



RESEARCH PAPER

Investigation of the Intention to Leave of Women who Work as Salesperson in the Retail Industry Within The Scope Of Expectation Theory: A Qualitative Research

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the turnover intentions of female employees working in the marketing department in the retail sector as an aisle salesperson. The Expectation Theory was applied as a frame for understanding the motivations of these employees' voluntarily leave intentions. In this study, face-to-face interviews were made with a semi-structured interview form. Data was collected from the female employees of a company that has 24 branches in Ankara, and 6 in different cities in the grocery retailing industry with 171 employees. The qualitative data were analyzed with the QDA Miner program and then interpreted. According to the results, the motivation level of female employees is affected by their moral expectations as well as their financial expectations. For reducing the female turnover rate, organizations should apply the motivation tools and take the necessary measures.

Keywords: Turnover Rate, Female Employees, Retail, Expectation Theory, Intention To Leave

Received: 01.01.2021

Accepted: 22.01.2021

Suggested Citation: Baltacı, A, Balkaő Demir, S. (2021). Investigation of the Intention to Leave of Women who Work as Salesperson in the Retail Industry Within The Scope Of Expectation Theory: A Qualitative Research, *Journal of Management, Economic and Marketing Research*, 5(1), 41-56.

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INTRODUCTION

Employee turnover has substantial costs for organizations, so the managers should understand the motivating factors for the employee turnovers for finding proper solutions. Employees have different reasons as; the working atmosphere, salary, lack of promotable status, relations with colleagues and-or managers for leaving their organizations. Since motivation is one of the most substantial needs for an employee, this research takes the concept from the motivation frame of Expectancy Theory. On the other hand, there are different motivators for every employee when considering the personal differences. For managing the organization properly, managers should know the characteristics of the employees and their motivators.

Human capital is one of the most substantial components of the marketing operation in the retail industry. Employing the best employees for the marketing department might help the organization for gaining a competitive advantage against the competitors in the market. Since marketing is the only money-making department in the organization, having competent and loyal employees may help to achieve organizational goals easier. Thus, the steadiness of the human capital is a substantial component of a successful marketing system. In other words, a high level of employee turnover may affect negatively the sustainability of the marketing activities. For achieving success in employee retention, the motivators of the intention for leaving the organization must be understood.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Employee Turnover and Intention to Leave

Employee turnover is defined as the replacement rate in an organization, within a fixed period (Kılıç, 2004). Wanous (1978) asserts that employee turnover has two types as voluntary and involuntarily. Voluntarily leaving happens when an employee resigns from the organization for personal reasons. Contrary to this, involuntarily leaving is an output of external factors (employer might not be the only reason) cause employees to leave the organization (Ozuem ve Pigitala, 2019). This research is applying the voluntarily leaving frame.

Intention to leave is the behavior of ending the relationship with the employed organization in a voluntary, conscious, and intentional manner by employees Mobley et al., 1978; Tett ve Meyer, 1993; Hom ve Griffeth, 1995). The result of the high level of employee turnover rate is the increasing financial costs, enables competitors to learn the organizational secrets, and decreases employee loyalty (Mai et al., 2016).

The employee turnover concept has been investigated by many disciplines as; sociology, management, economy, etc. Every discipline took the subject from their perspective and applied different research methods to interpret it (Haris et al. 2002). The concept is widely discussed, and there are many different models in the literature. Frequently referred models are given in Table-1 chronologically.

