

Empirical Investigation of the Relationship between Career Progression and Employee Turnover Intention

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(✉) Corresponding Author

S. M. Aguwamba¹

B. A. Chukwu²

A. N. Ezeabogu³

¹Department of Banking and Finance, School of Business and Management Studies, Igbinedion University, Okada, Edo State, Nigeria.

Email: sundayaguwamba@gmail.com Tel: +2348056731834

²Department of Business Administration Igbinedion University Okada, Edo State, Nigeria.

Email: benedictchukwu103@yahoo.com Tel: +2348160264544

³Department of Management University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus, Nigeria.

Email: augustineabog@gmail.com Tel: +2348153394939

ABSTRACT

This research investigated the relationship between career progression and employee turnover intention in food and Beverage Industry in Nigeria. Various Literature on career progression revealed that turnover intention is an inevitable outcome when career progression is treated with levity by management of organizations. Employees should be allowed to progress within their chosen career otherwise they will opt out of the organization. Employees should be given opportunity for career prospect. Workers will intend to leave when their ambition to move up the managerial hierarchy through hard work and display of intelligence is frustrated. Survey research method was used to collect primary data from 355 staff of sampled firm in Nigeria. The data for the study was analysed using simple regression and Pearson correlation. Simple regression and Pearson correlation was used to test the hypothesis. The empirical result from simple regression analysis showed that negative and significant relationship exist between career progression and turnover intention at 5% level of significance. Pearson correlation result for career progression and turnover intention ($r = -0.395 < 0.05$) indicated that negative association exists between career progression and turnover intentions. The negative coefficient means that decrease in career progression would lead to increase in turnover intention. The study recommend that management should encourage career progression of employees in organizations to enable them to be committed and loyal. Committed and loyal employee hardly leave the organization.

Keywords: Career progression, Turnover intention, Labour turnover, Employee retention, Career opportunity, Career prospect, Advancement opportunity, Staff motivation, Employee, Organization.

JEL Classification: Industrial organization.

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Highlights of this paper

- The Objective of this study is to investigate the relationship between career progression and employee turnover intention in Food and Beverage Industry in Nigeria.
- The simple regression result indicated that career progression had negative and significant relationship with turnover intention at 5% level of significance.

1. INTRODUCTION

Career progression is an antecedent of turnover intention. Career progression is a job related and an organizational variable. Career progression is the upwards movement of employee in his area of specialization (Adeboye and Adegrooye, 2012). Lack of career progression is one of the reasons people decide to change jobs, followed by lack of new challenges (Cafaro, 2001; Adeboye and Adegrooye, 2012). Workers can intend to leave when their ambition to move up the managerial hierarchy through hard-work and display of intelligence is frustrated (Dale, 1969; Parker *et al.*, 2011).

Opportunity for Career prospect and better pay can make an employee leave to greener pasture, where a better standard of living is assured (Jackson, 1981; Chukwu, 2017). There is likely to be turnover in an organization where loyalty is missing (Mottaz, 1986; Kim, 2012). Organization can succeed only where there is productivity, motivation in terms of career progression and loyalty from employees. Turnover intention can be reduced, if employer foster those qualities by providing employees with jobs that motivate them, offer opportunity for career prospect, job satisfaction and encourage attachment (Chukwu, 2017).

Staff turnover has been a serious problem facing organizations worldwide especially in the field of human resource management (Roshidi, 2014). Staff turnover is costly to organizations usually the quality of products and the productivity of workers are affected (Gustafson, 2002; Roshidi, 2014). High employee turnover brings destruction to the organization in the form of direct and indirect costs and productivity (Roshidi, 2014). The direct costs refers to replacement costs, recruitment and hiring cost, advertising, selection and interviewing cost (Gustafson, 2002).

In addition to monetary cost, high turnover affects organizations reputation badly and also affects its competitive advantage (Stovel and Bontis, 2002). Loss of intellectual capital is also incurred as a result of turnover (Stovel and Bontis, 2002). Staff turnover can cause additional work stress and lower moral and motivation of workers that stay (Solomon *et al.*, 2012). Employee turnover can disrupt organization strategic planning to achieve objectives when an important employee is lost (Capelli, 2008; Oluwafemi, 2010).

1.1. Objective of the Study

The study investigated the relationship between career progression and employee turnover intention in food and beverage industry in Nigeria.

1.1.1. Hypothesis of the Study

Null hypothesis was formulated to guide this study.

