCS). This is made up of 10 items isolated from Work Environment Survey 2007/08 by Public Service Secretariat, New Foundland Labrador and Employee's Satisfaction Interview Schedule by Mosammod Mahamuda Parvin& M.M. Nurul Kabir (2011). Using the test-retest method with an interval of two weeks, a new reliability coefficient of 0.85 was obtained for the adapted new scale.

Section B: Grievance Procedure Scale (GPS). This is made up of 9 items measuring grievance procedure. The items were isolated from Survey of Grievance Procedure/ Survey of Large Texas City Government Human Resources Directors by Valerie LaCour Francois (2004). A new reliability coefficient of 0.89, using the test-retest method with an interval of two weeks, was obtained for the adapted new scale.

Section C: Fringe Benefit Scale (FBS).

This is made up of 9 items measuring fringe benefits. The items were isolated from Survey on Impact of HRM Practices on Organisational Performance by Raigama Rathnaweera Neelamani Thanuja Rathnaweera (2010). Using the test-retest method with an interval of two weeks, a new reliability coefficient of 0.78 was obtained for the adapted new scale.

Section D: Labour Turnover Scale (LTS).

This is made up of 10 items measuring labour turnover. The items were isolated from Equity Preference Questionnaire by Weathington and Craig (2011) & Evaluation of Job Satisfaction by Jackie Mamista Banyana Ramasodi (2010). Reliability value of 0.90 was got for the adapted new scale using the test-retest method with an interval of two weeks.

4.5 Administration of Instrument: The instruments were administered by the researcher with the assistance of the Human Resource Personnel/ Manager of the industries. Three hundred and ten (310) questionnaires were distributed, two hundred and eighty-eight (288) were recovered and found usable for the research.

4.6 Procedure for Data Analysis: Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the research hypotheses at 5% level of significance.

5.0 Results

Hypothesis 1: There will be no significant relationship between working condition and labour turnover in selected industries in Ibadan.

Table 1 showing the correlation between working condition and labour turnover in selected industries in Ibadan

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	N	R	P	Remark
Working Condition	26.0174	4.4624	288	.275	.000	Sig.
Labour Turnover	28.8542	5.1017				

It is shown in table 1 above that there is a positive significant relationship between working condition and labour turnover ($r = .275$, $N = 288$, $P < .05$). This means that the null hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis 2: There will be no significant relationship between grievance procedure and labour turnover in selected industries in Ibadan.

Table 2 showing the correlation between grievance procedure and labour turnover in some selected industries in Ibadan

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	N	R	P	Remark
Grievance Procedure	20.3958	5.6982	288	.393	.000	Sig.
Labour Turnover	28.8542	5.1017				

It is shown in table 2 that there is a significant relationship between grievance procedure and labour turnover ($r = .393$, $N = 288$, $P < .05$). This means that the null hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis 3: There will be no significant relationship between fringe benefits and labour turnover in selected industries in Ibadan.

Table 3 showing the correlation between fringe benefit and labour turnover in some selected industries in Ibadan

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	N	R	P	Remark
Fringe Benefit	20.6875	5.4395	288	.374	.000	Sig.
Labour Turnover	28.8542	5.1017				

It is shown in table 3 that there was a significant relationship between fringe benefits and labour turnover ($r = .374$, $N = 288$, $P < .05$). This means that the null hypothesis is rejected.

6.0 Discussion of findings

There is a positive significant relationship between working condition and labour turnover. The implication is that good working condition will lead to low employee turnover in industries. If employees are working in a very good environment, it will have considerable positive impact on employees' retention. So in a good work environment, employees feel happy and active to perform various job tasks assigned to them without having a second thought of wanting to leave the job. This result supports the findings of Madiha, Ayesha, Syed and Sayid (2009) that working environment correlates positively with employees' retention, which means, good working environment in the organisation has positive significant impact on

employees' retention. Also, the above finding is in line with the findings of Samuel & Paul (2010) that working condition, which is a hygiene factor and opportunity for career advancement which is a motivator, feature as the major factors in leaving or joining an establishment. In addition, the findings support the findings of Samson Kuria Wanderi Peter Ondigi Alice (2011) that training, experience, age and promotion are key factors in determining labour turnover. Subsequently, unfavourable working conditions, long working hours with minimal pays and poor employees' training policies are the main causes of labour turnover.

Also, there is a significant relationship between grievance procedure and labour turnover. It implies that grievance procedure is a good determinant of labour turnover in industries. The study negates the findings of Raigama Rathnaweera Neelamani Thanuja Rathnaweera (2010) that promotion, grievances handling,

recruitment and selection practices are insignificant variables that explain the variance in employees' retention. Grievance procedure improves perceptions of fairness and equity on the part of both parties (employers and employees) at the workplace (Lewin and Peterson, 1988) and denies the construction of employees' dispute (Rose, 2004). Also, employees are enabled 'to have their say' at progressively high levels of decision-making authority and the denial of the construction of employees' disputes, hence their willingness to remain in their workplace. Furthermore, there is a significant relationship between fringe benefits and labour turnover in some selected industries in Ibadan. This negates the findings of Lee, Hsu, and Lien (2006) that retirement fund and fringe benefits are negatively correlated with employees' turnover. Also, it negates the findings of Chang and Chen (2002) that benefits plan is significant and negative in relation to employees' turnover. However, the finding is supported by Dale-Olsen, (2006) who discovers that employers choose to offer fringe benefits to workers because employees have high tendencies for fringe benefits since it leads to decrease in turnover rate just as a similar valuable increase in wages.

7.0 Recommendations and implications for industrial Social Workers

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- Employers through the management should formulate and implement policies on working conditions, grievance procedure

and fringe benefits within their establishments and make sure they strictly adhere to it.

- Employers should put in place a formal working grievance procedure and make sure employees are well represented at each stage of the procedure to ensure equity fairness and minimisation of disciplinary sanctions.
- Employers should provide good and healthy working conditions for employees as this will enable them work in a safe environment, retention and increase productivity.
- Employers should provide employees with fringe benefit packages so as to reduce absenteeism and increase job satisfaction with consequential retention at the workplace.
- Industrial social workers should advocate on behalf of employees with the management to create a conducive workplace environment, good communication network and adequate fringe benefits so as to attract, retain, and motivate the workforce for increased productivity and employees' wellbeing.
- Industrial social workers should ensure the entrenchment of good grievance procedure at the workplace so as to limit the occurrence of trade disputes and maintenance of industrial harmony. It will assist industries to resolve grievances with equity and fairness

and retention of those on the employment of the establishment.

- Industrial social workers should ensure the provision of policy blueprint and staff handbook to enhance good and orderly preservation of organisational culture.
- Industrial social workers should negotiate and strive to convince top management team on the need to make workers' welfare paramount so as to enhance workers productivity as well as industrial harmony.

8.0 Conclusion

Actually, some labour turnovers are good because new employees bring in new ideas, attitude and keep the organisation fresh and current, however, retention is most preferable because of the enormous economic cost of doing business where there is high rate of turnover. To discourage turnover of employees in the workplaces, there is the need to give considerations to other factors apart from increase in wages. These may include promotion of employees and increased compensation packages, preferred working environment that is suitable for them, good and mouth-watering benefits package so as to retain employees in workplace organisations.

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