

Perceived Organizational Support and Turnover Intention of Academic Staff in University of Uyo

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to assess the relationship between perceived organizational support and turnover intention of academic staff in University of Uyo. The population of the study was made up of 1,451 academic staff in the employ of the institution. Sample size was determined using Taro Yamene's formulae for sample size determination in which a sample of 314 was arrived at. Sources of data were from both primary and secondary sources. Secondary source was from published articles and textbooks while primary source was from responses of the 314 copies of questionnaire administered on the respondents using convenience sampling technique. Findings showed that turnover intention of academic staff in university of uyo is influenced by their felt negative support from the institution. For university of uyo to attract and retain experienced academic staff, Management of the institution should strive to increase the level of support given to the academic staff by showing they care about their wellbeing and value their contribution to the institution.

Keywords: perceived organizational support, academic staff, turnover intention

INTRODUCTION

The importance of education to any nation cannot be overemphasized. Education creates an enlightened society. It is the ultimate element that contributes a great deal in human growth and development. Iqbal and Hashmi (2015) opine that it is the pillar upon which highly developed cultures are fabricated. For this pillar to be strengthened and sustained, it is necessary to highlight its importance and upgrade the quality of education. One of the greatest means of upgrading this educational quality is by retaining of experienced academic staff in higher institution

of learning as the absence of this pillar makes the foundation weak and everything built on it deteriorates. Hence, the worth of effective teaching in higher educational institutions brought in lime light the overlooked issue of retaining of good academic staff.

Academic professionals are very crucial for effective performance of an institution. According to Ng'ethe et al. (2012), universities serves as storehouse of knowledge for development of human resources needs, consequently gratifying the ambition and desire of the nation for superior and benevolent civilization. No academic institution can survive and perform effectively without competent and committed academic staff. In the same manner, Pienaar and Bester (2008) strongly agree that academic profession is elementary for effective operation and performance of universities. As such, universities relies more on scholarly and resourceful abilities and loyalty of academic staff compared to other organizations or institutions.

According to Pienaar and Bester (2008), academic profession is very essential to the functioning of any university. Altbach (1991) opines that without well qualified and committed academic staff, no academic institution can really ensure sustainability and quality over a long time. Kusku (2003) posits that academic institutions are more dependent on the intellectual and creative abilities and commitment of their academic staff than most other organizations.

In the present scenario, academic staff is very important part of academic institution and retaining them is also very important for the institution. According to Akila (2012), employee retention is a process in which the employees are encouraged to remain with the organization for a maximum period of time or until the completion of the project. Retaining academic staff is beneficial for both the institution and the individual. When an academic staff feels dissatisfied with the current institution, he/she may want to switch to another one. This process is

known as turnover intention. Turnover intention is a cognitive construct, indicating an employees' decision to want to leave the institution. Hence, it is the responsibility of the employer to retain their best academic staff (Akila, 2012).

One of the most important factors that play a major role in retaining employees in an institution is their perception of the level of support they receive from the institution. Perceived organizational support refers to the employees' belief about the availability of help he/she can get when it is needed most in order to perform task creditably (Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002).

According to Anderson, Richard and Saha (2002), higher education institutions will be increasingly obliged to make the retention of academic staff a strategic priority, since 68% of the academic personnel in a study in Australian higher institutions indicated that they wished to leave higher education. Koen (2003) equally opined that this problematic situation is also experienced in South African higher education institutions, since data indicates that a substantial number (between 5% and 15%) of academics leave higher education institutions. Therefore, the retention of academic staff should be a priority since it is difficult to replace the knowledge and experience; skills are only acquired over a long period of time and are accompanied by extensive experience.

Academic staff will feel a sense of belonging when they are valued and supported when they are valued, they will show commitment and good attitude. However, it is not uncommon to observe that in some Nigerian Tertiary Institution like University of Uyo, certain policies, work procedures, excessive workload due to academic staff shortage, insufficient research inducement, poor facilities and learning environment, management actions and inactions may compel academic staff to form negative cognitive impression about the institution. Undoubtedly, such impressions will bring about low work morale,

incessant tardiness, increased absenteeism, and desire to leave the organization. These attitudes may affect the institution's productivity and long term reputation. Also, Perceived Organizational Support is rapidly gaining interest in the Asian and Western economy past studies have shown strong relationship between Perceived Organization Support and Turnover (Waseem, 2010; Godfrey, 2010; Meyer & Allen, 2007) others did not support this finding (Levy, 2013; Allen, Shore and Griffeth, 2003). It is worthy of note that most of the studies carried out in this area are focused on organizations in the developed economies; very few empirical studies considered developing economies which an example is Nigeria and other African countries. Moreso, most of these studies only concentrate on turnover, few considered turnover intention in a tertiary institution owing to this fact, it is more feasible to obtain a reliable and valid measure of turnover intent compared with actual turnover, primarily due to potential inaccuracies and unavailability of agency records (Lambert, 2006). The above mentioned theoretical gap and conflicting views among scholars underpins the basis for this study.

