

Staff Turnover in National Non-governmental Organizations (NNGOs) in South Sudan: 2011-2021

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Abstract

The high turnover of staff is unhealthy for the smooth running of institutions since it affects the growth, profitability, beneficiary satisfaction and general reputation of the institution whenever it occurs in the workplace. This study focused on studying staff turnover in national non-governmental organizations in South Sudan. This was a qualitative study which adopted descriptive survey research design, which allowed the researcher to use semi-structured questionnaires when collecting the data. The survey method used in this study because the target population only composed of 30 employees from 30 organizations in South Sudan. The study employed purposive, sampling and convenience sampling techniques. A high response rate of 100% obtained. The study revealed that, poor remunerations and lack or inadequate fringe benefits, autocratic leadership style in which the manager retaining as much power and decision-making authority is more prevalent in NNGOs leading to staff turnover and poor working conditions contributed to staff turnover in national non-governmental organizations in South Sudan. The recommendations for this study are based on the observation of the data as reflected in the histograms, pie charts and tables under each research objective. The study therefore recommended that the management should improve the working conditions for the employees by ensuring a hazard free and safe environment, improving salaries, which also enhances efficiency and productivity. Management of national non-governmental organizations should improve their leadership styles by embracing transformational leadership.

Keywords: *Staff Turnover, Salary & Fringe benefits, Leadership styles, Poor working Conditions.*

Introduction

The Republic of South Sudan attained independence on 9th July 2011 after several decades of civil war. During 2011–2013, South Sudan had a short period of relative peace after its independence from Sudan. Donors started to plan for longer-term, more development-orientated funding, aligned with the government of South Sudan's Development Plan 2011–2013 [4]. This attracted many Non-Governmental Organizations both local and international. There is an estimated 650 Non-Governmental Organizations in South Sudan, categorized into International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) and National Non-Governmental

Organization (NNGOs). National non-governmental organizations (NNGOs) refer to those NGOs founded in South Sudan and headquartered in South Sudan [1].

According to the NGO Forum there are about 201 national non-governmental organizations (NNGOs) in South Sudan. Most of the 109 international NGOs deliver their services work through NNGOs [2]. These shifts are also taking place in the context of global commitments to 'localize' humanitarian response, with humanitarian organizations and donor governments committing to shift power and resources closer to affected populations [3].

Having skillful, honest, and dedicated employees in national non-governmental

organizations in South Sudan for a longer period can help them to achieve their goals and complete the projects successfully within a specific time frame and desired quality.

However, high turnover rate within national non-governmental organizations (NNGOs) in South Sudan continues to be a concern for them and various stakeholders [4]. This is because organizations spend a lot of resources in training and investing in their employees. Losing a talented and expert workforce will result in not having the competent staff to run the organization at various levels. Also, it will require new investments in human resources to close the competency gaps. If the company is aware of the most common causes of employee turnover, it would certainly be able to address them to operate effectively and efficiently. A need, therefore, arises to investigate the factors behind employee resignations in the NNGOs in South Sudan.

Review of Literature

Existing Solutions to the Problem

Salary, Fringe Benefits and Staff Turnover

It is often said that job dissatisfaction is the major cause of poor pay scale procedure, leading employees to leave the job. When employees "receive a lower salary and insufficient financial rewards, they tend to stay no longer with the organization [5]. This is in line with the findings of [6] who concluded that when high performers are insufficiently rewarded, they leave. Generally, employees who are paid handsomely are likely more committed to the company because they do not want to lose their high-paying jobs [7]. [8] conducted a study on the influence of remuneration on staff turnover in the humanitarian sector in Afghanistan. The study adopted descriptive survey design. The population of this study was drawn from the employees of various NGOs registered with the 4 NGO coordinating bodies. Data was collected through questionnaires distributed to 384 respondents. The study findings revealed that

remuneration was important in explaining staff turnover. The study recommended that the human resource managers should establish competitive human resource practices that are meant to control staff turnover.

[9] carried out a study to determine the factors affecting recruitment and retention of employees in the International Non-Governmental Organizations operating in Southern Sudan. The study was a descriptive survey. Chief among the factors that influence employee recruitment are pay attractiveness. The study recommended that the International NGOs working in southern Sudan should focus on and improve on pay attractiveness.

