

A Proposed Relationship between Actual Turnover Behaviour, Career Advancement Opportunity, Frustration at Work and Perceived Alternative Job Opportunities among Faculty Members

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Abstract Actual turnover has become one of the most important constructs in organisations. In recent time the visible effects of this phenomenon among faculty members has been widely captured in the Nigerian media. Some of the effects included decline in the quality assurance of the faculty members and students, increased staff shortages, higher burden, and excessive workload, among other factors. Empirically speaking, however, only but a few have attempted to measure the relationship between career advancement opportunity, frustration, perceived alternative job opportunities and actual turnover behaviour. The few, if any, found conflicting findings. Thus, this paper proposes direct and interaction relationships between the designated variables of interest.

Keywords Actual Turnover, Career Advancement Opportunity, Frustration At Work, Perceived Alternative Job

1. Introduction

The concept phenomenally has been and will continue to be an important management subject. It is therefore, not surprising that literature on turnover are well established ([1][2]), defined as the end of an individual's membership and the discontinued collection of financial compensation from the organization ([3]), normally initiated by the individual ([4]). It is a costly and pervasive subject of interest, to firms regardless of the nature of the job or the industry the firms belong to. If its adverse nature are ignored it may apparently become too difficult to manage ([5],[6]). For example, ([7]) reported an estimated cost of USD400, 000 as loss per annum on each departing call centre employee. Indeed for larger firms the cost of employee turnover could be more.

Tertiary institutions in Nigeria have also not been spared by this pervasive phenomenon ([8]). In recent time this phenomenon has been widely captured by the Nigerian media ([9],[10]). One of the most visible effects is on the public universities ([11]), which has caused decline in the

quality assurance of faculty members and students, heightened staff shortages, more burden, excessive workload and the suspension of both professional and non-professional undergraduate and post-graduate programmes in some of the public universities. The rate at which faculty members quit their teaching job has been identified as one of the major constraints hindering the effective management of such institutions in Nigeria. Concerted efforts aimed at improving the quality assurance of both the faculty members and their students have been severely constrained by the presence of acute turnover, ([12]). It is glaringly evident that it is harmful, with its attendant negative consequences. Today public universities are pathetically in a disappointing state, resulting in their inability to accommodate the demand for education. For example, in the 2010/2011 academic sessions, only 18.9% of applicants who applied were admitted as students across the public universities. The rejection of the applicants is not because they were unqualified. It may be due shortfall in the needed amount of manpower to meet up the requirement for teaching ([12]). It is further asserted that acute turnover has negatively resulted in producing extra burden. An extra burden usually occurs when employees experience an excess of job tasks or encounter an excessive pressure, way above their capabilities ([13]). This is an indication that the remaining staff will have to perform jobs that in reality are meant to be performed by more than one

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Published online at <http://journal.sapub.org/economics>

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person. Resulting in reduced morale, and eventually when they can no longer cope with the extra burden, some may quit the academia, to find greener pasture elsewhere, as job mobility means a relatively higher availability of opportunities for career advancement ([14]).

2. Employee Turnover

It is worthy of note, however, despite the voluminous literature on turnover, the proposed paper has observed that the dominant issue lies in the failure of turnover constructs and models to establish a universally accepted model on why and how individuals leave their jobs ([1],[15]). From the twentieth century to date reasons on why and how employees quit their employment have been extensively addressed (e.g.:[16],[17],[18],[1],[19]) to enable better understanding of the turnover decision process. Yet, only a handful have empirically tested actual turnover ([20],[1]) nearly all turnover researches have typically considered turnover intention as the criterion variable ([21]) and regarded it the strongest and most immediate proxy precursor to actual turnover behaviour ([22],[23],[24],[25],[26]). Using intentional behaviour as proxy/surrogate of actual turnover can lead to a number of problems. Example includes its inability to explain turnover variance beyond ten to fifteen percent and not all intentions translate into actual behaviour ([27],[20],[1]). Notwithstanding, the huge amount of extant turnover literature, it is quite a surprise that less attention has been given to explore the influence career advancement opportunity on actual turnover behavior.