Table 1: Frequently referred models of Intention to Leave and Employee Turnover,

Name of the Model	Definition
March & Simon's Model (1958)	This model interprets the leaving decisions of employees under two factors. These are perceived ease and desire of movement. Perceived ease of movement is about the opportunities and alternatives, and the perceived desire to move is about work satisfaction. This model asserts that employees' intention to leave decreases by the effect of incentives.
Porter &	According to this model, "Discrepancy between what a person encounters on this job in form of positive and negative experiences and what he expects to encounter". Based on this

Steers Met Expectations Model (1973)	information, the intention to leave an employee increases because of the unmet expectations. In addition to this, job satisfaction also has a positive effect on the met expectations.
Mobley Intermediate Linkages Model (1977)	Mobley indicates three cognitions may transform to employee turnover: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Thinking of leaving,- Evaluating the job alternatives,- Intention to leave. This theory asserts that dissatisfaction is a trigger for thinking of leaving. That is also an emotional and cognitive process.
Sheridan & Abelson Cusp Catastrophe Model of Turnover (1983)	According to this model, organizational commitment and employee turnover are in correlation with each other. Also, this model indicates that intention to leave is a dynamic and impermanent structure. Because of this, it may be triggered by sudden and unexpected changes. The model also asserts that employees are intending to work in the same place as much as they can, and define this as delay rule. Two factors affect the withdrawal. The first one is the splitting factor, and the second one is the attractor.
Jackofsky An Integrated Process Model (1984)	According to this model, ease of movement depends on the number of alternatives in the market. Intention to leave is in interaction with the job satisfaction and intra-organizational factors. These two issues are asserted as triggers of the voluntary intention of leaving. According to Jackofsky, rewards are in correlation with job performance. It is expected that highly talented employees are deemed to have great rewards. These rewards may increase the loyalty of the employees. Highly awarded employees may engage the attention of the competitors, and they may try to have those employees.
Price Causal Model of Turnover (2001)	External variables of this model are environmental, personal, and structural. The environmental variables are non-work settings about the intention to stay in the company. In other words, intention to leave may increase with the rising job opportunities in the market. With the increasing opportunities, employees would evaluate the benefits, costs, and risks of leaving the organization. The satisfaction level of the employee is affected negatively when the benefits of the alternative jobs are higher. Kinship is another reason for the intention to leave. The employee would intend to stay if his/her relatives are living close to the employee's working place. Salary also affects the intention to leave directly. Another substantial factor for intention to leave is education.
Mitchell Et al. Job Embeddedness Model (2001)	Mitchell et al. assert that intention to leave begins when the employee evaluates the current situation. Employees are judging their jobs about their satisfaction level of material and moral issues about it. If their expectations are not satisfied well, their job dissatisfaction and intention to leave may increase. According to the model, there are three paths for employee evaluation about the intention to leave. These are: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- The first path occurs when the employee has no alternative plan for an

unexpected situation.

- The second path occurs when the employee feels violated by the working environment.
- The third path occurs when the employee is deliberate about leaving the job.

Based on this information, it can be said that the process has physiological aspects.

Cited by: March ve Simon, 1958; Porter ve Steers, 1973; Mobley, 1977; Sheridan ve Abelson, 1983; Jackofsky, 1984; Price, 2001; Mitchell et al., 2001

As seen in Table-1, employees are evaluating their experiences about their workplaces and compare this information with other ones. Since employees intend to maximize their material and moral expectations, they are investigating the opportunities in the market for achieving that aim. If their expectations have not met well, then they intend to leave.

Expectations Theory

According to expectations theory, people decide between a set of alternatives. This theory asserts that behavior is an output of three components called; expectation, valence, and instrumentality (Chiang et al., 2008). The equation of this model and the definition of the components are given in Table-2.

Table 2: Expectation, Valence, and Instrumentalit

Motivation = Expectation x Instrumentality x Valence	
Expectation (Effort)	The expectation is an evaluation of an employee, about the possibilities that he/she can calculate about his/her efforts. The value of this parameter changes between 0 to 1. If the employee believes that his/her efforts are enough to achieve success, then the value of the expectation is 1. When it is opposite, the value is 0.
Instrumentality (Performance)	Instrumentality is a result of the employee's evaluation of his/her performance and the results of this level of performance. As same as expectation, the value of this parameter is between 0 to 1. If an employee believes that result of high performance is always a salary increase, then the value of the instrumentality is 1 to this person. If the employee can not relate the high performance and salary increase, then the value of instrumentality is 0 for this case.
Valence (Reward)	Valence is the level of desire of an employee for an achievable reward with effort. Every different type of reward as; salary increase, getting appreciated, being accepted, etc. may have a different meaning for the employee. On the contrary to expectation and instrumentality, valence can be a negative value. If the employee has a great desire to achieve the reward, that means the valence value is positive. Otherwise, it is negative. If the employee is insensible for the reward, then the value of the valence is 0. The value of the valence is between -1 to +1. On the other hand, the reward has value since it is about the needs of the employee. That is why valence is also about the Expectations Theory.

