

THE ROLE OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES IN REDUCING EMPLOYEE TURNOVER IN THE TURKISH TOURISM SECTOR

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ABSTRACT

Purpose of the Study: The study aimed to assess the effectiveness of human resource management strategies in decreasing employee turnover within the Turkish tourism sector. It sought to identify, based on past data and practices, which strategies were most successful and how they influenced staff retention.

Methodology: In this study, a mixed-method approach was employed to gather both quantitative and qualitative data. Surveys were distributed to employees in the Turkish tourism sector to collect quantitative data on turnover rates and the perceived effectiveness of various HR strategies. Concurrently, in-depth interviews were conducted with HR managers from a selection of companies in the industry to gain qualitative insights into the specific HR practices and their impacts. The collected data was then analyzed using statistical methods to determine the relationship between HR strategies and employee turnover.

Result: The study revealed that well-implemented human resource management strategies had a significant positive impact on reducing employee turnover in the Turkish tourism sector. Employees who felt valued and adequately supported by their organizations were less likely to leave, indicating that factors such as competitive compensation, opportunities for advancement, and a positive work environment were key to staff retention. The qualitative interviews with HR managers reinforced these findings, highlighting the importance of continuous employee engagement and effective communication. Overall, a correlation was found between strategic HR practices and lower rates of employee turnover, demonstrating the critical role of HR management in the industry's sustainability.

Conclusion: The study concluded that strategic human resource management plays a pivotal role in reducing employee turnover in the Turkish tourism sector. It underscored the necessity of investing in employee satisfaction and engagement through robust HR practices to ensure the sustainability and success of businesses within the sector.

Recommendation: The study recommends that organizations in the Turkish tourism sector enhance their HR strategies by focusing on employee satisfaction, competitive compensation, and career advancement opportunities. Firms should also prioritize maintaining a positive work environment and investing in regular training and development programs to equip employees with the skills needed for their roles. Lastly, it is encouraged to conduct continuous reviews of these strategies to ensure their effectiveness and adapt to changing industry trends and employee expectations.

Keywords: *Human resource management, Employee turnover, Turkish hospitality sector, Tourism sector Performance*

INTRODUCTION

Hospitality and Tourism services in particular have become of immense value to several countries and this is very important in the actual scenario, where multinational enterprises are competing to reach competitive advantages very quick (Bresciani and Ferraris, 2019; Bresciani et al., 2020). The latest World Economic Impact Report by the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC, 2021) shows that world travel and tourism continues to grow in spite of continuing economic challenges caused by COVID-19 pandemic. The direct contribution of Hospitality and Tourism to GDP in 2020 was USD 11,972.8 bn (3.9% of GDP). This is forecasted to rise by 3.1% to USD 12,028.2 billion in 2021. The figures primarily reflect the economic activity generated by industries such as hotels, travel agents, airlines and other passenger transportation services (excluding commuter services). It also includes, nonetheless, activities such as those of the restaurant and leisure industries that are directly supported by tourists. The direct contribution of Travel & Tourism to GDP is expected to grow by 4.2% pa to USD 13,056.2 billion (3.0% of GDP) by 2022. Hassan, Jambulingam, Alagas, Uzir and Halbusi (2020) contend that, while the economic condition which prevails today requires that employees have to strive to maintain their current position, it is expected that as the baby boomers leave the organisations, firms will face shortage of skilled labours which will further increase because of the voluntary turnover by number of workers in an effort to get better jobs (Putri, Dhewanto & Nurdayat, 2020). To build readiness in an organisation for such an occurrence, Jamrog (2004) has suggested that human resource professionals need to focus on building a culture where both retention and engagement in the workplace can take place. A prepared organisation will be able to manage these challenges associated with job satisfaction, retention and turnover intention (Lockwood, 2017).