Leadership Style and Staff Turnover

Many organizations are facing turnover issues due to unsupportive leadership. Poor leadership can cause employee turnover, which ends up costing the organization time and [10]. According to [11] employees who claim to receive poor support from their leaders or organization are less committed to their job and prefer to leave the job, and thus, lead to intentional turnover. Similarly, [12] in a quantitative study on how leadership styles and followers' regulatory focus will mitigate followers' turnover intention, found that transformational leadership was unfavorably related to turnover intention.

[13] empirically examines, at the organizational level, the impact of quality public managers on turnover. The findings reveal that quality middle managers exert a significant and negative effect on organizational turnover and quality upper-level managers do not directly influence turnover. [14] carried out a quantitative study that seeks to discover the effects of poor managerial skills on employees and to assess if employees still quit regardless of conducive working conditions. The results of this study show that administrators and employees have a huge role to play in reducing the rate of turnover.

[15] undertook a study to investigate the relationship between leadership behaviors (transformational and transactional), satisfaction with the leaders, and voluntary turnover intention on 200 participants from National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I softball and volleyball assistant coaches in the USA. The outcome of their study showed significant negative correlation between transformational leadership style and voluntary turnover intention as well as the relationship between transactional leadership behaviour and voluntary organizational turnover intention. Based on the foregoing review, it was conjectured that transformational leadership behavior would have a significant inverse relationship with employees' turnover intention.

[16] carried out a study to explore the possibilities and methods of retaining great employees without undue sacrifices on the part of managers, leaders, and employees, while at the same time allowing an organization to develop and progress. The study concluded that styles of leadership and followership have a direct impact on employee turnover or retention. This is in line with the research conducted on the state of South African Training industry which indicated that management style was the most prominent retention factor in South Africa [17].

[18] carried out a study to establish the relationship between leadership style, organizational climate, employee commitment and employee retention in Non-Governmental Organizations operating in Juba-South Sudan. The study used a cross sectional research design using 269 questionnaires. The study revealed that leadership style is a predictor for staff retention. The study recommends that for the NGOs who operate in conflict and humanitarian areas like South Sudan, concentrate on leadership styles to retain good talents. However, the study had limitations such as concentrating on NGOs in Juba only and selecting respondents from both international and national Non-Governmental Organizations.

Career Development Opportunities and Staff Turnover

Investing in employee professional development is a high-commitment human resource strategy that offers organizations a competitive advantage by enhancing the skills and knowledge of their employees as well as increasing employee commitment and motivation [19]. When employees are satisfied with and have positive perceptions of career development opportunities, they are more likely to remain with the organization.

[20] carried out to explore the impact of work support and potential for career advancement on the nurse turnover intention to find an effective approach to curb high turnover. It was a cross-sectional survey of 526 nurses from eight teaching hospitals in Tianjin, China, was conducted to test the hypothesized multilevel model. The study showed a lack of work support and career advancement negatively and directly associated with nurse turnover intention. This is in line with the study by Mendis [21] whose study findings also revealed that career commitment strongly predicts employees' turnover intentions. Employees who are highly committed to their organization are less likely to leave.

Working Environment and Staff Turnover

According to [22] employees benefit from an environment that provides them a sense of belonging; and that will encourage them to stay committed and loyal to the workplace for longer. [23] found that recognition, job security and work environment have positive and significant influence on employee retention. In a related perspective, [24] explained the role of work life balance has a direct relation in employee's decision to stay or leave the organisation. Furthermore, there is significant links between the employee support policies in place and the levels of female employee turnover in more recent studies [25].

[26] explored the effects of physical surroundings on humanitarian assistance service workers' satisfaction in South Sudan and Syria. The study found out that four primary dimensions of physical surroundings (i.e., safety, communication tools, physiological needs, and ambient conditions), affect humanitarian assistance service workers' job satisfaction, and willingness to stay in the organizations.

Best Solution

Since the retention of skilled workers is influenced by a range of issues including among others: health, safety and security concerns; living/working conditions, including housing and access to basic amenities (water, electricity, sanitation); lack of access to adequate healthcare and schools; long working hours and burnout; poor management styles and practices as well as lack of equipment and infrastructure: uncertainty associated with short-term contracts due to reliance on donor funding; difficulties with cultural adjustment; and tensions between local staff, regional workers, and expatriates, addressing the above named issues will help curb the issue of staff turnover. However, the study is limited in terms of geographical scope since the studies focused on NGOs operating in Central Equatoria State and Jonglei. Therefore, this study found out whether poor workplace environment do contribute to staff turnover in NNGOs.