Cited: Lunenburg, 2011; Chaudary, 2014

This theory was applied as a base for the Porter and Steers' (1973) met expectations model of the employee turnover. According to this theory, employees make assumptions for the results of their behaviors and adjust their working performance upon this (Chen and Fang, 2008). We prefer to apply the Expectations Theory frame for this research, because of its practical approach to interpreting human behavior and financial aspects together.

METHOD

The population of this research is the Turkish saleswomen in the retail industry. According to the Turkish Employment Agency, the total number of workers in the retail industry is almost 447.000, and approximately 116.600 of them are women (İŞKUR, 2018). Convenience sampling method has been applied data was collected from a company that has 171 employees. The company permitted the data collection under the term of not to expose any of the employee and company name. Also, the company executives indicated that participating in this research is a voluntary decision of their employees. In other words, they would not push their employees to participate. For collecting the data, face-to-face interviews made with 30 voluntary participants by a semi-structured question form. The data was collected between 15.09.2019 and 15.12.2019. The qualitative data were analyzed with the QDA Miner program and then interpreted.

The accounting department of the company provided the secondary data as; turnover rate, the number of employees, etc. The qualitative data were analyzed with the QDA Miner program and then interpreted. The constraints of this research are given below:

Secondary data as turnover rate, number of employees, etc. were obtained from the accounting department of the company.

The constraints of this research are given below:

- Because of the time and financial constraints the data was collected from the 30 participants.
- The participants may abstain from expressing all their opinions and feelings.
- Turnover rate might be fallacious since the company had expanded the business two times more for the last six months. The turnover rate has increased during that period.

FINDINGS

The company where we collected data was established in 2000. It has 30 branches and serving in the bakery department of hypermarkets with 171 employees. Information about the employees of this company are below:

- Number of saleswomen: 56
- Number of salesmen: 16
- Total salesperson: 72
- Average working days of the current saleswomen: 1263 days
- Average working days of the current salesman: 932 days
- Average working days of all employees: 1193 days

The general output of the frequency analysis shows that:

- 65% of the participants were expected to getting promoted soon,
- 80% of them feel that they were in seeking more attention from the company,
- All participants indicated that they would like to work in that company until they get retired,
- Also, they all mentioned that their motivation is affected by the people they work together.
- 86% of them said they were feeling the support of their employer.

Participants also asked about their feelings about the contribution of the coworkers on their motivation. A1 (Works as a department chief) impressed the importance of being a team as; *“Teamwork is necessary for us. When one of the rings is broken, the chain collapses. I am working with the best production personnel in the company, and that is a plus. But many members of the salesforce are new people and that is sometimes hard to manage. Whatever it is, we are all trying to work with a high level of motivation.”*. C12 said, *“What we do is*

teamwork. *Tranquility is a must for our harmony. When everyone in the team is tranquil, our motivation rises. I think the level of our team communication is good. That also affects our motivation in a positive way. Both newcomers and outgoers have a significant impact on this*". Based on these statements, it can be interpreted that the level of communication is a substantial component of the work motivation for saleswomen in the retail industry. Also, saleswomen are intended to be at the same time with the people that they can work in harmony. A1 indicated that *"I think our managers should ask more about our opinions when they are deciding the members of the teams. They can not always know the relation between the employees. Some of us hate each other"*.

