

EMPLOYEE TURNOVER: A FACTORIAL STUDY OF IT INDUSTRY

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Abstract *Change is inevitable and it affects all. Changes in organisations are visible across areas and levels. Change at times can yield dividends and many times proves detrimental to organisations. One area change can take place is the nature of workforce and is visible in form of employee turnover. This aspect of workforce can be a cause for concern if it goes beyond the limit. Employee turnover has most severely affected, Information Technology, as it is growing rapidly and is dominated by knowledge workers. These knowledge workers are demanding, and their expectations from life are distinct from workers engaged in other sectors. They are restless and are constantly on the move, looking for newer avenues. Retaining them is difficult for employers. In order to retain them, it becomes imperative to identify aspects (feature) of organisation this set of employees look before exiting. The present study is exploratory in nature and aims at identifying features of organisation which the employees in IT sector consider, while exiting their positions. The study reveals that appraisal, training, openness, and flexibility are important features which employees consider while leaving the organisation.*

Keywords: *Talent Retention, and IT Industry.*

1. INTRODUCTION

World web dictionary defines employee turnover as the ratio of the number of workers replaced in a given time period to the average number of workers. Price (1977) defines turnover as the ratio of the number of organisational members who have left during the period being considered which is divided by the average number of people in that organisation during the period. Wood (1995) defines turnover as a replacement cycle, in which a new employee has to be hired and trained against a vacancy, either voluntarily or involuntarily. Bliss (2004) argues that cost associated with employee turnover can be: recruitment costs, training costs, lost productivity costs, new hire costs, and lost sales costs.

Abbasi and Hollman (2000) estimated costs of turnover in organisations to be approximately \$11 billion annually. However, there are also non-financial costs like loss in customer relations, disruption of efficiency, and decrease in morale associated with the turnover. The exiting employee carries with him experience, knowledge and talent, resulting in output delays caused by the vacancy. Watrous et al. (2006) classifies turnover as voluntary and involuntary. Voluntary turnover according to them is dysfunctional and in this type, individual makes a decision to stay or leave. Whereas, involuntary turnover is functional and the organisation assumes control.

According to Robbins et al. (2000), employees are the most valuable assets to the organisation and communication plays an important role in employee intent to stay or leave. Organisations that communicate effectively are more likely to report low employee turnover rates or significantly below those of their industry peers. Branham (1995) in his study mentions certain facts about employee turnover. Turnover happens and zero per cent turnover is not realistic. However, some turnover is desirable because older employees at the top will incur high expenses, and new employees bring fresh ideas, approaches, abilities, and attitudes and keep the organisation from becoming stagnant.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Ashford et al. (1989) based on review inferred that employees and organisations enter a psychological contract. This gives the individual a sense of control over the events. If any event disturbs this sense of control, it will result in strong reactions. This further disturbs the psychological contract within the organisation resulting in lack of control and anxiety. The job insecurity causes a decline in commitment and trust within the organisation, affects job satisfaction and increases the intent to quit the organisation. High job anxiety can affect the identity of an individual. When an individual is anxious about his position within the organisation, he is under a continuous threat to his identity and self-concept.

Branham (1995) suggested that when employees feel that they are worth more and paid less for the job which they are doing, condition of disparity exists. When the gap becomes large and opportunity occurs, turnover can result. Researchers argue that psychological contract violation has important bearing on employee turnover. And its symptoms are anger, frustration, decreased motivation, dissatisfaction, lessened commitment, turnover, litigation, and unionisation (Cole, 1981; Tornow, 1988; Rousseau, 1989). Tsui et al. (1997) noted that mutual investment approach involving a combination of social and economic exchange yielded the most returns in terms of productivity. In over-investment approach, supervisor and peers perceived employees to be less dependable in continuation of employment than employees under mutual investment. In case of under investment approach discouraging results on employee performance and attitude were produced. In quasi-spot-contract approach, employees sacrificed performance.

Zhou and George (2001) observed that employees reacted to job dissatisfaction in one of the four ways: exit, voice, loyalty, and neglect. Out of this exit, loyalty and neglect can be detrimental for an organisation, whereas voice form of dissatisfaction when expressed in an active manner can result in creativity as the employees within an organisation will always be looking for improvement and new ways of doing things. Rousseau (1990) found two distinct sets of employee obligations and referred to them as transactional and relational. Transactional contracts are economic in nature. On the other hand, relational contracts are characterised on the employees' side by perceived obligations to their employer of loyalty, and on the employers by an obligation to provide job security.

