

Factors Affecting the Turnover of Entry-Level Employees in Housekeeping Department in Five Star Hotels

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Abstract

This research aims to investigate the factors that affect entry-level employees' turnover in the housekeeping department at five star hotels in Cairo, Egypt. To achieve this aim, a self-administered questionnaire was used as a quantitative method with entry-level employees (Guest Room Attendants) in a sample of five star hotels in Cairo. For this purpose, 10 hotels were selected as a convenience sample. A total of 300 questionnaire forms were distributed to a convenience sample of entry-level employees (GRAs) among them 250 were valid for analysis. Moreover, a face to face semi-structured interview was conducted with housekeeping managers and human resources managers in order to identify the practices taken to reduce employee turnover in the housekeeping department. The findings revealed that there was a significant relationship between employee turnover intentions and employee compensation, employee work environment, and employee work engagement. The research concluded that to reduce employee turnover in the housekeeping department, the human resources management should use career promotion as an important factor to increase employee loyalty and employee retention.

Keywords: Employee turnover, employee compensation, employee work environment, employee work engagement, housekeeping department, hotels.

Introduction

Housekeeping is one of the hotel's departments that have a huge labor. Maintaining the hotel's cleanliness and aesthetic appeal is the main responsibility of the housekeeping staff. The first impression created by the guest is when he enters the hotel room and judges it in terms of room decor and comfort (Joshi, 2016). The goal of all accommodation establishments is to get more safe, appealing, convenient, and friendly environments for their customers that provide value for money. Nothing in a hospitality operation sends a powerful message than cleanliness. Upon entering a property safe, clean, and conveniently organized room, no degree of service, kindness, or splendor can equal the sensation a guest has (Raghubalan and Raghubalan, 2018). Housekeeping is one of the broadest departments in the hotels and plays a very vital role in the guest relationships as it serves back of the house. However, housekeeping is known as both very hard and less reputable work.

The housekeeping department is coping with the industry's highest workforce turnover (Nayak *et al.*, 2015). Employee turnover is one of the biggest challenges in the hospitality industry (Faldetta *et al.*, 2013). A drop in the number of employees makes it necessary to establish the potential factors behind the turnover of employees. Many staff quit the company because they are paid more at other firms.

Chan et al. (2011) declared that employee turnover is a significant problem, especially in the field of human resources management. Nayak et al. (2015) clarified that some employees are dismissed from an organization because they do not fulfill the organization's criteria.

Many employees are searching for other businesses that can grow better. Others quit the company to pursue their education. Many employees enter the industry at a very young age because of their experience. Over time, however, they try to seek higher learning, or transfer to other organizations to improve or better give their working conditions. Some workers quit the company because of unavoidable factors such as injuries that momentarily, permanently or inability the employee to do their ordinary job. Others may be due to the lack of sense, a lack of working atmosphere or a lack of job security when employees quit the organizations (Nwobia & Aljohani, 2017).

Employee turnover is a costly expense especially in poor wages job positions for which employee turnover is the highest rate. There are several reasons positioned in the turnover rate of employees of any organization and they will come from both the employer and the employees. Salaries, business benefits, attendance of staff and job efficiency are all variables that play an important role in success turnover of employees (Singh, 2015).

This research aims to investigate the factors that affect entry-level employees' turnover in the housekeeping department at five-star hotels. To achieve this aim, the following objectives are identified as follows:

- To identify the factors that affect entry-level employees turnover in the housekeeping department at five star hotels.
- To state the strategies taken by the managers to reduce employee turnover in the housekeeping department.
- To establish a set of recommendations and suggestions about solving the issue of employee turnover in the housekeeping department.

Literature Review

Employee turnover

Beam (2009) mentioned that employee turnover is an evaluation portion of the organization over a certain period of time, and substituted by average total number of employees. "Employee turnover indicates to the percentage of employees who quit the company, calculated as a proportion of the total numbers of employees during a fixed amount of time (usually annually)" (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, 2014). When employees quit an organization, employee turnover takes place and new hires have to be substituted. In addition, employee turnover is an alternation between various companies, professions and job (Kunu *et al.*, 2017).