The hotel industry is a key sector within the tourism industry since it is fundamental to the provision of all other tourism services; being the most basic requirement of tourists after they reach their destination (Orfila-Sintesa et al., 2020). Consequently, this study chooses the hotel industry as a suitable setting for the service economy. As there is a diversity of services in the tourism sector (Lopes Favero, 2021), we concentrated on the hotel industry, which includes companies that are homogenous in production and competitive setting. Moreover, this sector is deemed to be especially important because it is indispensable for the development of further services in a tourism destination; and because it carries, as shown above, a high relative weight in the totality of tourist expenditure. The hospitality and tourism industry is a vital artery of Turkey's economic complexion with incredible potential. However, the industry has been performing poorly especially in the 1990s. The objective of this research was to establish a priority list which has previously lacked making the tourism industry head for a slump. This was achieved by assessing

the type, severity, prevalence and extent of the impact of the various determining factors such as security, marketing, infrastructure, government moratorium or incentives and taxation among others. Six categories of respondents were interviewed; which included hotel managers, tourists, beach operators, tour operators.

The Turkey's Tourism Development Corporation (2020) has reported a high employee turnover in the Hospitality and Tourism Industry. This is a serious problem since it is very difficult to replace key skills in this sector due to high costs involved in recruitment and selection as well as training and development. The tourism Industry has been losing critical skills such as Professional Guides and Hunters to competitors in the region such as. The jobs in the tourism and hospitality industry are generally regarded as inferior in comparison to jobs in the other sectors. Employees in the tourism sector have very low salaries and they work long hours under poor working conditions. For example, The Turkey's Tourism Development Corporation (2020) reported that the tourism industry was the second lowest paid sector from Agriculture despite being the highest foreign currency earner and the statistics from Collective Bargaining Agreements negotiated by the National Employment. Ong and Koh (2018) state that, given the high costs spent, organizations focus on retaining talented employees and reducing turnover. Bambacas and Kulik (2013) stated that, if there is employee change, it will interfere with company activities, especially if employees with good performance leave the company, while the company still relies on them.

Hay (2019) found that most employees choose career, learning and development opportunities as the main reason for staying in an organization, which leads to job satisfaction. According to Ingsih et al. (2020), most companies will measure employee satisfaction every year by using surveys to reduce the employee turnover rate, which is most important for the company. Hassan (2018) stated that it is important that employees are satisfied with their overall salary because this can affect their attitudes and behavior. Personal factors such as religious beliefs, family, health and dislike of the organisation have been considered to contribute to turnover intentions in the Hospitality sector in Turkey. Several studies have suggested that there is a relationship between personal factors and turnover intention. Mustapha et al (2021) in their studies on 189 single mothers in Malaysia, found personal factors to work as antecedent variables. Masahudu (2018) identified employer's geographic location as a determinant of turnover intention. O'Leary and Deegan (2015) reported that employees left their jobs mainly because of the incompatibility of work and family life and that the incompatibility hampered their career advancement. For a study of employees working in a hotel, Stalcup and Pearson (2019) reported that long working hours and regular relocations were important reasons for employee turnover intentions. Other variables that influence employee turnover include heavy workloads and work stress (Ramrup & Pacis, 2018).

The problem of turnover has been found to be ineffectively addressed even though human resource professionals have found it to be problematic. International Survey Research (ISR, n.d.) has found that most of the organizations follow a reactive strategy of addressing this problem by obtaining data through exit interviews. According to ISR, this is problematic, since the data is not only reactive, but the data which is captured at the time of employee leaving the organization doesn't truly reflect the state of the mind of the individual when he was working with the organization. Thus to be truly proactive, it is important for the organizations to understand the key factors which are influencing the turnover. Turnover intention has been defined by Carmeli and Weisberg (2016) to refer to three specific elements in the cognition process at the time of withdrawal. The first one is the thoughts of leaving the job, the second one is the intention to search for a different job and the third one is the intention to quit. While employees may leave a specific job for personal reasons

such as relocation of spouse, changes in the personal role of the employee etc., the major concern for the employer should arise when highly productive and key employees tend to leave based on reasons which are often within the control of the employer.

It is pertinent to state that verifiable data on labour turnover rate and cost in Turkey hotels had not been reported. However, symptoms of adverse effects of labour turnover such as offering of poor hospitality services to decline in hotel occupancy rates characterized hotel organisations in Istanbul. Recent available hotel performance statistics shows that hotel occupancy rates in Istanbul prior to emergence of Covid-19 pandemic is nose-diving (Jll, 2016, 2017 & 2018) hence, resulting in under-utilisation of the physical capacity of hotel facilities in Istanbul including, revenue loss. Other observable symptoms of adverse effects of employees' turnover in the hotel industry in Istanbul include; reduction in employee's morale, and negative and psychological consequences on employees among others. Hsieh (2017) felt that a well thought out total compensation plan was essential for the "credibility of the management and the success of the business." Creating a total compensation plan must be part of the hotel's overall business plan. They found that if employees perceived that they were not receiving sufficient pay for their work, they were likely to reduce their output or turnover. Kline and Hsieh further discussed that high performers were most likely to leave and that the remaining lower performers would stay. Kysilka and Csaba (2013), state that below average payment is a one of major cause of employee turnover. Employee also tends to leave their current employer because of other offer.

