

JOB PERFORMANCE AND ACTUAL TURNOVER IN AN EXPATRIATE (GUEST WORKER) SALES SETTING: THE MODERATING ROLE OF EXPATRIATE ADJUSTMENT

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ABSTRACT

This paper proposes a curvilinear relationship between expatriate (guest worker) salesperson performance and actual turnover. Also, the relationship is moderated by expatriate salesperson adjustment. Utilizing a single event-history (or survival) analysis technique, we test the relationships with a sample of 308 expatriate salesperson-manager dyads. Results indicate that the relationship between expatriate salesperson performance and actual turnover is indeed curvilinear and the three dimensions of expatriate adjustment do moderate the curvilinear relationship.

INTRODUCTION

Although, for the most part, past studies have explored a linear linkage between job performance and salesperson turnover, the emerging view suggests that the relationship is curvilinear (Jackofsky 1984; Trevor, Gerhart and Boudreau 1997). Both low and high performers exhibit high turnover, while average performers show low turnover making the linkage curvilinear. This curvilinear relationship may also be moderated by certain variables. Despite calls to enhance our theoretical understanding of the curvilinearity and the corresponding moderating influences related to job performance-turnover linkage, empirical research remains a rarity. Also, past research has commonly focused on turnover intention as a proxy for actual turnover. Finally, since almost exclusively derived from salespeople in U.S. context, the universal applicability of models of job performance-turnover linkage is not known, which limits theory building.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

We attempt to empirically examine the curvilinearity of the job performance-actual turnover relationship among expatriate (guest worker) salespeople in Saudi Arabia. Further, we explore the moderating role of expatriate salesperson adjustment to the host country on the curvilinear relationship between job performance and actual turnover.

By using actual turnover, we take a step further from past research that has almost exclusively used turnover intention as a proxy for actual turnover. Also, by utilizing guest worker salespeople in Saudi Arabia, we extend the research of job performance-turnover relationship to not only a novel type of salespeople but also to a new and non-U.S. context.

Hypotheses Development

We hypothesize that there will be a curvilinear relationship between expatriates' job performance and actual turnover. Also, the curvilinear job performance-actual turnover relationship is significantly stronger for low and high performing expatriate salespersons with low work adjustment than for low and high performers with high work adjustment. Further, the curvilinear job performance-actual turnover relationship is significantly stronger for low and high performing expatriate salespersons with low general adjustment than for low and high performers with high general adjustment. Finally, the curvilinear job performance-actual turnover relationship is significantly stronger for low and high performing expatriate salespersons with low interaction adjustment than for low and high performers with high interaction adjustment.

REFERENCES

- Jackofsky, E. F. (1984), Turnover and Job Performance: An Integrated Process Model, *Academy of Management Review*, 9, 74-83.
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