The main causes of employee turnover can be summarized as follows:

Poor Human Resources Management. Employee turnover may increase as a result of poor human resource management. For example, employees who voluntarily leave an organization, usually have an exit interview with a member of the HR staff. The interview's goal is to provide the organization with information about the worker's

motivation to quit. A planned exit interview that performs poorly may unable to offer the company with critical information about employee morale, workplace attitudes, or other information needed to keep a satisfied and efficient labor. Instability in an organization's management leads to high employee turnover (Nillos, 2015).

Compensation. It refers to all shapes of wages and rewards that employers give employees in exchange for performing their duties (Maimako & Bambale, 2016). Benefits are programs offered by an employer to supplement the salary for an employee (Schlechter, *et al.*, 2015). Pension plans, health insurance, and tuition reimbursement schemes are all possible benefits. Salary is one of the most influential elements in employee turnover (Emirolu, *et al.*, 2015). Employee turnover in the hospitality industry is influenced by compensation and extrinsic rewards, according to AlBattat *et al.*, (2014). High employee turnover may also be caused by poor working conditions, inadequate training, and unsatisfactory salaries.

Work Environment. It relates to the working conditions under which employees must fulfill their duties on a daily basis. These include work schedules, reports, supervisors, work conditions and flexibility in working conditions, between other employees (Lee *et al.*, 2015). Coworkers' emotional support was found to be negatively linked to turnover (Subramanian & Shin, 2013). Many staff are quitting from an organization to another as they want a suitable work environment. According to Kruja *et al.* (2016), it is critical to make employees feel that they are a member of the organization's team. Employees who work in a supportive group environment decrease the employees' intentions to leave (Li, *et al.*, 2017).

Career development. It involves creating opportunity for promotion within an organization by providing opportunity for training and skills development that allows employees to improve their employability in the market" (Das and Baruah, 2013). Furthermore, Arnold *et al.* (2019) noted that three forms of career development in business enterprises have recently been conducted: Transfer or promotion of work from one place to another; top management career planning through employee data gathering, job matching and future occupation data collection, and career development directed individual basis. Organizational support for career development has been linked to a decrease in employee voluntary turnover because employees are more likely to consider career development opportunities within the business as high (Kraimer *et al.*, 2011). As a result, employees with better career adaptability have higher job satisfaction and have less intention to leave their companies (Chan & Mai, 2015).

Engagement and Embeddedness. Reducing Employee engagement and loyalty might result in increased turnover rates as mentioned by (Karatepe *et al.*, 2013). Individuals are more inspired to put forth greater effort when they see positive aspects of organizational collaboration. They are more likely to stay when empowered as stated by (Raub & Robert, 2013). Employees would feel more empowered and engaged as a result, which might contribute to improved performance and job satisfaction as clarified by (Biswas & Bhatnagar, 2013).

In the hotel business, there is a link between job embeddedness and worker intention (Robinson *et al.*, 2014)

A Conceptual Framework to Measure the Factors Affecting the Turnover of Entry-Level Employee

The conceptual framework (Fig. 1) for this research was developed by the researcher utilizing literature and evidence acquired with respect of the research problem. Based on the framework the research hypotheses are proposed as follows:

H1: There is a negative relationship between employee turnover intention and employee compensation.

H2: There is a negative relationship between employee turnover intention and employee work environment.

H3: There is a negative relationship between employee turnover intention and employee work engagement.