Given that actual turnover could be reduced with the provision of opportunities for career advancement ([28]). To fill the gaps identified this paper proposes to investigate the influence career advancement opportunity construct on actual turnover behaviour.

3. Direct Association between Career Advancement Opportunity and Actual Turnover Behaviour

Organizational equilibrium theory ([29]) proposes inducements that exceeds or at least matches contributions rendered by employees should theoretically be able to reduce actual turnover behaviour ([30],[31]). The robustness of career advancement opportunity and the purported role it plays in reducing turnover are well documented (e.g.[29]). Its availability can assist organisations prevent the dangers of having a workforce that may become obsolete and not in tune with growing global changes. It has also been suggested that turnover decisions involves continuous evaluation of career advancement opportunities in the person's current workplace relative to his/her expectations of opportunities for career growth in other organisations.[32], further argues that a person's organisational-specific training and skills coupled with accumulated job experience has the tendency to lose its value when a person moves and begins his or her career in a

new firm. Since the costs of leaving an organisation are found to be high, absence or lack of career advancement opportunities are seen as the driving force that can trigger an employee to quit his or her job. It logically follows that if people have successfully established their career and continue to be provided with more career opportunities in their current organisation, they will have fewer reasons to leave the organisation ([29],[33]).

It is worthy of note, from the theoretical angle that the provision of opportunities for career development can reduce the actual act of leaving an organisation ([34]). More so, a successful inducement-contribution reciprocal link is likely to cause employees to engage less in the actual act of leaving the organisation, where job inducements exceed or at least match contributions made. Hence, this study hypothesizes

H1: Career advancement opportunity will be negatively related to actual turnover behaviour

4. Direct Association between Career Advancement Opportunity and Frustration at Work

This paper hypothesizes that career advancement opportunity will be negatively related to frustration at work. According to organisational equilibrium theory, a person will partake in activities within the firm as long as the amount of outputs (inducements) received exceeds or at least matches the contributions (inputs) made ([29]). Several studies suggested the likelihood of an increased level of frustration at work, if inducements are insufficiently made available ([37]). Providing adequate inducements can assist in preventing frustrating situations at work, ([28],[36]). It is, therefore, in the best interest of employers to provide sufficient inducements in the form of career advancement opportunities to employees.[37], for instance found that when frustrated, employees may respond by seeking for alternatives, which provide room for the attainment of goal directed behavior rather than quitting the job.

Furthermore, from the perspective of [36]'s, affective events theory, positive emotion of frustration is likely to be evoked where job inducements exceeds or at least matches job contributions. Thus, the more available opportunities for career advancement, the lower will be the level of frustration at work. Hence, this study hypothesizes that:

H2: Career advancement opportunity will be negatively related to frustration at work

5. Mediating Influence of Frustration at Work on the Association between Career Advancement Opportunity, and Actual Turnover Behaviour

This paper hypothesizes that frustration at work will mediate the association between career advancement

opportunity and actual turnover. Frustration at work has been defined from different perspectives.[37], defines it as some form of stimulus situation that blocks employees from attaining their goal at the workplace. Similarly,[38], describe it as a situation that hinders employees’ ability to effectively and efficiently perform their daily assigned responsibilities and duties. According to the affective events theory, affective events encountered at work can cause employees to experience positive emotions of frustration that can indirectly or directly shape or influence the person’s behaviours ([39]) resulting in an outcome that can reduce turnover rate ([40])

Therefore, this paper argues that because frustration at work is an outcome of career advancement opportunity. We expect employees to quit when an opportunity for career advancement fails to prevent them from experiencing frustrating events at work. Empirical studies have argued that not all individuals who lack opportunities for career advancement get frustrated and leave the organization. This could be because frustration most certainly involves affect and emotion in the decision-making process ([36]), as such, this study hypothesizes that,