Armour (2000) suggested that recognition should be part of the organisation's culture because it contributes to both employee satisfaction and intention to stay within the organisation. Organizations can avoid employee turnover by rewarding top performers. Rewards are one of the keys to avoiding turnover, especially if they are immediate, appropriate, and personal. Moss (2000) cited that rewards like employee of the month awards, years of service awards, bonus pay for weekend work, invitation to technical shows and other industry events, and meaningful and motivational rewards. Woods and Macaulay (1989) identified the reasons for turnover in employees engaged in the hospitality sector as: quality of supervision, ineffective communication, working conditions, quality of co-workers, inappropriate condition with company culture, low pay and few benefits, lack of clear definition of responsibilities, no direction on what to do.

In another survey conducted by Wood et al (1998), turnover and diversity in the lodging industry were researched. The sample consisted of 5,000 general managers of hotel properties. From the study, five internal causes of turnover

identified were rate of pay, communication problems, lack of advancement opportunities, lack of recognition for a job well done, and conflict with management. The five most cited external causes of turnover were better pay elsewhere, increase of pay in other industries, low unemployment, a strong local or regional economy and low quality of employees overall. Lofquist and Dawis (1969) argued that increasing levels of job tension or stress may lead to a decision to quit. A study by Sheridan and Abelson (1983) showed that when individuals perceived job tension exceeded a threshold limit, they quit. Bedeian and Armenakis (1981) found that job-induced tension causally affected satisfaction which in turn, influenced the propensity to leave. There appears to be strong support for stress playing an important role in affecting intention to quit.

Mobley et al. (1979) suggested that dissatisfied individuals would remain in jobs when it provides them with a means to achieve their career goals. Bedeian et al. (1991) found that perceived career growth had a negative relationship with turnover intentions, but was moderated by career commitment. That is, employees who reported greater commitment to their careers and higher opportunities for career growth in their current jobs also reported lower intention to turnover than other workers. Moore (2002) concluded that supervisory support has an indirect relationship with turnover. Support from supervisors reduced the nurses' burnout, and indirectly, through reduced levels of burnout, reduced nurses' intention to quit. Kalliath and Beck (2001), also obtained similar results, when they tested the impact of social support on components of burnout, namely depersonalisation and emotional exhaustion. They found that supervisory support reduced symptoms of burnout along with nurses' turnover intention.

The above review has shown that a number of factors have been identified by researchers for the turnover of the employees in the organisation. The present paper attempts to identify the aspects of organisation which employees in IT sector contemplate while relinquishing their positions and moving to new position in a different organisation.

3. METHOD

The Study: The present study is exploratory nature. The objective of the study is to identify factors which employees in IT sector consider before leaving the organisation.

The Sample: The sample consisted of 93 respondents working in IT sector. Out of this 60 were engineers and 33 were MCAs. The engineers group was constituted of graduates in Computer Science and Electronics. The mean age of the respondent was 25 years with an average work experience of four years.

Table 1: Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3.870	27.642	27.642	3.870	27.642	27.642	2.611	18.652	18.652
2	1.866	13.328	40.969	1.866	13.328	40.969	2.201	15.719	34.370
3	1.684	12.032	53.001	1.684	12.032	53.001	2.076	14.827	49.198
4	1.333	9.524	62.525	1.333	9.524	62.525	1.866	13.327	62.525
5	.959	6.850	69.375						
6	.797	5.693	75.068						
7	.714	5.104	80.171						
8	.626	4.471	84.642						
9	.541	3.867	88.509						
10	.504	3.600	92.109						
11	.393	2.805	94.914						
12	.302	2.155	97.069						
13	.267	1.908	98.977						
14	.143	1.023	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Tools for Data Collection: Self-designed questionnaire was administered on the respondents working in IT sector.

Tools for Data Analysis: The collected data were analysed in two stages with the help of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). In stage one, item of total correlation was used to identify non-significant items. In stage two, the data was subjected to factor analysis. The factors which IT employees consider before leaving the organisation were lack of appraisal system, lack of training opportunities, open system, and flexibility.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Principal component analysis with varimax rotation sorted four factors with Eigen value of 3.870, 1.866, 1.684, and 1.333 (Table 1). The total variance explained by factor one, lack of appraisal system, was 18.62 percent and consisted of lack of participation in decision making, mentoring of juniors absent, lack of financial aids during contingency and employee appraisal not on performance basis (Table 3). The factor two, lack of training opportunities, accounted for 15.719 percent of variance and consisted of statements slow rate of growth of the company as compared to the industry, lack of challenging assignments, lack of domain training, and incompetent development teams (Table 3). The factor

three, open system, showed 14.827 percent of variance and was constituted of unsatisfactory salary package, no opportunity for knowledge sharing between teams, work on maintenance project, less attention to employees having financially weak clients, and no opportunity for knowledge sharing between teams (Table 3). The factor four, flexibility, was constituted of lack of flexi pay and lack of flexi timings, and it explained 13.327 percent of variance (Table 3). The cumulative variance of the four factors was 62.525.