Ho: Career progression has negative relationship with employee turnover intention.

1.2. Significance of the Study

The study would be of great benefit to the following stakeholders.

- i. Employees: The study would be of great benefit to employees to strongly appraise the motivational factors that would enhance employee intention to stay. This would also enable employees to know how they can find better opportunities to reduce turnover intention.
- ii. Managers: This study would help managers of food and beverage industry in finding possible measures/strategies to reduced employee turnover intention. It would be of great interest and valuable to practicing managers especially Human Resource Managers and help them to reduce turnover intention and savings in hiring and training replacements.
- iii. Researchers and Academia: This study would be of great benefit to researcher in Business Administration and management related field as it would provide empirical evidence for further studies on the area of employee turnover.

1.3. Scope of the Study

The study investigated the relationship between career progression and turnover intention in food and beverage industry in Nigeria. The scope of the study would delimit to staff of Bottling Company in Nigeria.

1.4. Limitations of the Study

In carrying out this research, the researcher was faced with the following limitations:

- i. Low response rate: The usage of research instrument is usually constraint with poor response rate and ultimately affects the sample size.
- ii. Also the reluctant of respondents to answer the questionnaire in the process of data collection, due to fear of victimization by those in authority was another limitation of the study.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Turnover Intention

Hom and Griffeth (1991) define turnover intention as the individual intention toward voluntary permanent withdrawal from organization. It is the employee likeliness to quit the organization at some near future (Hom and Griffeth, 1991). Turnover intention is the determinant of leaving behavior (Price, 2001; Brigham *et al.*, 2007). And when an employee intend to leave and it is ignored, it will lead to high loss of employees. High loss of employees can cause psychological distress, reduced productivity, quality service, increased cost of recruitment (Powell and York, 1992; Oluwafemi, 2010). Turnover intention is the precursor and predictor of turnover (Price, 2001; Allen *et al.*, 2003).

2.2. Career progression and Turnover Intention

Previous Studies on turnover intention considered career progression as a determinant of employee turnover intention (Korsakiene *et al.*, 2014). Korsakiene *et al.* (2014) stated that lack of advancement opportunity was one of the most influencing factors of turnover. Cafaro (2001) argued that career progression and work design are the major reason for employee deciding to join remain or leave an organization.

Fairness in administering promotion is another critical issue concerning career progression (Parker *et al.*, 2011). Parker *et al.* (2011) posited that promotion should be based on performance and that this will lead to high perception of justice and satisfaction of employees. Kaplan and Ferris (2001) stated that transparent promotion criteria are another crucial factor of employees perceived fairness which can reduce turnover intention. Career progression has negative relationship with turnover intention (Chukwu, 2017).

The importance of career progression as a vehicle for enhancing employees performance and growth was dealt extensively in management theory (Kim, 2012). Perceived career opportunities outside the organization increases employee intention to leave the organization (Stahl *et al.*, 2009; Kim, 2012). Weng *et al.* (2010) argued that employee organizational career growth is subdivided into four factors such as promotion speed, progress in career goal, professional ability development and advancement in pay. Perceived career progression is negatively related to turnover intention (Price, 2001; Munasinghe, 2006). Heilmann *et al.* (2008) argued that lack of career growth in areas such as learning, variety and promotion often compel employees to seek employment elsewhere.

Carter (2011) executed a research on the effect of career progression on turnover intention. The objective of the study was to identify the reason why people leave organizations. The findings showed that lack of opportunity for career prospect is one of the reason employees leave and that the key to retention is giving room to grow and develop their career with the organization. Adeboye and Adegroye (2012) carried out a research on employee perception of career progression and turnover intention among bank workers in Ife central local government Area, Osun State, Nigeria. The research findings showed that a significant inverse relationship exists between perception of career progression and turnover intention. The study recommended that the findings should be used for improvement of work policies, such as those involving downsizing and retrenchment on such a way that would bring justification for job termination and save them from staggering turnover costs.

Wimalasiri and Jayatilake (2016) carried out a study on the factors affecting turnover intention among employees of machine operators in apparel industry in Sri Lanka. The objective of the study was to investigate the relationship between career progression and development, compensation and benefits, employee performance management system, employee relation, job security and turnover intention among staff of machine operation in apparel industry. The finding shows that career progression and development, compensation and benefits, job security, work-family life balance significantly impacted on turnover intention, while perceived supervisor supports and employee performance management were not significantly influenced by turnover intention. The study recommended that employees should be given enough time to meet their family requirement, enhance career development opportunities and the immediate supervisor need to keep strong relationship with their subordinate.