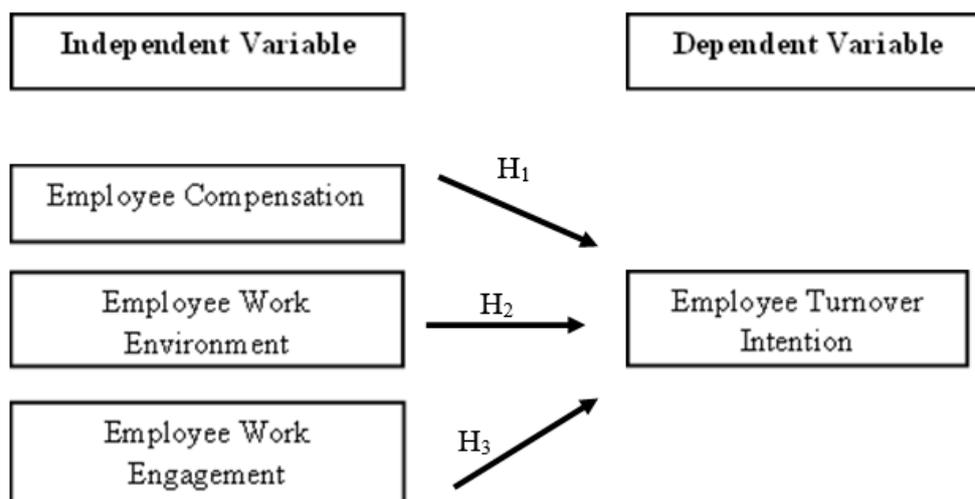


Figure 1: The Proposed Conceptual Framework

Methodology

The Research Instrument

The research used two instruments. Firstly, a questionnaire survey as an instrument for collecting data. The questionnaire form included four main parts. The first part covered the respondents' profile, e.g. gender, age, marital status and educational level. The second part covered the objective data that consists of four questions. Part three was to identify the entry-level employees' perspectives towards the reasons of leaving their jobs by using Likert scale starting with 1 "strongly disagree" and ending with 5 "strongly agree", it consists of four groups of items. The compensation scale (CS) was measured using a 5-item scale developed by Mensah (2014). The work environment scale (WES) was measured using a 7-item scale developed by Rossberg et al. (2004). The work engagement scale (WES) was measured using a 14-item scale developed by Schaufeli et al. (2002).

The turnover intention scale (TIS) was measured using a 7-item scale developed by Khan and Du (2014). Part four of the questionnaire was for any additional comments or suggestions of the employees to write it down. Secondly, a face-to-face semi-structured

interview was conducted with a sample of hotel housekeeping managers and human resources managers in order to identify the practices taken to reduce employee turnover in the housekeeping department.

Research Population and Sampling Technique

The research was conducted on a convenience sample of five-star hotels in Cairo. According to the published statistics by the Egyptian Hotel Association (2015-2016), there are 33 five-star hotels in Cairo. Ten five-star hotels in Cairo were purposely chosen to achieve the aim of the research.

The pilot study was conducted during August 2021. A total of 300 questionnaire forms were distributed (30 forms in each hotel), among them, 250 completed forms were valid for analysis, representing 83.3% response rate.

Data Analysis

A Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS version 25) was used for data analysis. Descriptive analysis was conducted to illustrate respondents’ profile. Moreover, content analysis was adopted to analyze the results with regard to the qualitative data analysis.

Results and Discussion

Descriptive Analysis of respondents’ profile

The profile of respondents included their gender, age, marital status, educational level, experience years, and Future plan for professional career (see Table 2).

Table 2: Profile of respondents’ analysis			
Profile	of respondent	Freq.	%
Personal Data			
Gender	Male	186	74.4
	Female	64	25.6
Age	Under 25 years	89	35.6
	From 25 to less than 35 years	111	44.4
	From 35 to less than 45 years	30	12.0
	Over 45 years	20	8.0
Marital status	Single	63	25.2
	Married	18	7.2
	Married with children	158	63.2
	Widower / Divorced	11	4.4
Educational level	Illiterate	10	4.0
	Literacy	12	4.8
	Basic education (preparatory)	26	10.4
	Secondary School/ Technical Diploma	104	41.6
	Hotel Diploma institute	51	20.4
	College or higher institute for tourism and	21	8.4

	Other University or higher institute degree	26	10.4
Objective Data			
Experience Years	Less than 1 year	3	1.2
	From 1 to 2 years	5	2.0
	More than 2 to 5 years	51	20.4
	More than 5 years to 10 years	110	45.2
	More than 10 years to 15 years	61	24.4
	More than 15 years	20	8.0
Future plan for professional life	Get promotion in the same department	125	50.0
	Transfer to another department or management	93	37.2
	Changing Career	30	12.0
	Other	2	0.8

Regarding to gender, the tabulated data shows that males represent 74.4% of the all respondents, while females represent 25.6%. This can be explained on the basis that this job needs high physical efforts, so most of the employees were males.