Lack of Appraisal System has emerged as the prominent factor, which employees consider at the time of exiting from the organisation (Table 2 & 3). Yong (1996) defines performance appraisal as a periodic evaluation of the output of an individual measured against certain expectations. The process involves observing and evaluating performance in the workplace with relation to pre-set standards. According to Kundu (2003), performance standards must be clear and objective. These standards must be communicated across the organisation and used on objective criteria without any bias. Armstrong and Baron (1998) stressed upon the importance of performance appraisal as a participative process (coaching and counselling). According to Aziz (1999), performance appraisal is done for various purposes, such as for professional and career development, accountability check, to be linked with recognition and

	Component			
	1	2	3	4
Unsatisfactory salary package	.09	-.157	.575	.407
Lack of flexi pay	-.179	.203	.06	.794
Lack of flexi timings	.200	-.105	-.157	.761
Slow rate of growth of the company as compared to the industry	.341	.565	.280	-.309
Lack of participation in decision making	.821	.138	-.01	-.226
Lack of challenging assignments	.380	.481	.240	.106
Lack of domain training	.01	.841	-.172	.161
Mentoring of juniors absent	.504	.319	-.08	-.442
No opportunity for Knowledge sharing between teams	.333	.159	.595	-.05
Incompetent development teams	.176	.677	.415	-.142
Work on maintenance project	-.232	.447	.561	-.108
Lack of financial aids during contingency	.665	.214	.177	.254
Employee appraisal not on performance basis	.825	-.09	.301	.07
Less attention to employees having financially weak clients	.151	.09	.763	-.09
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.				
a Rotation converged in 7 iterations.				

compensation, references to disciplinary procedure, and most commonly, is as a mechanism to determine salary increment and promotion exercise. De Nisi and Kluger (2000) opined that feedback is an essential component of an effective performance improvement strategy. London (1995), maintains that sensitivity to and recognition of information about oneself are related to individual and organisational effectiveness. Hackman and Oldham (1980) viewed that performance feedback increases job satisfaction and motivation. Many career development models include a feedback loop emphasising that individuals learn on the basis of receiving feedback on their performance. Besides, it has been observed that organizations use appraisals to provide developmental advice to employees, as well as obtain their perspectives and justice perceptions about their jobs, departments, managers and organizations (Erdogan, 2002; Holbrook, 2002; Longenecker, 1997).

Taylor (1998) is of the view that performance appraisal is a panacea that helps in validating selection decisions by providing information to support HR activities, identifying development opportunities, improving perceptions of organisational goals and selecting people for promotion and redundancy.

Lack of Training Opportunities has been identified as the second factor, which plays an instrumental role in employee decision to quit (Table 2 & 3). Training helps in sharpening old skills and developing new skills. It makes a person a specialist, and specialization in a particular skill and profession helps in creating a niche for oneself. Ghiselli (1971) in his study concluded that supervisory ability played the most important role in managerial success, followed by achievement motivation, intelligence, self-actualisation, self-assurance and decisiveness. In another study conducted by Okechuku (1994), the relationship between managerial characteristics of supervisory ability, achievement motivation, intellectual ability, self-actualisation, self-assurance, decisiveness, and managerial effectiveness was studied. The samples were of senior managers working in Canada, Hong Kong, and the People's Republic of China. It was found that these characteristics explained 77 percent of the variance in managerial effectiveness ratings for the combined sample, 79 percent for the Canadian sample, 67 percent for the Hong Kong sample, and 74 percent for the People's Republic of China sample.

According to Goldstein (1991) training opportunities are important as they are instrumental in opening the doors of an organisation to an individual and thereafter satisfaction and rewards can be enjoyed by the individual. Training and

Table 3 :Factor Loading	
Factors	Factor loading
Factor 1 (absence of appraisal system)	
Lack of participation in decision making	.821
Mentoring of juniors absent	.504
Lack of financial aids during contingency	.665
Employee appraisal not on performance basis	.825
Factor 2 (lack of training opportunities)	
Slow rate of growth of the company as compared to the industry	.565
Lack of challenging assignments	.481
Lack of domain training	.841
Incompetent development teams	.677
Factor 3 (lack of openness)	
No opportunity for Knowledge sharing between teams	.595
Work on maintenance project	.561
Less attention to employees having financially weak clients	.763
Unsatisfactory salary package	.575
Factor 4 (lack of flexibility)	
Lack of flexi pay	.794
Lack of flexi timings	.761

positive effects are related, as individuals expect that it will open doors of job markets with requisite skills, which will result in performance and reward. Mello (2002) indicated that training and development are major strategic issue for organisations, as the rapid changes in technology results in skill obsolescence and it becomes imperative for employers to impart training to its employees. There occurs redesigning of jobs, accompanied with broader responsibilities, demanding employees to assume more responsibility, take initiative, and develop interpersonal skills to perform and attain success, Mergers and acquisitions bring employees from different cultures together. Employee mobility is high where loyalty is towards the profession not towards the

employer. Globalisation of business operations necessitates acquisition of knowledge and skills.