Limitations

The study was limited in scope as it focused on only 30 national non-governmental organizations. The study is practically limited in that there was a problem with time and budget. There was a huge challenge accessing literature on the research topic that were conducted in South Sudan. The study was conducted in one of the 10 states in South Sudan and thus the findings may not be generalized to the whole country. Thus, this calls for future research to

widen the scope of the study by including other states.

Methodology

Research Design

Descriptive research design was used in this study for its flexibility and appropriateness based on the type of data required data collection methods and the research timing. [27] define descriptive research as the study concerned with the frequency or relationship between two variables. The design adequately helped in answering research questions apart from it being fast and cheap. This design has the advantage of allowing flexibility in data collection by use of closed and open-ended questions.

Research Approach

A multiple case study case design approach involving 30 national non-governmental will be employed to conduct the study. A multiple case study design contains more than one case in a different setting. Researchers use a multiple case study design to ask the same interview questions to multiple participants in a different setting to layer the findings [28]. The proposed strategy enabled the researcher to collect a large amount of data from a sizeable population in an economical manner.

Research Site

The study was deployed within Juba city in Central Equatoria State which hosts the headquarters of most national non-governmental organizations. Juba is the capital and largest city of South Sudan. The city is situated on the White Nile and serves as the capital of the Central Equatoria State. It is the world's newest capital city to be elevated as such and had a population of 525,953 in 2017. It has an area of 52 km² (20 sq mi), with the metropolitan area covering 336 km² (130 sq mi). Juba was established in 1920–21 by the Church Missionary Society (CMS) in a small Bari village, also called Juba. The city was made the capital of Mongalla Province in the late 1920s.

The growth of the town accelerated following the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005, which made Juba the capital of the Autonomous Government of Southern Sudan. Juba became the capital of South Sudan in 2011 after its independence.

The reason for choosing Juba as the study area was due to the fact that I could easily meet the employees and get enough information that required on time as all the participants have their head offices within it.

Size of Sample and Sampling Techniques

The study adopted the non-probability purposive sampling technique on the selection of samples the appropriate study size was estimated at 30 using the Taro Yamane's formula [29] is as follow:

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

Where N = is the total number of the population, I = is constant, e = error margin (5%) constant

n = sample size

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

$$n = \frac{33}{1} + 33(0.05)^2$$

$$n = \frac{33}{1} + 33(0.025)$$

$$n = \frac{33}{1} + 0.0825$$

$$n = \frac{33}{1.0825} = 30.48$$

$$n = 30$$

From the formula, the size of the sample is thirty (30). Hence, the study focused on the thirty non-governmental organizations in Central Equatoria State. The researcher used non-probability purposive sampling technique to administer questionnaires which were all written in English language.

Inclusion Criteria

National non-governmental organizations which are over ten (10) years old with head offices in Central Equatoria state.

Exclusion Criteria

National non-governmental organizations which are less than ten (10) years old without offices in Central Equatoria state.

The Instruments for Data Collection

The main instruments employed for the data collection of the data were structured questionnaires administered to the thirty (30) human resource managers of the thirty (30) national non-governmental organizations.

The questionnaire contained two main sections. Section A captured demographic information of the participants and Section B contained both open and closed-ended questions under each objective to stimulate reaction from the participants in respect to their experiences to determine the status of the variables within their organizations.

Analysis of Data

The collected data was thoroughly reviewed to check and correct possible errors and omissions that might have occurred to ensure consistency across the participants. The data was then coded. Microsoft Excel software was used for the analysis. The processed data were presented in narrative, tables, and graphs for easy analysis.

Ethical Standard

The researcher ensured that all applicable ethical criteria for conducting research were upheld. Prior to involving the participants informed consent, disclosures to the study subjects about the goals and advantages of the study, the confidentiality of their information were made.

All the data obtained was managed carefully. The data results were kept secured based on Texila American University guidelines. The process of destroying the data is considered environmental safety.

