

INFLUENCE OF ORGANIZATIONAL POLITICS ON LECTURERS' TURNOVER INTENTION IN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION IN NORTHWEST NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined the influence of organizational politics on lecturers' turnover intention in Colleges of Education in Northwest Nigeria. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population was five thousand seven hundred and thirty six (5736) respondents. A sample of three hundred and eighty-two (382) respondents was drawn using a multistage sampling technique involving stratified and simple random sampling techniques. Data was collected using Organizational Politics Questionnaire (OPQ) and the Turnover Intention Questionnaire (TIQ). All the questionnaires were adopted and adapted. The population of the study comprised all the lecturers of public Colleges of education in the Northwest Nigeria. Data was analyzed using multiple regression analysis with SPSS version 20.0. The results revealed that organizational politics significantly and positively predicted lecturers' turnover intention, accounting for 51.0% of the variance ($R^2 = .510$). Among the dimensions of organizational politics examined, pay and promotion policy emerged as the strongest and only significant predictor of lecturers' turnover intention, while general political behaviour and go-along-to-get-ahead behaviour did not significantly predict turnover intention. The study concludes that politically influenced pay and promotion practices significantly heighten lecturers' intention to leave. It was therefore recommended that management of Colleges of Education should ensure transparent, fair, and merit-based pay and promotion policies in order to reduce lecturers' turnover intention and enhance staff retention.

Keywords: Organisational politics, Turnover intention, Lecturers, Colleges of Education, Nigeria

Introduction

Education is widely recognized as a vital instrument for national development and the effectiveness of any educational system largely depends on the quality, commitment, and retention of its teaching workforce. In Nigeria, Colleges of Education play a strategic role in teacher training for basic education, making lecturers indispensable to the achievement of national educational objectives. Consequently, issues affecting lecturers' commitment and retention deserve sustained scholarly and policy attention.

In recent years, Colleges of Education in Nigeria have continued to face challenges such as declining staff morale, dissatisfaction, and increasing turnover intention among lecturers. Turnover intention refers to an employee's conscious and deliberate willingness to leave an organization and has been identified as a reliable precursor of actual turnover (Raja & Johns, 2021). High turnover intention among lecturers poses serious threats to institutional stability, continuity of academic programmes, and the quality of teacher education.

One organisational factor that has gained increasing attention in explaining turnover intention is organisational politics. Organizational politics can be regarded as behaviors and practices that are perceived as self-serving and designed to advance individual interests, often at the expense of fairness and organisational goals (Zhang et al., 2020). In academic institutions, such political practices may manifest in the allocation of rewards, promotion decisions, access to opportunities, and enforcement of rules.

In the Nigerian higher education context, particularly in Colleges of Education, issues surrounding pay and promotion policy have become a major source of concern. Delayed promotions, non-payment of promotion arrears, perceived favoritism, and inconsistent application of promotion criteria are frequently reported by lecturers. Such practices are often interpreted as politically motivated rather than merit-based, thereby intensifying perceptions of organisational injustice. Research has consistently shown that unfair pay and promotion practices undermine employees' sense of equity and increase their intention to leave the organisation (Holm, 2019).

From a theoretical perspective, social exchange theory provides a useful framework for understanding this phenomenon. The theory posits that employees enter into reciprocal relationships with their organisations and expect fair rewards in return for their contributions (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2019). When lecturers perceive that pay and promotion decisions are unjust or politically manipulated, the social exchange relationship is weakened, leading to dissatisfaction and turnover intention.

Although several studies have examined organisational politics and turnover intention in universities and other sectors, empirical evidence focusing specifically on Colleges of Education, particularly within the Northwest geopolitical zone of Nigeria, remains limited. Moreover, findings on which dimensions of organisational politics exert the strongest influence on turnover intention have been inconsistent across contexts. This gap necessitates and pave way for this study. This study therefore, investigates the influence of organisational politics on lecturers' turnover intention in Colleges of Education in Northwest Nigeria. The study aims to generate empirical evidence that will inform institutional management and policymakers on strategies for reducing lecturers' turnover intention and enhancing staff retention.

Turnover Intention

Turnover intention refers to an employee's conscious and deliberate willingness to leave an organisation within a foreseeable period. It is considered a strong predictor of actual employee turnover and is widely used in organisational behaviour research to assess staff retention risks (Hom et al., 2017). In the context of higher education, lecturers' turnover intention can disrupt academic programmes, reduce institutional stability, and negatively impact students' learning outcomes (Rubenstein et al., 2018).

Employee turnover intention is often influenced by organisational factors such as job satisfaction, work environment, career advancement opportunities, and reward systems. When lecturers perceive inequity in pay, promotion, or recognition, they may experience reduced organisational commitment and increased desire to exit the institution. Turnover intention therefore provides an important measure for understanding the likelihood of staff attrition and planning retention strategies within colleges of education.