The participants were asked about their opinions about their level of acceptance by the organization. C4 told, *"I believe the level of acceptance is about my level of doing my work right. As much as I make it right, they would accept me more"*. B1 thinks similar to C4 *"I believe I am good at my work. This is a determinant. If I get outperform they would accept me more"*. It seems that the saleswomen are associating their acceptance with their level of performance. So, it can be said that acceptance expectation is a motivator for saleswomen.

Most of the participants expressed their expectations about an increase in their salary. C7 told, *"Yes, considering my performance, I believe I already deserve an increase"*. B1 said, *"As I said, I believe I am doing my work well. Probably our company is also observing that. They would reward my performance"*. C6 seems she is not quite sure about her situation *"I can not make a proper evaluation, but I believe the company will give me what I deserve"*. According to their responses, participants are expecting an increase in their salary for their efforts.

When their opinions asked about the bonus system, saleswomen indicated that they believe it is a substantial extra profit to their effort. But they seem they are slightly satisfied with the current system of the company. Also, the dissatisfaction with this issue is a demotivating issue for their work performance. Participant D2 said, *"The bonus system does not reward our efforts every time. If you ask me, it is not enough nor fair. Our company should rearrange it. It is a substantial motivation tool for us"*. C5 told, *"It is not enough or not fair. Every store should have its evaluation criteria set, based on their working conditions. I wish everyone could get a fair amount of bonus"*. A1 indicated that the bonus system should be more motivating *"The system should be redesigned more satisfactory and fairly. I believe mega branches must have privileges"*.

Participants alleged that they could be more successful with an increase in the side benefits. C5 said, *"I am expecting a bit more support for the transportation and food fares"*. A2 stated that *"Physical facilities of our branch are adequate and our team members are congruous. Well these are surely good but what about increasing the transportation and food fares?"*. From this point of view, it can be said that an increase in the side benefits on the saleswomen would increase their organizational loyalty, motivation, and success.

When the participants were asked about their expectations of getting a promotion, participant D2 said *"I have that expectation, and I am putting more effort forth for achieving this"*. Participant A1 said, *"Once my executive offered me that, but I refused. I am not complaining about my current position in fact I am happy with it"*. That shows that employees are not only working for the promotion but also keeping their current positions. Participant A2 seems confident with the companies evaluations *"I believe they will make the right decision when considering my performance"*.

All the participants expressed that they want to work in this company until they retire but, they also added that issue is dependent on the future conditions and mutual agreements between them and the company. When they are asked about their motivation to stay C7 participants said that *"Because I like to be in that industry and my company"*; participant A2 said, *"I am working in this company for 6 years and wish to go on. I think permanency is important, and I like persistence"*.

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Having a qualified workforce and developing their qualities are vital importance for hypermarkets of the retail industry. Human capital is the critical component for gaining a competitive advantage.

Under these conditions choosing the right employees, training and preserving them, increasing their performance, and sustaining this system is a must for companies. Companies with a high level of employee turnover rate would strain to achieve their goals.

Productivity is affected negatively when the employee turnover rate is high in the industries where the human interaction is high. This negativity also increases the costs as; selection, placement, and training of the human resources. Thereby, companies should detect why their employees are leaving them if they have a high turnover rate. According to the findings, the saleswomen are not well satisfied with their financial gainings. Salary and side benefits may increase the employee turnover rate if they are unsatisfying. The relationship between wage and labor turnover rate is based on "Equity Theory" (Adams, 1963). The employee compares the salary earned with time, experience, effort, and education for spending to perform a job or task. As a result of this comparison, the employee who perceives inequality will experience loss of motivation, low performance, and intention to leave. The main reasons for employee turnover are low salary structure and deficiencies in benefits (Angel ve Cannella, 2004; Shukla ve Sinha, 2013: 58). Employees always look for opportunities that they can earn higher wages. Even if other conditions are improved, employees who make a lower salary by doing similar jobs will always be looking for new job opportunities (Handelsman, 2009). The structure of low wage is the main reason employees underperform (Rampur, 2009), and it increases the turnover of the workforce (Liu ve Regmi; 2015: 19). Wage structure and promotion system affect the employee's job satisfaction (Rizwan ve Mukhtar, 2014: 89). Therefore, increasing job satisfaction would decrease employee turnover (Dole and Schroeder, 2001). Otherwise, if the employee turnover rate keeps remaining, it will cause permanent problems for the organization (Armstrong, 2003). Companies in the hypermarket industry usually assess their salary policy based on the market conditions, and companies are usually unable to change these conditions. Companies may increase the side benefits when it is not possible to increase the salary. These may work as a barrier to the employee turnover rate. A premium system is another tool that companies can apply. The bonus system should be designed well and fairly. Otherwise, it may cause a disturbance on saleswomen and decrease their motivation. A win-win deal between employees and the company is a must.