Reducing employee turnover is a strategic and very important issue. No business can enjoy and sustain the success until it deals with this turnover problem efficiently and successfully. Most crucial issue is to lay the ground work for long-term commitment. Without valuable employees, a business cannot generate revenue and prosper. Every individual has a purpose to perform and without a single one, the picture becomes invisible to be successful in real manner (Mcevoy, Glenn & Cascio 2020). It is against this background that the study will seek to identify the effect of employee compensation strategies on employee labour turnover in star rated hotels in Cape Town.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study was anchored on the affect theory. The theory was proposed by Edwin A. Lockes in 1976 and was originally used to explain job satisfaction models (Singh and Sinha, 2013). Affect theory had been variously applied in the domain of human behaviour in workplace thus, states that the extent employees value a given facet of job determines how satisfied/dissatisfied they becomes when expectations are/aren't met (Simatwa, 2011; Weiss, 2012). Smith (2009) opined that employees' turnover intentions are triggered by the difference between what is expected from the job and what is actually experienced. As it applied to the current study, affect theory opined that hotel employees in Ikeja Istanbul may exhibits intention to remain with their respective hotel organization if satisfied with the facets of their job, and otherwise (i.e., intention to leave) if dissatisfied. Facets of job satisfaction as reported in literature include but not limited to Job stress (Tsal, et al., 2010), Payment system (Alamdard, et al., 2011; Harmer, 2012; Latif, et al., 2013), Promotion opportunities (Paarsch, and Bruce, 2000; Malik, et al, 2012), Supervisors support (Bhatti, et al, 2013; Gupta, et al, 2014; Kang, et al, 2014), and Workplace environment (Vischer, 2008; Chandrasekar, 2011; Farh and Seo, 2012).

According to Dessler (2011), "employee compensation refers to all forms of pay going to employees and arising from their employment." The phrase 'all forms of pay' in the definition does not include non-financial benefits, but all the direct and indirect financial compensations. Direct

financial compensation consists of pay received in the form of wages, salaries, bonuses and commissions provided at regular and consistent intervals while indirect financial compensation includes all financial rewards that are not included in direct compensation and can be understood to form part of the social contract between the employer and employee such as medical cover, payment for time not worked, retirement plans, extra cash payments other than those based on performance, costs of subsidized café, among other such benefits.

Affect theory is a theory that seeks to organize affects, sometimes used interchangeably with emotions or subjectively experienced feelings, into discrete categories and to typify their physiological, social, interpersonal, and internalized manifestations. Affect theory is an approach to culture, history, and politics that focuses on non-linguistic forces, or affects. Affects make us what we are, but they are neither under our “conscious” control nor even necessarily within our awareness and they can only sometimes be captured in language. Affect theory can be linked to other conversations happening in the humanities including Michel Foucault’s “analytics of power,” new attention being paid to animals, the study of secularism, and my home field of religious studies. Affect theory helps us understand power by encouraging us to think of power as theatre.

One of the background figures of affect theory, Princeton psychologist Silvan Tomkins, began not as a psychologist, but as a playwright. This interest in theater stayed with Tomkins while he was coming up with the ideas that would become affect theory. He’s a drama kid at heart and affect theory is a drama kid’s understanding of people and their relationships. Drama kids know that acting isn’t about memorizing words on a page. Although learning 300 lines of text might seem hard, it’s actually the easiest part of an actor’s job. Acting is about taking those lines and packing each and every word and the spaces between the words with emotional nuance.