According to age, the category (less than 25 years) represents 35.6% of all respondents, while 12.0% of them had age category (from 35 to less than 45 years). The low percentage 8.0% respondents were (Over than 45 years) the highest percentage of employees' ages was found in the range (from 25 to less than 35 years) which represents 44.4%. This indicates that the youth segment is predominated in such hard job.

The obtained results indicate that status of (Married with children) occupy higher percentage representing 63.2% of the sample, whereas (Widower / Divorced) employees are lowest representing 4.4% of the sample, (single) status percentage representing 25.2% and married with no children housekeeping employees presenting 7.2% of the total sample. These findings stated that inspite the difficult job of housekeeping but there is a noticeable percentage of ladies having children. This can be attributed to the need of ladies to such job.

In terms of educational level of the respondents, Secondary School or Technical Diploma had the highest percentage which represents 41.6% of all respondents. Furthermore, 4.0% had an illiterate. Literacy has 4.8% of the total sample, where 10.4% were the percentage of Basic education (preparatory) and University degree or higher institute, Hotel Diploma had 20.4%. College or higher institute for tourism and hotels has 8.4%. In this respect, it is obvious that the percentage of university graduates was relatively low and who had intermediate education represented the major segment, meanwhile those illiterate and literacy constituted the lowest segment. These findings seem logic with housekeeping department.

According to the experience years in the housekeeping department, the analysis clearly depicts that, 45.2% of respondents had more than 5 to 10 years' experience in the housekeeping department, compared to 24.4% who have more than 10 to 15 years of experience. 20.4% of them have more than 2 to 5 years of experience. However, only 8.0% work over than 15 years in the housekeeping department, from 1 to 2 years

represent 2.0%, and less than 1 year experience were 1.2%. In this respect, the dominant segment of housekeeping employees had 5-10 per years. Those who worked for longer period, i.e. more than 15 years were relatively of low percentage namely; 8.0%. This indicates the noticeable turnover phenomenon in such department.

Regarding to the future plan for professional career for employees in the housekeeping department, the analysis clearly depicts that, 50.0% of employees need to get promotion within the housekeeping department, compared to 37.2% who prefer to transfer to another department. Some 12.0% of employees want to change the career and leave the housekeeping department. However, only 0.8% of employees choose another answer with no specifications. In this respect, the dominant segment of housekeeping employees need

to get promotion. These findings indicated that housekeeping employees should be motivated through promotion to retain them.

Scale Reliability

Cronbach’s coefficient alpha was used to measure the internal consistency of the scale. A minimum level of the Cronbach’s coefficient alpha is 0.7. The higher level of the Cronbach’s coefficient alpha indicates greater value (see Table 3).

Table 3: Reliability of the Scales used in the Study			
Scale Item	Mean	Standard Deviation	Cronbach's Alpha
A: Compensation Scale			
1. I earn more than others who occupy similar positions in my hotel.	3.9423	1.00477	0.774
2. The non-monetary benefits, such as vacation time and medical insurance that I receive here are better than those I could get at other hotels.	4.4000	0.66466	
3. People who are hardworking and results-oriented are rewarded in this hotel.	3.9000	1.22310	
4. The salary and benefits I receive in this hotel is commensurate with my responsibilities.	3.4000	1.28319	
5. Compensation is satisfactorily reviewed from time to time in this hotel.	4.1000	1.22310	
B: Work Environment Scale			
1. My job gives me a chance to apply all of my abilities.	4.2000	0.98176	0.802
2. My job helps me to have more confidence in myself.	4.1000	0.94529	
3. I feel nervous or worried on this job. *	3.4000	1.49967	
4. I feel that I get the support I need when I face difficult job problems.	3.9000	0.70140	
5. I can use my knowledge and experiences in this job.	3.8000	1.16853	
6. My manager always gives me a number of tasks more than the available time. *	4.0000	0.89622	
7. In this hotel, there is discrimination among the employees within the housekeeping department. *	2.9000	1.58114	
C: Work Engagement Scale			
1. At my workplace, I feel energetic.	3.9000	0.94529	
2. I find the work that I do in this hotel is full of meaning and purpose.	4.1000	0.94529	
3. I like to spend most of my time in the work.	4.5000	0.67217	
4. At my job in this hotel, I feel strong and vigor.	4.5000	0.50100	