Organizational Politics and Turnover Intention

Organizational politics refers to informal and self-serving behaviors by employees or management aimed at influencing decisions to gain personal advantage. Such behaviors may include favoritism, manipulation, and biased decision-making, particularly in areas such as pay and promotion (Ferris et al., 2019). In tertiary institutions, organizational politics can create perceptions of unfairness and injustice, which are strongly associated with increased turnover intention among lecturers.

Empirical studies indicate that organizational politics has a significant influence on turnover intention. In his study on organizational politics and turnover intention among employees of private colleges in Pakistan, Ahmed (2019) discovered that dimensions of organizational politics especially, pay and promotion, favoritism significantly and positively influenced employees' turnover intentions. This indicated that when lecturers perceive that promotions are delayed, criteria are unclear, or rewards are distributed unfairly, they are more likely to consider leaving their institutions (Holm, 2019; Adebayo & Ogunsina, 2021). In addition, Atyayi et al. (2024) in their study on organizational politics and turnover intentions of secondary school teachers in Uganda found that there is significant and positive relationship between organizational politics and turnover intentions.

Similarly, Abdi et al. (2025) in their study on organizational politics and academic staff turnover intentions and professional commitment in private universities in Mogadishu, Somalia found that perceived organizational politics significantly and positively influenced academic staff turnover intentions. These findings suggest that tangible outcomes related to career progression and financial recognition are more influential in driving turnover intention than general political behaviour or go along to get ahead tendencies. The above theoretical arguments led to the formulation of the following hypotheses:

Hypotheses

H₁. Organizational politics significantly and positively influences lecturers' turnover intention in Colleges of Education in Northwest, Nigeria

H₂. All the dimensions of organizational politics significantly and positively influence lecturers' turnover intentions in Colleges of Education in Northwest, Nigeria.

Methodology

This section discussed the methods the researchers used to carry out this study. This was discussed under the following subheadings:

Research Design

Descriptive survey research design was used for this study. A descriptive survey research design involves asking the same set of questions often prepared in the form of a written questionnaire for a large number of respondents (Fraenkel, Wallen and Hyun, 2015).

Population and Sample

The population of this study comprised of all the lecturers of the four (4) federal and eight (8) state Colleges of Education from the seven states of Northwest, Nigeria. The number of the population for federal colleges was two thousand two hundred and fourteen (2214), while that of state is three thousand five and twenty five (3525) aggregating to five thousand seven

hundred and thirty six (5736) lecturers. A sample of three hundred and eighty two (382) respondents was drawn using a multistage sampling technique involving stratified and simple random sampling techniques. The figure was arrived at using research advisor table 2006 as a guide.

Instruments used for Data Collection

Questionnaires were used to get the needed data for the study. The questionnaires are: Organisational politics questionnaire (OPQ) and Turnover intention questionnaire (TIQ). All the questionnaires used were adopted and adapted from Kacmar and Ferris in Eran (2000), and Bothma and Roodt (2013) respectively. The organisational politics questionnaire used in this study has three dimensions. They are: general political behaviour, go along and get ahead, and pay and promotion policies with four items each. Some of the items are: favoritism rather than merit determines who gets ahead around here, agreeing with powerful people is the best way to get ahead, promotions are based on performance rather than politics, for general political behaviour, go along and get ahead and pay and promotion policies respectively. Similarly, the turnover intention questionnaire is one-dimensional with six items some of which are: how often have you considered leaving your job. The questionnaires items were rated using four points Likert scale. The rating run thus: Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1).

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis were used to analyse the data collected. The former was used to analyse the demographic information of the respondents while the later was used to examine how organisational politics (independent variables) influences lecturers' turnover intention (dependent variable). SPSS version 20.0 was employed to analyze the data.

Results of the Study

Table 1: Regression Coefficient and F- Test Value of Turnover Intention

	R= .714 ^a				
	R ² = .510				
	Adjusted R ² = .507				
	SEE = 57850				
Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	131.895	3	43.965	131.373	.000 ^b
Residual	126.500	378	.335		
Total	258.395	381			

Table 1, shows the regression model was statistically significant, $F(3, 378) = 131.37, p < .001$, indicating that the predictors collectively had a significant effect on turnover intention. The model produced a multiple correlation coefficient of $R = .714$ and an $R^2 = .510$ (adjusted $R^2 = .507$), showing that 51.0% of the variance in turnover intention was explained by the independent variables (dimensions of organisational politics). This result support the hypothesis one which states that organizational politics significantly and positively influences lecturers' turnover intention in Colleges of Education in Northwest, Nigeria.