Nazim (2005) conducted a research on factors affecting employee turnover intention among lecturers of sector college of NWFP in Pakistan. The objective of the study was to examine the influence of promotion on employee turnover intention. The research findings showed that lecturers of private sector college NWFP were dissatisfied with promotion and satisfied with co-workers nature of work, operating conditions and communications. The research findings also showed that promotional chances were significantly associated with turnover intention.

Usman and Jangraiz (2015) carried out a research on the factors affecting turnover intention among 150 employees of Private Sector Universities of Peshwar in Peshwar. The objectives of the study was to examine the interrelationship among promotion opportunities, job satisfaction and turnover intention. The findings of the study showed that promotion opportunities and job satisfaction significantly affected turnover intention. The study recommended that private sector universities should give promotion opportunities, competitive salary, make the system transparent and justified.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

3.1. Theory of Turnover Intention

3.1.1. Social Exchange Theory

- Social exchange theory asserts that various social exchange relationship are found between members of organization (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005). Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005) also posited that social

exchange theory is an exchange process between two parties that is mutually contingent and mutually rewarding (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005). This theory was used by many studies to explain the relationship between a diversity of organizational aspects and employee behavior (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005).

- Gould-Williams (2007) argued that a sense of attachment and commitment towards the organization is built by high level of social exchange. He posited that employees with high positive perception of exchange relationship are less likely to leave their employer. The social exchange theory opined that organizations and managers can provide organizational support to achieve desirable attitude and behaviours from employees (Gould-Williams and Davies, 2005; Gould-Williams, 2007).
- Employees do not leave their Job when they are satisfied with their organization (Abubakar *et al.*, 2014). Eisenberger, Stinglhamber, Vandenberghe, Sucharski & Rhoades argued that the greater employees satisfaction with organization support, the more likely they will stay and feel a responsibility to reward their organisation.

4. METHODOLOGY

The data for the research was collected from primary source. The source of the data was through questionnaire randomly distributed to employees of Bottling Company in Nigeria. The population of the study was 3158. A sample of 355 was selected from the population using (Yamane, 1964) formula. A stratified random sampling technique was used to distribute sample to Bottling Company using stratum allocation technique of Kumar (1976).

The questionnaire consisted of demography data such as age, gender, level of education, marital status etc. The questionnaire was made up of five point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree with the statements) to 5 (strongly agree for each of the statement). The questionnaire is a combination of adaptation of the proposed scale for career progression developed by Zhang and Liao (2007) and turnover intention scale developed by Michaels and Spector (1982); Viator (2001) and self development of items. A total of 355 questionnaires were distributed to staff of Bottling Company and 304 responses were collected which has 85.63% response rate.

The model has two variables for empirical testing. And the variables are turnover intention which is the dependent variable and career progression which is the independent variable. The sample was analysed with statistical package for social science (SPSS) 16.0. Simple regression analysis was utilized as a statistical tool since it was a measure of association. Pearson Correlation test was also carried out to find out the relationship between the stated variables. The demographic data were analysed using frequency table.

4.1. Model Specification

The following model was specified for empirical testing:

$$TI = \beta_0 + \beta_1 CP + \mu$$

Where

TI = Turnover intention.

β_1 CP = Career progression .

$\beta_0 = \beta_{\text{eta Zero}}$

β_i (i = 1) is the estimate of the coefficient.

μ = An error term measuring variation in turnover intention unaccounted for by the independent variable.

4.2. Validity/Reliability of Instrument

Questionnaire was sent to 40 respondents to test the relevance and pass their comment. The idea was to ensure that the questions in the questionnaire were simple and understandable, which helps in developing the questionnaires more efficiently. A favourable comment was obtained from the 40 respondents and the result of the pilot rest ensured that the questionnaire was understandable by the 40 respondents.

A reliability test was also carried out on career progression and Turnover intention scales. The analysis result showed that the reliability test of the data were over all 0.798. This value is generally considered acceptable in social science. The analytical scale or data of 0.798 is reliable enough for analysis. According to [Walonick \(1993\)](#) the value 0.7 is acceptable and the values above 0.8 are preferable.

5. DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSES AND INTERPRETATION

5.1. Data Presentation and Analysis for Sample Background Variables

A total of three hundred and fifty five (355) questionnaires were given out to respondents and three hundred and four (304) were duly returned and useable and subsequently utilized. Therefore, the response rate was 85.63%. The demography of the respondents to show the characteristics of the respondents who participated in the survey is shown below.

Table-1. Demographic feature of respondents.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Age:		
Less than 30 years	40	19.7
30-39 years	122	40.1
40-49 years	86	28.3
Above 50 years	36	11.9
Total	304	100
Sex:		
Male	200	65.8
Female	104	34.2
Total	304	100
Educational level		
Secondary	82	27
Post-Secondary	125	41.1
Polytechnic/University	97	31.9
Total	304	100
Department		
According	33	10.9
Marketing	80	26.3
Administration	44	14.5
Production	97	31.9
Maintenance	50	16.4
Total	304	100
Marital status		
Single	123	40.5
Married	181	59.5
Total	304	100
Years of service		
Less than 5 years	79	25
5-10 year	127	41.8
15-Oct	66	21.7
Above 16 years	32	10.5
Total	304	100
Number of time		
Change Job		
2times and below	187	61.5
3-4 times	76	25
5times and above	41	13.5
Total	304	100

Source: Field survey, 2019.

Table 1 shows the age distribution of the sampled respondent of whom 60 (19.7%) of them were aged 30 year below, 122 (40.1%) of them were aged 30-39 years, 86 (28.3%) of them were aged 40 – 9 years, and 36 (11.9%) of them were age 50 years and above. This shows that the majority of the respondents were aged 30 – 39 years. On the issue of sex of the sample respondents 200 (65.8%) were males and 104 (34.2%) were females. This implies that majority of the respondents were males. On the educational level of the respondents who returned valid copies of distributed questionnaires of whom 82 (27.0%) of them attended secondary school, 125 (41.1%) of them attended post secondary and 97 (31.9%) of them attended polytechnic/university. This means that majority of the sampled respondents attended post-secondary school. Based on department, 33 (10.9%) of the respondents were in accounting department, 80 (26.3%) of the respondents were in marketing department, 44 (14.5%) of the respondents were in administration department, 99 (31.9%) of the respondents were in production department and 55 (16.4%) of the respondents were in maintenance department. This means that majority of the respondents were in production department. On the issue to marital status of the sampled respondents, 123 (40.5%) of them were single and 181 (59.5%) of them were married. This shows that the majority of the respondents were married. On the year of service, 79 (26%) had work for the period of 5 years and below, 127 (41.1%) had work for period of 5 – 10 years, 66 (21.7%) had work for the period of 10 – 15 years and 32 (10.5%) had work for the period of 16years and above. This shows that majority of the respondents had work for the period of 5 – 10 years. The number of times change job, 187 (61.5%) of the respondents had change job less than twice, 76 (25%) of the respondents had changed job for 3 – 4 times and 41 (13.5%) of the respondents had changed job for 5 times above. This means that the majority of the respondents had changed job for less than 2 times.

5.2. Data Collected and used for Regression Analysis

Table-2. Responses to questions asked in independent variable.

Independent variable	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Career progression	34 (11.2)	76 (25)	17 (5.6)	98 (32.2)	(26) 79

Source: Field survey, 2019.

5.3. The Non Bracketed Numbers Indicate Number of Responses

5.3.1. The Bracket Numbers Indicate the Percentage of Responses

In Table 2 34 respondents which comprised 11.2% of 304 respondents that participated in the survey strongly agreed that career progression and turnover intension have positive relationship while 76 (25%) agreed, 17 (5.6%) of the respondents were undecided on the issue, 98 (32.2%) disagreed while 79 (26%) strongly disagreed. This in essence showed that majority of the respondents comprising 58.2% disagreed that career progression and turnover intension have positive relation, while 36.2% agreed and 5.6% were undecided on the issue.

Table-3. Responses to questions asked on dependent variables.

Dependent variable	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Turnover intention	53 (17.4)	109 (35.8)	94 (30.9)	42 (13.9)	6 (2)

Source: Field survey 2019.

5.4. The Non Bracketed Numbers Indicate Number of Responses

5.4.1. The Bracketed Numbers Indicate The Percentage of Responses

Table 3 showed that 53 respondents which comprised (17.4%) of 304 respondents who participated in the survey strongly agreed that they can leave when there is no opportunity for career progression in the organization, 109 (35.8%) agreed, 94 (30.9%) were undecided on the issue. 42 (13.9%) disagreed while 5 (2%) strongly disagreed.