(Continued)

Table 3 (Cont.)			
5. I am enthusiastic about my job with this hotel.	4.4000	0.66466	0.745
6. When I am working in this hotel, I forget everything else around me.	4.4000	0.66466	
7. When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work.	4.4000	0.66466	
8. I feel happy when I am working intensely in this hotel.	4.0000	1.00201	
9. I am proud of the work that I do in this hotel.	4.2000	0.60120	
10. I can continue working for long periods of time in this hotel.	4.4000	0.66466	
11. In this hotel, my job is challenging. *	2.9000	1.22310	
12. At my job, I am very resilient and mentally good.	4.4000	0.66466	
13. At my work I always persevere, even when things do not go well.	4.0000	1.00201	
14. It is difficult to detach myself from me job in this hotel. *	3.3000	1.27140	
D: Job Turnover Intention Scale			
1. I often think of leaving this hotel. *	2.5000	1.43465	0.816
2. I will resign from this hotel at the earliest possible opportunity. *	3.0000	1.41705	
3. If I could choose again, I would choose to work for the current hotel.	3.8000	1.16853	
4. The salary that I receive is equal to the physical effort that I do in this job.	4.1000	0.94529	
5. The physical effort that I do in my job has negative effect on continuing in the housekeeping department. *	2.6000	1.20241	
6. I think I am poorly paid compared to people working in other industries. *	3.1000	1.22310	
7. My current job is very stressful. *	3.6000	1.20241	

Note: (*) refers to reverse questions

The following are the major results gathered from the analysis of the scale:

In terms of compensation scale, table 3 shows (M= 3.94846, SD= 1.079764) that the majority of the employees which are 185 employees out of 250 select disagree which represent 74%. These findings agreed with the previous results of Kuria et al. (2012) study who found that just 26% of study participants in the hospitality industry felt their compensation and benefits was acceptable for the work they did.

According to working environment scale, table 3 shows (M= 3.7571, SD= 1.11057) indicating that the majority of the employees which are 165 employees out of 250 select agree which represent 66%. These findings agreed with the previous results of (Kurnia, 2019) study who found that the work environment has a negative and significant impact on turnover intentions.

Regarding to work engagement scale, table 3 shows (M= 4.1, SD= 0.82048) indicating that the majority of the employees which are 140 employees out of 250 select agree which represent 56%. These findings agreed with the previous results of (Karatepe *et al.*,

2013) study who found that a lack of employee engagement could lead to higher turnover rates.

In terms of job turnover intention scale, table 3 shows (M= 3.2428, SD= 1.2276) indicating that the majority of the employees which are 205 employees out of 250 select agree which represent 82% which show that the participants had a higher turnover intention than neutral views. These findings agreed with the American Hotel & Motel Association (2010) that conducted a research on the employee turnover ratio and discovered it to be the highest in the hotel industry.

Correlation Analysis

Correlation Analysis used to describe the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two variables.

The factors that affect the entry-level employees’ turnover intentions were investigated using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (see Table 4).

Table 4: Pearson Product-moment Correlations between the factors that affect entry-level employees and turnover intentions		
Factors	Turnover Intention	
Compensation	Pearson Correlation	- 0.340 **
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	250
Work Environment	Pearson Correlation	- 0.260 **
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001
	N	250
Work Engagement	Pearson Correlation	- 0.536 **
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	250

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

Testing Research Hypotheses

Research hypotheses were tested using Pearson product moment correlation coefficient (see Table 5).

The research hypothesized a negative relationship between compensation and employee turnover intention, which means that an increase in the compensation and benefits is associated with a decrease in employee turnover intention. The correlation analysis showed that there was a slightly negative correlation between compensation and employee turnover intention, (r - 0.340, Sig. = .000).