Results and Discussions

Descriptive Analysis

Out of the four hundred (30) human resource managers who were sampled, thirty (30) responded to the questionnaires that were administered, resulting to a 100% response rate hence it was considered satisfactory to conduct data analysis and interpret the results [30].

Table 1 shows a wide range of gender disparity among the human resource managers who responded to the questionnaires since 70% were female while 30% were male.

The majority of the human resource managers were 26 and 30 years (47%) and worked for 1 to 3 years (50%) on education level, majority of the respondents (67%) had bachelor's degree.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of the Human Resource Managers

Characteristics	Category	Freq.	Percentage
Gender	Male	9	30
	Female	21	70
	Total	30	100
Age Bracket	20 -25	6	20
	26- 30	14	47
	31 – 35	7	23
	36 - 40	3	10
	Total	30	100
Number of Years Served in the NNGO	1 - 3	15	50
	4 - 6	10	33
	7 - 10	3	10
	More than 10	2	7
	Total	30	100
Education Level of Respondent	Diploma level	8	27
	Bachelor's degree level	20	67
	Post graduate level	2	6
	Total	30	100

Presentation of the Findings

The research question for this qualitative multiple case study was: To what extent do salary and fringe benefits, leadership style, career advancement and working conditions cause staff turnover in national non-governmental organizations in South Sudan? After receiving approval of the data collection tools and the bonafide letter from Texila University, the Human Resource Managers at each of the thirty NNGOs received a hand-delivered letter of participation and a copy of the consent form for review. I distributed questionnaires to Human Resource Managers of 30 NNGOs in Juba and followed it up with interviews.

Each participant's name was changed to a code (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P13, P14....P30) to mask their identities and maintain confidentiality, while organizations' names were allotted the following codes: O1, O2, O3, O4, O5, O6, O7, O8, O9, O10, O11, O12, O13, O14....O30. All participants shared relevant company documents, which were mainly HR policies. The main objective for reviewing company documents was to corroborate information that I gathered from questionnaires and interviews.

Research Question 1: Does low salaries and other benefits cause high employee turnover in national non-governmental organizations in South Sudan?

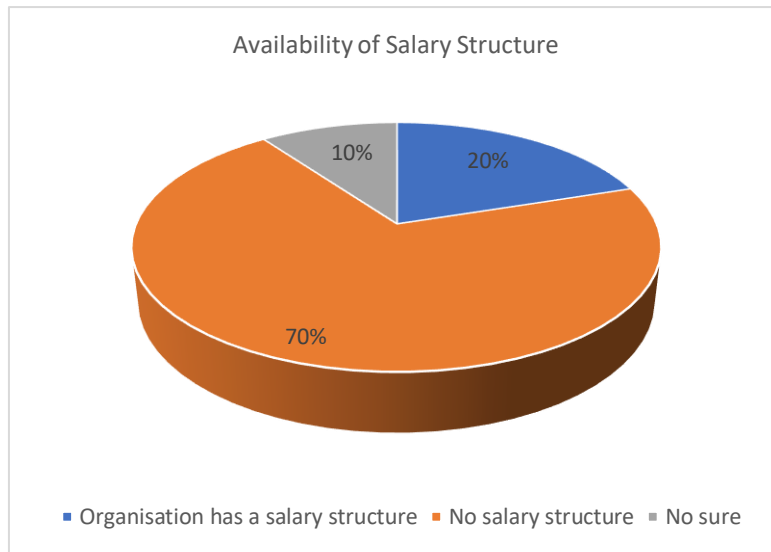


Figure 1. Availability of Salary Structure

Table 2. Salary Adequacy and Effect of Staff

Response	Freq.	Percentage
The salaries offered are adequate	3	10%
The salaries offered are inadequate	24	80%
Not sure	3	10%
Inadequate salaries led to staff turnover	27	90%
Inadequate salaries never led to staff turnover	1.5	5%
Not sure		5%

From Table 2, the majority (80%) of the participants responded that the salaries offered by their organizations are not adequate and only 10% said that they were adequate.

“Due to the low salaries here, which are not adequate to meet my needs I will resign if I get another job that pays better.” P11.

The results in Table 2 indicate that most (90%) of the participants mentioned that the inadequate salaries led to staff turnover in their

organizations. 5% of the participants mentioned that adequate salaries led to staff turnover in their organizations.