Employees with high self-esteem tend to have a different attitude towards training (Orpen, 1999). They believe that they are capable of drawing benefits from training, and thus, are more willing to make the necessary efforts. As high self-esteem and optimistic outlook on life are related, employees with positive feelings about themselves tend to perceive training to be of good quality in comparison to the employees with a negative view of themselves. Schuler (1980) believed that ability moderates the stressor-stress relationship because ability decreases stress by reducing an individual's

perception of uncertainty. High ability individuals can choose a better strategy to deal with stressors than low ability individuals, and high ability individuals may find dealing with stressors intrinsically rewarding rather than stressful. Jones and Crandall (1991) stress that jobs which are routine and with little training lead to job dissatisfaction and result in increased turnover. Weaver (1994) theorizes that a positive correlation exists between the level of employee training and job satisfaction. As training levels increase, so does employee satisfaction.

Lack of Openness has been identified as the third factor which can affect employee turnover in IT sector (Table 2 & 3). The factor, lack of openness, is in line with the first and second factors of the study. The first two factors are indicative of growth and proactive approach of the individual. The individual expects feedback from the organization, based on which the individual is ready to shape behaviour and learn new skills, but the condition is openness. Individual is looking forward for transparency in organisation's policy to reward and promote the employees. This feedback received from the organization will mould the behaviour of the employee in the future. According to Chaturvedi (1987), systems and policies of a company are indicative of the company's endeavor to bring into life the company's philosophy and thus, play an important role in building credibility. If there exists incongruence in spirit and functioning with the professed values and expectations, then it results in anxiety and uncertainty, accompanied with disappointment, perception of deception and feeling of being manipulated. In this climate where suspicion and mistrust are high, any attempt of making individuals to cooperate may not succeed.

Research findings on the impact of justice and fairness on commitment and trust suggest that organisational fairness has an impact on the employee attitudes toward the organisation and its authorities (McFarlin and Sweeney, 1992). Here, if the organizational communication is open and dealing with subordinates is transparent, then developing rapport and building trust with the employee will be elegant. Labov (1997) maintained that employees have a strong need to be informed. Businesses with strong communication systems enjoyed lower turnover of staff. Magner et al. (1996) observed that employees react favourably, and stay longer in positions where they are involved in decision-making process. Schneider (1975) maintained that the perception of organisations' functions, i.e., the way it rewards and punishes constitutes the organisational climate. The introduction of formalized employee participation may lead to the generation of a set of rules that hinders the free flow of ideas and improvements in performance sought from the participative approach (Cooke, 1992; Kelley and Harrison, 1992). According to Ostroff (1993) effectiveness of an

organisation depends on the behaviour of the people within the organisation, and the organisational context which they create, as it is well known that organisational policies and practices play an important role in forming organisational climate. According to Eisenberger et al. (1986) employees develop global beliefs concerning the extent to which an organisation values their contribution and cares for their well-being. This belief of the employees about the organisational commitment will determine the employee commitment. According to Wayne et al. (1997), perception of being valued and cared enhances employees' trust that organisation in return will fulfill its obligations of recognizing and rewarding the manifested attitude and behaviour. The relationship of autonomy and responsibility with managerial effectiveness has been reported by Paul (1983) who in his study observed that when managers perceive climate as autonomous then they are more effective in comparison to managers who do not perceive their climate as autonomous.

The fourth and the final factor which affected turnover in IT sector was Lack of Flexibility (Table 2 & 3). The IT revolution has made the world a global village. People from different backgrounds and identities converge at place to work. This has increased the diversity of the workforce. To manage this, workforce flexibility is needed. Flexibility is a condition wherein individual is in a position to accommodate contradictory views, i.e., divergent thinking is dominant. Liff (1996) conceptualised four different versions of diversity management, which highlights the importance of flexibility. These were named as dissolving difference, accommodating difference, valuing difference and utilizing difference.

5. CONCLUSION

Necessity plays an important role in the achievement of goals. Stronger the necessity, the more intense will be the drive to achieve goal. The attainment of goal in itself is satisfying. The results of the study indicate that the approach of the employee is growth oriented. Career is very important for them and they are looking for a fair play in the attainment of their objectives. The four factors that act as indicators are lack of appraisal system, lack of training opportunities, open system, and flexibility.

6. IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The findings of the study are of great relevance to HR Managers. Keeping in mind these findings, strategies can be designed. Employees must be continuously exposed to different training program, which will help them in updating their knowledge and sharpen their skills, thus remaining employable throughout their life. Employees must be made aware of the policies of the company. Secrecy and

confidentiality must be avoided. System must be made transparent in the crucial matters of rewarding, promoting and giving pay hike to employees. This will give them a sense of fair play.

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