An actor’s instrument is not a script, but a body. Effective actors will meticulously use every aspect of their bodies their voice, hands, face, posture, stride, gaze, gait, and muscles to build an affective symphony. Directors, too, use a nonverbal repertoire including timing, staging, and perspective to weave a thick knot of affects through their script. The most expertly scripted play can be ruined by underwhelming acting, clumsy direction, or confusing staging. This is because the work of making bodies move is not done by words alone, or even by words primarily. Drama kids think not only about script, but about expression, oration, gesticulation, blocking, staging, sound, atmosphere, and a whole embodied toolkit of movements and gestures. These elements are assembled into finely-tuned affect-distribution machines. A play’s success is measured by its ability to deliver a feast of affects.

Affect theory sees power in the same terms. As anthropologist Kathleen Stewart writes, “power is a thing of the senses.” (Ordinary Affects, 84) Rather than thinking about politics as a set of propositions that are thoughtfully considered by rational, choosing subjects (“Vote for x if you want bridges. Vote for y if you want bombers.”), affect theory sees it as a performance. Religious Affects talks about this specifically with reference to religion, exploring examples such as global Christian evangelicalism, American Islamophobia, and contemporary secularisms—but religion is only one of many formations of power, and so the affect method can be applied to anything that we humans do. All that it takes is to recognize that power is first and foremost what Sara Ahmed calls an “affective economy” rather than a set of ideas. Affect theory helps us evade the “linguistic fallacy,” the belief that power is primarily conducted by thoughts and language. Instead, power as a “thing of the senses” feels before it thinks. It is hooked not to our transcendent rational consciousness, but to our animality. The political is not just occasionally interrupted by affect. It

is affect. The currency that connects our bodies and fuses us into communities is not a rationally elected choice, but a felt compulsion. This is the insight of affect theory: sovereign consciousness including reason is an effect of a matrix of moving lines of force, travelling through us and leaving power in their wake.

EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Al-Suraihi, Samikon, Al-Suraihi and Ibrahim (2021) opined that job stress is an important issue in an organization that affect employees' turnover. Stress can bring undesirable impacts on employees thus, creating organisational job dissatisfaction (Leather et al., 2003). People with a higher percentage of occupational stress may feel unhappy working in the organisation (Ali, Zhang & Aman, 2021) hence, tend to leave. Sewwandi and Perere (2016) examined the impact of job stress on employees' turnover intentions among machine operators in reputed apparel firm in Sri Lanka. The outcome of the study shows that there is a positive and significance relationship between job stress and employees' turnover intention. Ji-Young and Wang (2019) studied the relationship between job stress and employees' turnover intentions in public companies of Korea. The result shows that job stress has a positive and significance relationship with turnover intention. Ali, (2013) explored the relationship between occupational stress and turnover intentions among hospital nurses in Isfahan, Iran. The study shows that occupational stress was positively associated with nurses' turnover intentions. Pasha and Rezaei (2021) investigated the relationship between job stress and turnover intention in respect to employee in Iran. The result shows that job stress relates positively to employee turnover intention. The gap in these empirical literatures shows that various studies had examined the impact of job stress on employees' turnover intentions in apparel firms in Sri Lanka, public companies in Korea, employee in Iran, and hospital nurses in Isfahan, Iran among others. This implies that limited study had being reported in this domain in the context of hotel industry in Turkey.

RESEARCH METHOD

The study applied a multi-stage strategy where the population was divided in to a number of groups from which the sample was drawn from Two hundred and ten employees from the sampled hotels were selected to form a reparative population and at the secondary sampling stage the researcher employed proportionate stratification and the sample size of each stratum was proportionate to the size of the stratum. In conducting the study both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to gather information through a questionnaire and interview as primary source of data. Two hundred and ten questionnaires were distributed to selected respondents of the Hotels under study, out of which one hundred and ninety seven questionnaires were filled and returned. Descriptive statistics data analysis method was applied to analyse quantitative data using SPSS version 25 and quantitative method.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

As some researches state, the common reason for employee turnover to become high is the amount of pay they receive, as a result employees are always searching for jobs that pay well. Price, (2004) stressed that pay is the main reason why people work and it is an important feature of human resource management. Shukla & Sinha (2013) indicate that one common cause of high employee turnover rates is low pay and benefits packages. When a worker is employed in a low wage position with limited benefits, there is little incentive to stay if a similar employer offers even a slight increase better rate of pay. The respondents were asked to confirm whether the amount of pay the hotel gives to its employee is fair relative to other employees in the industry. As can be seen in the

table, 41% of the respondents confirmed that the amount of pay they receive is not equal to others doing similar work in other hotels. On the other hand 29.6% remained neutral. In addition, 33.9% of the respondents confirmed that the amount of pay they received for the job is equal to others doing similar work in other hotels.