Employee turnover is affected by factors that can be controlled in terms of organization. These are working conditions, wage structure, loss of motivation, and reward system (Magalla, 2011). The findings of this research support that assertion since the saleswomen indicated their expectation to promote as regards their performance. This expectation increases their motivation and performance. Employees are motivated not only by the financial gainings but also the desire to achieve their career goals is a factor (Akinyomi, 2016: 110). The managers should consider the future career expectations of the employees. Also, developing a manager - employee dialogue is considered a retention strategy.

According to our findings, another substantial motivator for the saleswomen in the retail industry is their interaction with coworkers. Thereby, retail organizations have better establish their teams with the people who may interact effectively. To this end, organizational culture should be created for mutual understanding, respect, and interdepartmental cooperation (Zhang, 2016: 89). Organizations have better harmonize their career management systems with the employee career expectations to gain a win-win perspective. Also, training and personnel development planning should be designed from this perspective. This approach may help organizations to keep the employee turnover rate at an acceptable level.

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understanding, respect, and interdepartmental cooperation (Zhang, 2016: 89). When employees begin to work for their benefits instead of team synergy, then the employee turnover rate might increase in the long term.

Image-1 shows the model of “Loyal and Highly Motivated Saleswomen” based on the literature and the findings of this research.

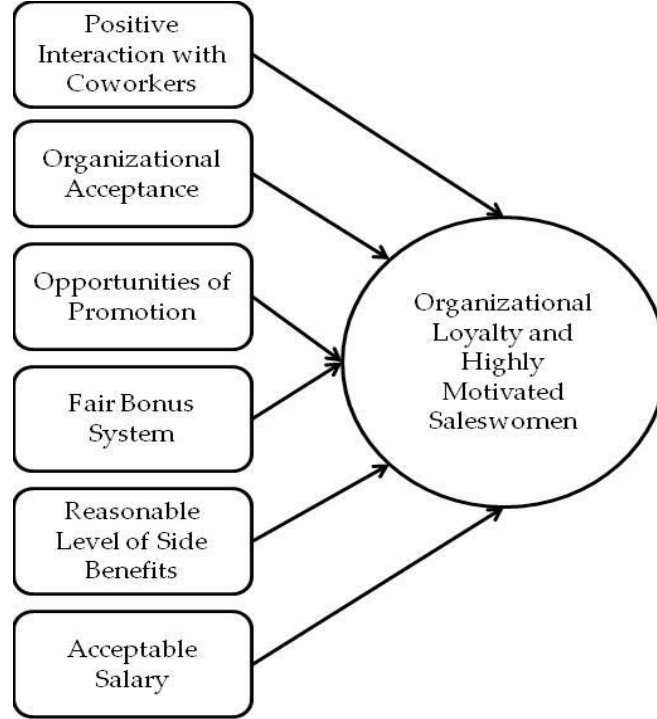


Image-1: Research Model

Companies in the retail industry could apply some precautions for decreasing the employee turnover rate. Fair opportunities for promoting, in-service training, reasonable salary, acceptable side benefits, satisfactory bonus system, participative management, and acceptable physical conditions are possible preventive tools for organizations to apply against high employee turnover rate. We recommend applying quantitative methods to these dimensions for further researches. With that, it would be possible to estimate the weight of these dimensions on the dependent variable.

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