Objective of the study

The major objective of this study is to examine the influence of Perceived Organization Support on turnover intention of academic staff in a developing economy like Nigeria. The specific objective is to assess how perceived organizational support influences turnover intention of academic staff in University of Uyo.

Research Question

How perceived organizational support does influences turnover intention of academic staff in University of Uyo?

Hypothesis of the Study

- There is no significant relationship between Perceived Organization Support and turnover intention of academic staff in University of Uyo.

Scope of the Study

This research is conducted in University of Uyo, Uyo. The study considered internal factors that may influence employees' perception of support level from the institution.

Review of Related Literature

The concept of Perceived Organizational Support (POS) came to lime light in the late 1980s (Chen, 2010). According to Esienberger, Huntington, Hurchison & Sowa (1986) POS is the employees' perception or judgement of how much the organization values their contribution and cares about them.

Krishman and Mary (2012) define POS as sensitivity and opinion of employees regarding the degree to which their involvement is appreciated and recognized by their institution and cares about their well-being. Employees will put more efforts when they know that all efforts will be owned and rewarded by the organization. Waseem (2010) in his study found that job attitudes and behaviour of employees is greatly affected by various institutional policies and programs which eventually leads to positive organizational outcomes. Organizational support is of great importance to employees. They are considered by the employees as key factor which also enhances the job satisfaction and the organizational commitment of employees (Colakoglin, Culha & Atay 2010). Perceived organizational support draws strength on the social exchange theory developed by Blan (1964) to explain employee-organization relationships. The theory holds that each party has perceptions and expectations regarding the behaviour of the other party, but these expectations and perceptions are related with the timing or the specifics of what each party must render. If both parties benefits from the exchange, neither will know whether the expectations of the other have been fully met. Therefore, social exchanges involve reciprocity (Tansky and Colven, 2001).

When academic staff are dissatisfied or feel uncomfortable with the institutions' show of care, support and concern they tend to reduce their commitment level in the institution. Where this persists overtime, the faculty may inhibit or harbor turnover intention.

Turnover intention refers to employee's plan to leave the organization. There is a major distinction between "Actual turnover" and "turnover intention". Actual turnover is a behavioural construct which refers to employee actually leaving the organization. While turnover intention is a cognitive construct referring to an employee planning to leave. According to Lambert (2006), it is more feasible to obtain a reliable and valid measure of turnover intent compared to actual turnover, primarily due to potential inaccuracies and unavailability of agency records. He further argued that intention is the single best predictor of actual turnover behaviour.

There exist some empirical studies that relate staff turnover and perception of organizational support. Some of them includes; Minor et al (2009) conducted a study on understanding staff perceptions of turnover in correctional facilities. Using a descriptive survey method, a structured questionnaire was administered on 255 staff members of a correctional facility. Findings revealed that staff attributed turnover to insufficient pay and benefits as well as to key areas of the work environment, including interpersonal conflicts, stress, unfavorable treatment and lack of recognition from superiors and perceived lack of input. The study concluded that correctional staff may consider alternative employment prospects and contemplate turnover when they experience a sense of revaluation, especially where devaluation is accompanied by perception of low efficacy on the job.

Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) in their study of Perceived Organization Support: A review of the literature, reviewed more than 70 studies concerning employees' general belief that their work organization values

their contribution and cares about their well-being (Perceived Organizational Support (POS)). In their work, a meta-analysis indicated that 3 major categories of beneficial treatment received by employees (i.e. fairness, supervisor support, and organizational rewards and favorable job conditions) were associated with perceived organizational support. Perceived Organizational Support in turn, was related to outcome favorable to employees (e.g. Job satisfaction, positive mood) and the organization (e.g. effective commitment, performance, and lessened withdrawal behavior). These relationships depend on processes assumed by organizational support theory: employees' belief that the organization's actions were discretionary, feeling of obligation to aid the organization, fulfillment of socio-emotional needs, and performance reward expectancies.

Research Methodology

This study adopted survey research design. Sources of data were from primary and secondary sources. Primary source of data was from a structured questionnaire, while secondary source was majorly from textbooks, journals, internet and other specific sources of publication. Population of the study was made up of 1,451 academic staff employed in University of Uyo as at December, 2015. Sample size for the study was determined using Taro Yamene's formulae for sample size determination at 5% level of tolerable error which is given as;

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where: n = sample size
 N = Population
 e = error term

As such, sample size was given thus;

$$n = \frac{1451}{1 + 1451(0.0025)^2} = \frac{1451}{1 + 3.6275} = \frac{1451}{4.6275} = 313.6 = 314$$

Instrument for data collection was a structured 4 point Likert scale questionnaire. Convenience sampling technique was used because of time and cost constraint. For statistical treatment of data collected, Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20 was used to test the hypothesis. Descriptive analysis was used to present the output generated from analysis of demographic data while Pearson product moment correlation analysis was used to test the strength of relationship between the dependent (Turnover intention) and independent variables (Perceived Organizational Support).