Table 2: Test of Significance of Regression Coefficient Variance

Model	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients		
	Beta	Standardised Error	β	t-value	Sign
(Constant)	1.100	.131		8.411	.000
General Political Behaviour	-.016	.012	-.165	-1.266	.206
Go Along and Get Ahead	.032	.026	.127-5	1.214	.226
Pay and Promotion Policy	.174	.017	.757	10.385	.000

Table 2, shows the results of multiple regression coefficient. It revealed that all the dimensions of organisational politics influence lecturers’ turnover intentions in Colleges of Education in Northwest, Nigeria. Among the three dimensions of organisational politics pay and promotion policy exhibited a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship on turnover intention ($B = .174, \beta = .757, t = 10.39, p < .001$). This indicates that unfavourable perceptions of pay and promotion policy significantly increased turnover intention among lecturers. Next dimension that influences Colleges of Education lecturers’ turnover intention is go-along-to-get-ahead which demonstrated a positive but insignificant relationship with turnover intention ($B = .032, \beta = .128, t = 1.21, p = .226$). This suggests that higher engagement in go-along-to-get-ahead behaviour tended to increase turnover intention, although the effect was not statistically significant. Whereas, general political behaviour showed a negative and insignificant relationship on turnover intention ($B = -.016, \beta = -.165, t = -1.27, p = .206$). This indicates that increases in general political behaviour were associated with a slight decrease in turnover intention; however, this relationship was not statistically significant.

Among all the dimensions of organizational politics, pay and promotion policy had the strongest directional influence on turnover intention. This result indicated that hypothesis two which says all dimensions of organizational politics significantly and positively influences lecturers’ turnover intentions in Colleges of Education in Northwest, Nigeria is rejected. This is because, only pay and promotion policy significantly and positively influences lecturers’ turnover intentions in Colleges of Education in Northwest, Nigeria.

Discussion

The study examines how organisational politics influences lecturers’ turnover intention in Colleges of Education in Northwest, Nigeria. Two research hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The hypotheses are:

H₁. Organizational politics significantly and positively influences lecturers’ turnover intention in Colleges of Education in North-West, Nigeria.

H₂. All dimensions of organizational politics significantly and positively influence lecturers’ turnover intentions in Colleges of Education in North-West, Nigeria.

The results indicated that organisational politics significantly and positively influences lecturers’ turnover intention in Colleges of Education in Northwest, Nigeria ($R^2 = .510$). In addition, all the three dimensions of organisational politics (general political behaviour, go along and get ahead and pay and promotion policy) influence lecturers’ turnover intentions in

Colleges of Education in Northwest, Nigeria. However, it should be stressed that though all the dimensions of organizational politics influence lecturers' turnover intentions, pay and promotion policy make the strongest, unique, positive and statistically significant contribution in influencing lecturers' turnover intentions. This indicates that lecturers in the sampled colleges do not take it lightly with issues surrounding promotion and compensation and that any slight maneuvering of it could lead to greater intention to quit. This further, highlights the central role pay and promotion policy play in shaping retention decision.

These findings agree with similar findings of Ahmed (2019), Atyayi et al. (2024), and Abdi et al. (2025) who at different studies, and locations found that organizational politics significantly and positively influences lecturers' turnover intention. However, the results differ with the findings of Zhang et al. (2020) and Colquitt et al. (2019) who in their studies found that general political behaviour is significantly associated with turnover intention among the university faculty members.

The study theoretically and practically contributed to existing literature in organizational behavior as it highlighted that while organisational politics is a relevant feature of the work environment, lecturers' turnover intention is most strongly influence by political practices that is directly related to economic rewards and career progression. General political maneuvering and adaptive political behaviors may shape the organisational climate, but they do not significantly influence turnover intention unless they distort pay and promotion procedures and decisions.

This underscores the centrality of pay and promotion policy as a strategic retention factor in Colleges of Education in Northwest Nigeria. The findings added to the existing literature by demonstrating that in resource constrained educational institutions, tangible reward related politics influences broader political perceptions in shaping lecturers' intentions to stay or leave.

Conclusion

The study examines how organisational politics influence lecturers' turnover intentions in Colleges of Education in Northwest Nigeria. It equally examines which of the organisational politics dimension best influences lecturers' turnover intention. The results revealed that organizational politics significantly and positively influences lecturers' turnover intention in Colleges of Education in Northwest Nigeria. However, among the dimensions examined, pay and promotion policy is the most statistically significant dimensions that influences lecturers' turnover intentions. In other words, perceptions of unfair, delayed, or politically motivated pay and promotion practices significantly increase lecturers' intention to leave their institutions.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Management of Colleges of Education should implement transparent, well-documented, and merit-based pay and promotion procedures. In order to enhance the satisfaction and commitment of their lecturers and reduce their turnover intentions.
2. Promotions should be processed as and when due, and promotion arrears should be paid promptly. Delays in implementing approved promotions contribute significantly to lecturers' turnover intention.

3. Government and governing councils should periodically review lecturers' conditions of service to ensure competitiveness, equity, and alignment with current economic realities.
4. Regulatory agencies such as the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) should monitor compliance with pay and promotion guidelines across Colleges of Education to promote fairness and staff retention.

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