“In our organization salaries have never been adequate for the last 10 years and there has not been any increment either. This is one of the main reasons for the high staff turnover”. P8

Participants were asked to mention the types of benefits offered by their organizations and the findings are shown in Figure 2 below:

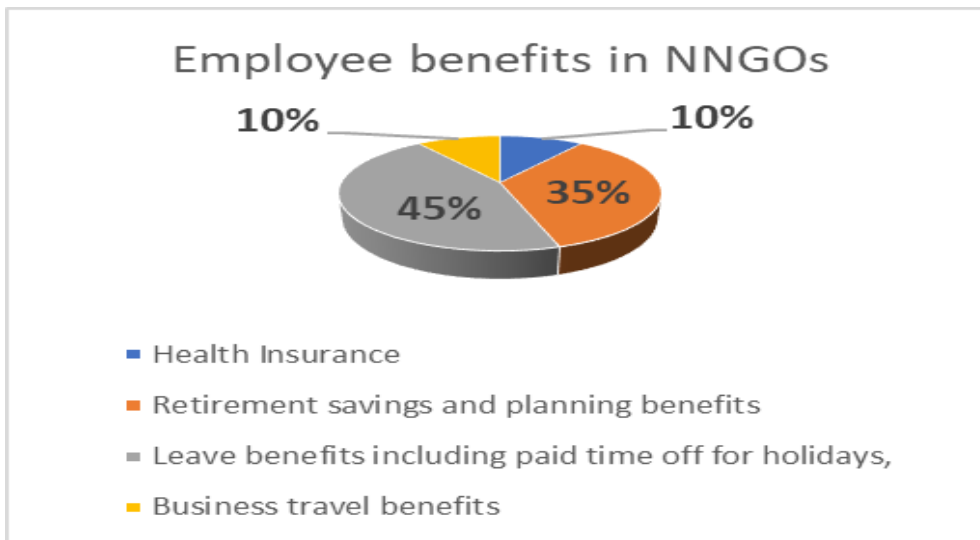


Figure 2. Types of Fringe Benefits

Participants mentioned leave benefits including paid time benefits as the most common (45%) type of benefit in NNGO in South Sudan. Results from Figure 4.7 indicate that 35% of the participants mentioned retirement and savings as one of the employment benefits. However, for some NNGOs it is something on paper in their benefits as the staff find it difficult to get it.

“We have many staff that were not paid their social security funds and some even when to the court before the organization paid them. In the contract it is very clear but when you leave it will take you months before you can get. They are even happy when you give up.” P23.

Few participants (10%) mentioned that their organizations offer medical insurance as one of the benefits. Most of the NNGOs do not offer this benefit to their employees who often end up resigning.

“When we asked for medical cover, the management usually tells us it is a benefit in international NGOs, and we should never dream about it at the NNGO. Staff just end up resigning after finding an opportunity elsewhere.” P14

Many NNGOs do not offer medical insurance for their staff because donors refused to fund it. When they include it in their project budgets, they are often told to delete it.

“Our partners refused us to include lines for medical insurance in our budget and yet they do insure their own staff.” P4.

Research Question 2: To what extent does leadership style cause employee turnover in national non-governmental organizations in South Sudan?

Results from the findings indicated in Table 3 showed that 47% of the participants mentioned autocratic leadership as the most common style in NNGOs in South Sudan. 70% of them stated that it had contributed to staff turnover in non-governmental organizations in South Sudan.

“We are not consulted always, and meetings are very rare here. Everything is determined by the Executive Director who wields a lot of powers”. P.4

Most of the participants (86%) mentioned democratic leadership as the type they most expect in their organization. The democratic leadership style was conceived in terms of the decision-making power and authority derived from followers. Through participation in the formulation of policies that serve as guidelines for the organization’s functioning, a leader considers the wishes and recommendations of followers [31]. Although undesirable, 6% of the participants expect laissez-faire leadership styles.