Data Analysis

Demographic Information of Respondents

The analysis provides information related to sex, age, educational background, and experiences of respondents. The following demographic characteristics of the respondents are presented along the sample frame in order to get a representative data from 314 copies of questionnaire which were prepared and distributed to employees of the University

Table 1: Respondents' Profile

Characteristics of Respondents	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	224	71.3
Female	90	28.7
Total	314	100
Age		
Below 25 years	27	8.6
26-35 years	141	44.9
36-45years	76	24.2
46-55 years	39	12.4
56 and above	31	9.9
Total	314	100
Qualification		
BA/B.Sc	71	22.6

Masters degree	105	33.4
Doctorate and above	138	44.9
Total	314	100
Work experience		
1-2 Years	39	12.4
3-4 years	75	23.9
5-7 years	68	21.6
8-10 years	58	18.5
Above 10 years	74	23.6
Total	314	100

Source: Field survey, 2017.

From the **table 1**, sex distribution of the sample, 224 (71.3%) of the total respondents are male, 90 (28.7%) are female. The results also showed that the majority of the respondent 141(44.9%) were between the range ages of 26 and 35 years. Next to this sample 76(24.2%) were between the ages of 36 and 45 years, and few of them 27(8.6%) were below 25 years. On the educational level of the respondents, majority 138(44.9%) of the respondents are in the category of doctorate and above. Additionally, the second majority 105(33.4%) of respondents are in category of Masters degree and the rest 71(22.6%) of the respondents are BA/B.Sc, therefore, they would have the ability to fill the questionnaire in English and have an idea about perceived organizational support and turnover intention. **Also**, the majority of the respondents 75(23.9%) and 74(23.6%) have worked for between 3-4 years and above 10 years in the University respectively. The second other majority 68(21.6%) for between 5-7 years and the rest faculties who are in the category of 8-10 years and below 2 years were 18.5% and 17% respectively.

Table 2: How does perceived organizational support influence turnover intention of academic staff in University of Uyo?

1. Management has provided me with all the necessary tools needed to execute my job assignment					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Undecided	16	4.6	4.6	4.6
	Strongly disagree	108	34.3	31.5	35.4
	Disagree	165	52.5	52.5	85.1
	Agree	8	2.5	2.5	90.0
	Strongly agree	26	8.2	8.2	100.0
	Total	314	100.0	100.0	
2. I feel management cares about my well being					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Undecided	21	6.6	6.6	8.6
	Strongly disagree	105	33.4	30.5	38.6
	Disagree	146	46.4	46.4	82.9
	Agree	8	2.5	2.5	87.7
	Strongly agree	34	10.8	10.8	100.0
	Total	314	100.0	100.0	
3. I feel management values my contribution to the attainment of this institution's goal attainment					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Undecided	62	19.7	19.7	20.3
	Strongly disagree	64	20.3	20.3	41.1
	Disagree	117	37.2	37.2	77.1
	Agree	22	7.0	7.0	83.4
	Strongly agree	49	15.6	15.6	100.0
	Total	314	100.0	100.0	
4. Management often let me know how well they think i perform					

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Undecided	23	7.3	7.3	9.1
	Strongly disagree	107	34.0	34.0	42.3
	Disagree	131	41.7	41.7	82.3
	Agree	10	3.1	3.1	85.1
	Strongly agree	43	13.6	13.6	100.0
	Total	314	100.0	100.0	
5. I cannot recommend this institution to friends and family					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Undecided	21	6.6	6.6	8.6
	Strongly disagree	63	20.0	20.0	29.1
	Disagree	82	26.1	26.1	55.1
	Agree	59	18.7	18.7	72.0
	Strongly agree	89	28.3	28.3	100.0
	Total	314	100.0	100.0	
6. Deciding to work for this institution was a mistake on my part					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Undecided	22	6.3	6.3	6.3
	Strongly disagree	128	40.7	40.7	45.4
	Disagree	170	54.1	54.1	96.6
	Agree	3	0.9	0.9	98.3
	Strongly agree	0	0	0	100.0
	Total	314	100.0	100.0	
7. I feel there is not much to be gained by sticking with this institution					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Undecided	31	9.8	9.8	11.4