The correlation analysis showed a relationship between work environment and employee turnover intention (r - 0.260, Sig. = .001). Therefore, the results showed a significant slightly negative correlation between work environment and employee turnover intention.

The correlation analysis showed a relationship between work engagement and employee turnover intention ($r = -0.536$, Sig. = .000). Therefore, the results showed a strong negative correlation between work engagement and employee turnover intention.

Table 5: Summary of correlation analysis and testing hypotheses			
Hypothesized correlation	Pearson Correlation (r)	Sig. (2-tailed)	Hypothesis
H ₁ : Negative relationship between employee turnover intention and compensation	- 0.340 **	.000	Supported
H ₂ : Negative relationship between employee turnover intention and work environment	- 0.260 **	.001	Supported
H ₃ : Negative relationship between employee turnover intention and work engagement	- 0.536 **	.000	Supported

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

Major Findings of the Interview with the Managers

90% of the human resources managers respondents stated that there are several reasons that lead GRAs to leave the job which are: insufficient wages and salaries, poor human resources management, job insecurity, the huge physical effort in the job, new job opportunities, dissatisfaction with working environment, the shortage in the career growth on the job, the community’s perception has a negative view to the job. While (90%) of the housekeeping managers respondents illustrated that there are several reasons that lead GRAs to leave the job which are the difficulty of the promotions in the department and the salaries are not compatible with the physical effort.

80% of human resources managers respondents mention that employees are satisfied with their jobs for the following: 1) Human resources practices are fair enough. 2) The perception of entry-level employees on the hotel appreciation for what they have done, which leads to create an emotional relationship with the hotel and remain in their jobs. 3) When entry-level employees are rewarded and recognized for their performance, they are motivated which leads to job satisfaction (as agreed with Santhanam et al., (2015). On the other side 90% of housekeeping managers respondents mention that employees are satisfied with their jobs when they get appropriate wages and salaries, have enough benefits, and they work in a stable and pleasant working environment.

80% of the human resources managers respondents state that practices to reduce employee turnover in the housekeeping department at the hotel are: motivating the entry-level employees can contribute positively to the hotel productivity through: 1) Rewards such as: (gifts, fringe benefits, and incentives). 2) Performance feedback enables them to understand what they are doing correctly or incorrectly and provides them with a sense of direction. 3) Employee recognition is a powerful motivator that encourages people to strive for even greater success. By praising employees who deserve it, they boost employee morale and make them more committed. 4) Competitions among housekeeping

employees and honouring the employee winner. 5) Bringing motivational guest speakers to all housekeeping employees. 6) Organizing the employee of the month program. 7) An effective method for recruiting and selecting employees can be a strategy to reduce employee turnover. 8) Effective leadership styles, through a group of sessions were conducted for entry-level employees to be a good leader of team members. 9) Career promotion is an important factor to increase employee loyalty and employee retention. While 90% of the housekeeping managers respondents stated that practices to reduce employee turnover in the housekeeping department at the hotel are: Creating a healthy work environment that contains management support, rewards, and incentives should lead to retain employees as mentioned before by (Vasquez, 2014).

Conclusions and Recommendations

Employee turnover is one of the most important challenges in the hospitality industry. The Main Concern for most organizations, employee turnover is a costly expense especially in poor wages job positions for which employee turnover is the highest rate. Employee compensation, employee work environment, and employee work engagement are all factors that play an important role in success turnover of employees.

According to the obtained findings, some recommendations are suggested in order to better investigating the factors that affect entry-level employees' turnover in the housekeeping department at five star hotels. First, the human resources management should motivate the entry-level employees through rewards, benefits and incentives for their performance to encourage them to remain in their jobs. Second, the human resources management should appreciate the entry-level employees for their huge physical efforts through material and moral motivation. Third, the human resources management should create a stable and positive, safe, secure, clean and hygienic work environment for their employees. Fourth, the human resources management should increase the relationship of employees with their colleagues and also their supervisors by encouraging teamwork, idea sharing and group outings. Finally, the human resources management should use career promotion as an important factor to increase employee loyalty and employee retention

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