Table 3. Responses on Leadership Style and Staff Turnover

Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percent
Common Leadership Style in NNGOs	Autocratic leadership style	14.1	47%
	Democratic leadership style	9.9	33%
	laissez-faire leadership style	6.0	20%
Expected Leadership Style	Autocratic leadership style	1.8	6%
	Democratic leadership style	25.8	86%
	laissez-faire leadership style	2.4	8%
Effect of Leadership Style	Led to staff turnover	21.0	70%
	Never led to staff turnover	6.0	20%
	Not sure	3.0	10%

Based on the findings of this study, this research concluded that when each leadership style is practiced in exclusion of other leadership styles, Autocratic leadership style positively influences NNGO staff turnover intentions, democratic leadership style negatively influences NNGO staff turnover intentions, and laissez-faire leadership negatively influences NNGO staff turnover intention.

Objective 3: To what extent does lack of career development opportunities cause employee turnover in national non-governmental organizations in South Sudan?

The third objective of the study sought to establish the extent to which lack of career development opportunities cause employee turnover in national non-governmental organizations in South Sudan. Participants were asked to state the types of career opportunities that exist in their organizations and their responses are indicated in Table 4.

From the results in Table 4, the participants (54%) stated that there were no career

opportunities in their organizations. Results indicate that 75% of the participants agreed that lack of career opportunities contribute to staff turnover in NNGOs in South Sudan.

the participants (54%) stated that there were no career opportunities in their organizations.

“Career opportunities only exist in international organizations because they have enough money to plan for them. Although important, our management always complained that there are no funds for the implementing career development programs.” P12.

From the results 23% of the participants mentioned that there is a training opportunity in their organizations. Results in Table 4 indicate that only 10% of the participants stated that there is promotion in their organizations. Only 3% of the participants stated that mentoring and coaching exist in their organizations.

“I have never been mentored since I joined this organizations three years ago.” P25.

Table 4. Responses on Career Development and Staff Turnover

Characteristics	Category	Freq.	Percent
Common career opportunities in NNGOs	Training opportunities	6.9	23
	Career counseling	3	10
	Job promotion	3	10
	Mentoring and coaching	0.9	3
	No career development opportunities	16.2	54
Career Opportunities expected at NNGOs	Study tour	3	10
	Training opportunities	3	10

	Job promotion	10.5	35
	Mentoring and coaching	1.5	5
	Scholarships	12	40
Effect of Lack of career opportunities on staff	Led to staff turnover	22.5	75
	Never led to staff turnover	4.5	15
	Not sure	3	10

Research Question 4: Does poor working environment cause employee turnover in national non-governmental organizations in South Sudan?

From the results in Table 5, most of the participants (80%) are not satisfied with the working environments in their organization and only 20% stated that they were satisfied.

Table 5. Responses on Working Conditions and Staff Turnover

Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percent
Current status of working conditions in NNGOs	Lack of teamwork	8.7	29%
	poor motivation	5.1	17%
	Lack of recreational activities	8.1	27%
	Rigid working hours	3	10%
	Conflicts	5.1	17%
Working environment expected by participants	Teamwork encouraged	6.9	23%
	High motivation	8.1	27%
	Reduced conflicts	4.8	16%
	Work-life balance	3	10%
	Presence of recreational activities	5.1	17%
	Flexible working hours	2.1	7%
Effect of Lack of bad working environment on staff	Led to staff turnover	10.5	35%
	Never led to staff turnover	19.5	65%

From Table 5, lack of teamwork is the major factor (29%) which makes staff dissatisfied with the working environment in national non-governmental organizations in South Sudan leading to staff turnover. Furthermore, 27% of the participants mentioned lack of recreational activities as a factor that makes staff dissatisfied with the working environment in NNGOs in South Sudan.

Conclusion

The objectives of the study were to find out whether low salaries, leadership style, career advancement and working conditions contributed to high staff turnover in national nongovernmental organizations in South Sudan. The findings of the research conclude that low salaries, leadership style, career advancement

and working conditions contributed to high staff turnover in national nongovernmental organizations.

The major contributing factor to high staff turnover is low salaries, followed by leadership style and working conditions. Therefore, national nongovernmental organizations will curb the situation if they improve on their salaries, leadership, career advance opportunities and working conditions.

“Working environment is one of the main factors in terms of managing voluntary employee turnover. Unfortunately, we are not satisfied with the working environment here at all and the chances of leaving are high unless there is an improvement. There are many things that need to be improved.” P6

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Conflict of Interest

I do certify that I have no affiliation with or involvement or any personal relationship with any of the directors of the Publishing House or any entity with financial interest. I am a candidate for Doctorate in Business administration of Texila American University.

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