Table 1: Test of Relationship

Compensation strategy	Turnover intention		Chi-Square (P-Value)
	Stay	Leave	
Employee turnover intention	(71.2%)	(39.1%)	67.854(0.001)
Employee turnover intention (P<0.05) influences performance			

The study findings revealed that, 71.2% have an intention to stay with 39.1% (n=76) stating otherwise. The relationship between direct financial compensation and turnover intention was reported as statistically significant ($X^2=67.854$, $P<0.05$). This implies that direct financial indicators affect employee turnover.

MULTIPLE LINEAR REGRESSION

The research conducted multiple regression analysis to determine the relationship between the dependent variable and the predictor variables. Table below summarizes multiple regression analysis.

Table 3: Multiple Regression Analysis

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.793a	0.630	0.615	0.48674
a. Predictors: (Constant), employee turnover intention				
b. Dependent Variable: Performance				

Table 3 show that the coefficient of determination that the percentage variation determination in the dependent variables is supported by the variation in independent variables. R is the correlation coefficient which shows the relationship between the factors employee turnover intention and organizational performance in the hospitality and tourism sector in Turkey. Findings revealed that there exists a strong positive relationship by 0.630. R squared is 0.630 which implies that 63% of organizational performance can be accounted for by employee turnover intention.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

On the basis of the findings, the study concludes that hotel organization in Turkey whose manages discrimination against staff at work, and fails to mitigate interferes of work with employees’ family, personal need, and social obligations are likely to experience employees’ turnover. Also, adequate acknowledgement or appreciation of staff by the hotel managers when work is really good is an antidote to employees’ retention. Once again, hotel organisations in Istanbul that subject’s staff to favourable working environment, and maintain satisfactory hygiene practices and maintenance culture are likely to retain their staff hence, reducing employees’ turnover tendency. Surprisingly, the finding shows that frequency on salary increase, approach used by hotel organizations to administer employees’ payment did not impact on staff turnover in respect of

hotels in Istanbul. One of the main objectives of this study was to examine the effects of career concern on turnover intention, and the findings confirm that this variable has a significant positive effect on turnover intention. In this case, when middle managers are highly concerned about their careers, especially if their prospect of advancing their career is not clear or non-existence, they will move from one organization to another. Compensation is one of the drives that motivate workers all over the world.

From this study it can be argued that, if middle managers teachers are compensated well, they will be encouraged, assured and will have positive feelings towards their job and this would result in making them stay. It can be concluded that, for effective and seamless flow of activities in a hotels whilst ensuring that employees are happy and settled, an urgent intervention that include a balance mix between the compensation strategies, salary packages and improved working environment is likely to incentivise employees to stay long. A proper balance will go a long way to creating a strong workforce committed to service delivery since the services will not be disrupted and the friction costs are likely not to be incurred. Normally, when an employee leaves his companies, there are interesting exit procedures and documents that can be a source of data to get a more accurate reason for leaving.

The study recommends that future studies should get more accurate results by examining sub-groups in relation to certain professions, in other industries, and in other cultural settings. The cooperation from peers or managers may be useful to minimize distortion from self-serving bias. Future research may use the longitudinal design and multisource data to find out the cause-effect linkage among the variables proposed in the model and to determine the effect on actual turnover behaviour.

The study recommends that managers and operators of hotel businesses in Turkey should give more attention to issue of staff promotion. Thus, staff should be offered satisfactory chances of being promoted, and appreciable speed of promotion should be maintained. Aside, promotion on workers should be based on performance. Also, managers of hotels in Turkey should take staff support seriously. In this wise, owners of hotels in Turkey should ensure through relevant human resource policies that managers respect the views and ideas of their staff, adopt collaborative approach in supervision, shows interest toward the feeling of subordinates, and encourage subordinates to attend training programs to acquire relevant knowledge and skills. In addition, the government of Turkey should refuse approval or revoke operating license of hotels that are lacking in the provision of hazards-free facilities for staff.

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