H3: Frustration at work will mediate the association between career advancement opportunity and actual turnover

6. Moderating effect of Perceived Alternative Job Opportunities on the Relationship between Frustration at Work and Actual Turnover

Affective events that trigger an employee to experience positive emotions of frustration at work should theoretically be able to prevent such an employee from quitting the job ([40],[36]). Organisations that provide the platform for affective events (e.g. career advancement opportunity) to trigger positive emotions of frustration are hugely likely to play an important part at reducing actual turnover behaviour ([37]). Previous studies on the influence of frustration, specifically at reducing turnover, appear inconclusive (e.g. ([42][37],[43]). For example,[43], found the higher the frustration level, the higher the withdrawal likelihood. The inconclusiveness could be suggesting that some other mechanisms may be at play in the frustration-turnover link. It is argued that not all employees may respond to frustrating work conditions by leaving their organisation[37], while some may have the luxury to change jobs others may not have the same opportunity. It seems that a moderator needs to be incorporated into the proposed theoretical framework. Hence, this present study proposes that perceived alternative job opportunities (PAJO) may potentially contribute to the better understanding of the mixed findings. PAJO is defined as the perception of a person regarding the availability of external alternative jobs ([44],[45]).Thus, the moderating role of PAJO could be explained from the perspective of

organisational equilibrium theory ([29]) that the more the inducements, the lower the withdrawal likelihood. From the organisational perspective, it can also be argued that career advancement opportunities may not be enough to reduce frustration and prevent one from leaving. This is because studies have found that when PAJO are plentiful the likelihood of leaving is higher ([44]).

Therefore, on the basis of evidences and arguments, we expect that employees will quit when the organisation ([42],[46]). It has equally being argued that whether or not individuals are able to leave their job depends on whether perceived job alternative is available before they made the decision to actually quit their job ([47],[44]). Hence it is reasonable to argue that the extent to which employees quit the organization due to frustration at work is contingent upon perceived alternative employment opportunities. Whilst such theoretical proposition is probable, to date, few have examined such possibility. As a result this study hypothesizes that:

H5: Perceived alternative job opportunities will moderate the relationship between frustration at work and actual turnover

7. Proposed Framework

On the basis of relevant literature, this paper hypothesizes as indicated in figure 1 below the proposed relationship between the variables to be measured

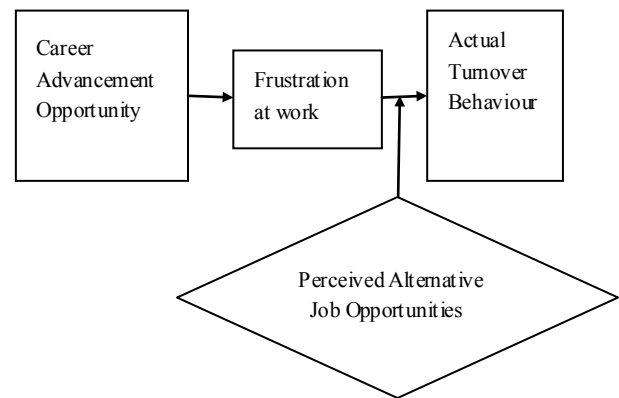


Figure 1. proposed theoretical framework

8. Conclusions

This paper depicts a framework on the relationship between career advancement opportunity, frustration at work, perceived alternative job opportunities and actual turnover behaviour as showed in figure 1 above. The proposed research framework has many implications. If it gets validated, the results of the study will add to the extant body of knowledge in respect of the ongoing theoretical and methodological debate regarding the validity of using intention as a proxy measure of actual turnover. It may also assist stakeholders with some helpful information on how to

develop effective retention strategies aimed at reducing actual turnover behaviour among academic members.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Productions wishes to acknowledge all the contributors for developing and maintaining this template.

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