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	Strongly disagree	89	28.3	28.3	39.4
	Disagree	175	55.7	55.7	92.0
	Agree	9	2.6	2.6	94.6
	Strongly agree	10	3.1	3.1	100.0
	Total	314	100.0	100.0	
8. I frequently think of quitting this job					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Undecided	30	8.6	8.6	8.6
	Strongly disagree	59	18.7	18.7	28.0
	Disagree	77	24.5	24.5	52.6
	Agree	73	23.2	23.2	76.0
	Strongly agree	74	23.5	23.5	99.7
	Total	350	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 2 depicts eight-items of POS and turnover intention model developed by Rhoades, Eisenberger, and Armeli, (2001) which were adopted by our study. Illustrative items are: "Management has provided me with the necessary tools needed to execute my job assignment, I feel management cares about my well being, I feel management values my contribution to the attainment of this institution's goal, I frequently think of quitting this job, I cannot recommend this institution to my friends and family members, I feel there is not much to be gained by sticking with this institution, Deciding to work for this institution was a mistake on my part".

On if management has provided academic staff with necessary tools to work with; 26(8.2%) respondents strongly agreed, 8(2.5%) respondents agreed, 165(52.5%) respondents disagreed, 108(34.3%) respondents while 16(4.6%) were undecided. The question if the employees feel management cares about their well being; 34 (10.8%) respondents

strongly agreed, 8(2.5%) respondents agreed. 146 (46.4%) respondents disagreed, 105(33.4%) respondents strongly disagreed while 21(6.6%) respondents were undecided. On academic staff's feeling if management values their contribution to the institution's goal attainment; 49(15.6%) respondents strongly agreed, 22(7.0%) respondents agreed, 117(37.2%) respondents disagreed, 64(20.3%) respondents strongly disagreed while 62 (19.7%) were undecided. On if management often let them know how well they are performing; 43(13.6%) respondents strongly agreed, 10(3.1%) respondents agreed, 131(41.7%) respondents disagreed, 107(34.4%) respondents strongly disagreed while 23(7.3%) respondents were undecided. On if they could recommend the institution for their friends and family members as a good place to work; 89(28.3%) respondents strongly agreed, 59(18.7%) respondents agreed, 82(26.1%) respondents disagreed, and 63 (20.0%) respondents strongly disagreed while 21 (6.6%) respondents were undecided. On if working for the institution was a mistake on their part; 3(0.9%) respondents agreed, 170(54.1%) respondents disagreed, 128(40.7%) respondents strongly disagreed while 22(6.3%) were undecided. On if they feel they can be successful in sticking with the institution; 10(3.1%) respondents strongly agreed, 9(2.6%) respondents agreed, 175(55.7%) respondents disagreed, 89(28.3%) respondents strongly disagreed while 31(9.8%) respondents were undecided. On if they frequently have the thoughts of quitting the institution; 74(23.5%) respondents strongly agreed, 73(23.2%) respondents agreed, 77(24.5%) respondents disagreed, 59(18.7%) respondents strongly disagreed while 30(8.6%) were undecided.

Test of Hypothesis

The hypothesis states that "there is no significant relationship between perceived organizational support and turnover intentions of faculties in University of Uyo". The result of the test of the analysis is presented in the table below.

Table 3: Correlation between Perceived organizational support and Turnover intention

		PERCEIVED ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORT	TURNOVER INTENTION
TURNOVER INTENTION	Pearson Correlation	1	.421**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	314	314
PERCEIVED ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORT	Pearson Correlation	.421**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	314	314

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 3 above shows that correlation between perceived organizational support and faculties' turnover intention is positive and significant at 0.01 probability level. Given the positive and significant correlation coefficient ($r = .421, p \leq 0.01$) the null hypothesis is rejected in favour of the alternative, implying that significant relationship exist between academic staff turnover intentions and perceived organizational support. This means that for the organization under study, perceived organizational support has an impact on turnover intentions of academic staff.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Findings revealed that perceived organizational support has a significant relationship with academic staff turnover intention. This simply means that turnover intention of academic staff in University of Uyo is

influenced by their felt non-organizational support. The findings support the position of Waseem (2010) which opines that perceived organizational support can enhance employees desire to remain in the organization. Also, the position of Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) which says that perceived organization support can help to lessen withdrawal behavior or employees intention to leave.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

For university of Uyo to live their dream of being “centre for academic excellence”, management must have the mission to improve the care for their academic staff well-being and value their job involvement, increase job satisfaction and encourage their retention with the institution. This study recommends that the institution’s management should seek to increase the level of support given to the academic staff by intimating them often of their performance, showing they care about their wellbeing and value their contributions (no matter how infinitesimal) also by providing them with all the necessary tools they need to work with. When this commitment is valued, they will retain their experienced academic staff.

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