This in essence showed that majority of the respondents comprising 53.2% agreed that they will leave when there is no opportunity for career progression in the organization while 15.9% disagreed and 30.9% were undecided on the issue.

5.5. Regression Technique

Simple regression technique was used to test the hypothesis of the research.

Table-4. Simple regression results.

Variable	Coefficient	Std error	t-statistics	Probability
Constant	3.101	0.516	6.005	0.000
Career progression	-0.415	0.086	-4.806	0.001

R-Squared 0.618
 Adjusted R-Squared 0.611
 F-Statistics 20.556= (0
 Standard error of regression 0.416
 (SPSS) version 16.0

In Table 4 the beta value or coefficient showed that 1 unit negative change in the value of career progression would result in -0.415 (41.5%) negative change in the turnover intention, other variables being held constant. The beta value or coefficient of -0.415 showed that career progression has negative relationship with turnover intention. The t-statistics of -4.806 showed that career progression has no significant t-ratio. The t-statistics of career progression showed that it accounted for significant negative variation on dependent variable turnover intention (p = -4.806, p <.05). Probability or significant value of .001 showed that career progression is significant at less than 5% level.

The F value of 20.556 showed that the model has over all significance of 1% level. R² 0.611 suggested that the model is a good fit. This indicates that 61.1% of the variation in turnover intention is accounted for by variation in career progression.

Table-5. Correlation result.

Career progression (CP)	
Turnover intention (TI)	Pearson correlation - 0.395 Significance (1-tailed) .001

The spear correlation result is significant at 5% level.

5.6. Interpretation of Results

Ho: Career progression has negative relationship with employee turnover intention.

In testing the hypothesis, it would be revealed from the simple regression results above that career progression had a negative and significant relationship with employee turnover intention at 5% level of significance. This means that we were 95% confidence level that career progression would significantly lead to decrease in turnover intention. The negative coefficient value of career progression (-0.415) accounted for 41.5% employee turnover intention. This means that career progression would not lead to employee turnover intention and is statistically significant. This significant influence of career progression is because it passed test of significance. The t-statistics of career progression also accounted for significance negative variation in dependent variable, turnover intention (P = -4.806, P<05). And as a result, null hypothesis is accepted and alternate hypothesis rejected. Career progression has negative relationship with turnover intention.

5.7. Pearson Correlation Test

Table 5 shows the result of correlation between career progression and turnover intention i.e. ($r = -0.395$, $P < 0.05$). The correlation measured the result of degree of linear association between the given variables for the research. The result of the correlation revealed that a negative association exists between career progression and turnover intention ($T1 = -0.395$). The negative coefficient means that decrease in career progression will lead to increase in employee turnover intention.

5.8. Discussion of Findings

Career progression had a negative and significant influence on employee turnover intention at 5% level of significance. The findings was in line with the findings of Korsakiene *et al.* (2014), Kim (2012), Stahl *et al.* (2009), Adeboye and Adegoroye (2012), Wimalasiri and Jayatilake (2016) and Usman and Jangraiz (2015) that career progression have negative relationship with turnover intention. This research therefore suggest that we should accept the null hypothesis that career progression is negatively related to turnover intention.

It would be observed in Table 4 that the coefficient of determination (adj .R²) value of 0.611, that is 61.1% of the systematic variation in employee turnover intention was explained by career progression. The remaining 38.9% was captured by the error terms. This means that the model overall was good for statistical predictions. The value $F = 20.556$ with ($P < 0.05$) showed that the model is significant, thus it can be assumed that an inverse relationship exist between the variable in the model.

Table 5 showed the result of correlation between career progression and turnover ($r = -0.395$, $p < 0.05$). It showed that a negative relationship exists between career progression and turnover intention.

6. CONCLUSION

The study addressed to what extent career progression influence turnover intention, from the result above, the empirical support of the hypothesis is obvious. The empirical result from the regression showed that career progression and turnover intention had significant negative relationship at 5% level of significance. This implies that when employees are denied career progression they will intend to leave.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

In line with the empirical findings with the multiple results, the recommendation are made accordingly.

1. The study recommended that employees should be offered opportunity for career progression to enables them excel in their chosen career.
2. The study recommended that management should not pay lip service on issues bordering on career progression as this would lead to disloyalty and lack of commitment to the organization. A disloyal and non committed employee often leave the organization.
3. The study recommended fair and just practices when handling issues related to career progression in organization.

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