

EMPLOYEE REDUCTION AND COMMITMENT IN FIVE STAR HOTELS IN RIVERS STATE

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the relationship between employee reduction and commitment in five star hotels in Rivers State. The objectives of the study were to examine how dimensions of organisational downsizing interact with employee commitment in five star hotels in Rivers State. Findings revealed that there is a relationship between employee reduction and commitment in five star hotels in Rivers State. Also, there is a moderating role of organisational culture on the relationship between employee reduction and commitment in five star hotels in Rivers State. The study also concluded that employee reduction correlate with commitment, and it is being moderated by the organizational culture. The study recommended amongst others that management of five star hotels adopt and implement strategies that supports employee hard work in terms of task execution and reward them appropriately to boost their morale and commitment.

Keywords: Employee Reduction, Commitment, Downsizing, Affective Commitment

Introduction

Okafor and Onuoha (2023) stressed that employee commitment in the Nigerian luxury hotel sector is directly linked to job satisfaction, organizational support, and the provision of incentives that promote loyalty. They further highlight that employees who feel valued and supported by their employers are more likely to demonstrate affective commitment, where they have a genuine emotional attachment to the organization. This commitment is essential for ensuring consistent, high-quality service delivery in five star hotels.

Moreover, employee commitment in Rivers State five star hotels is strongly influenced by the management's leadership style and organizational culture. Uche and Adeola (2021) argued that leadership practices that nurture trust, transparency, and professional development play a decisive role in enhancing employee commitment. Besides, Meyer and Allen (1997) have emphasized the importance of employee commitment in raising three components: affective, continuance, and normative commitment, all of which are highly relevant in luxury hotel settings, where employee loyalty is often seen as a fundamental driver of excellent service. Despite its importance, employee commitment presents significant challenges, particularly in today's dynamic and often raging business environment. The rise of appearance economy jobs, remote work, and frequent organizational restructuring can undermine traditional forms of commitment. Contemporary, Meyer et al. (2001) suggests that while affective commitment remains a strong predictor of positive organizational outcomes, maintaining it is increasingly difficult in an era characterized by high job mobility and changing work expectations. Organizations must therefore innovate in their approaches to building and sustaining employee commitment, going beyond traditional methods to create a work environment that addresses modern workforce needs. According to Stanley et al. (2013), high levels of continuance commitment can result in lower job satisfaction and reduced organizational citizenship behaviors. Therefore, organizations must strive to substitute affective and normative commitment rather than solely relying on continuance dynamics. This involves creating a supportive environment where employees feel valued and integral to the organizational mission, which in turn can foster genuine loyalty and commitment.

Therefore, organizational downsizing, a strategic approach often adopted during economic instability in market dynamics which entails the deliberate reduction of a company's workforce to enhance efficiency, cut costs, and improve overall competitiveness. This process, aimed at maintaining the

organization's financial health, involves complex and complex decisions that affect not only the company's structural dynamics but also its human capital. The repercussions of downsizing are profound and different, often presenting a separation between financial necessity and ethical considerations. On one hand, downsizing can lead to immediate improvements in cost reduction and a streamlined focus on core business functions. Besides, it can result in diminished employee loyalty, increased stress levels, and a potential loss of valuable institutional knowledge. Effective downsizing strategies require careful planning and communication, emphasizing transparency and support for affected employees. Balancing the short-term financial benefits with the long-term health of the organization necessitates a nuanced understanding of both economic imperatives and the human element inherent in any workforce reduction.

Objectives of the Study

1. Determine the relationship between employee reduction and affective commitment in five star hotels in Rivers State.
2. Examine the relationship between employee reduction and normative commitment in five star hotels in Rivers State.
3. Ascertain the relationship between employee reduction and continuance commitment in five star hotels in Rivers State.

Employee Reduction

Cameron (2021) defined employee reduction as the planned elimination of positions or jobs in an organization with the intention of improving efficiency or reducing costs. Cascio (2020) defined employee reduction as aligning the workforce to the current operational needs of the organization, often involving the reduction of staff to optimize performance. Employee reduction is a temporary or permanent discharge of employees for economic or business reasons such as decreased demand or financial struggles (Gertz, 2019). Employee reduction is a situation in which an employee is let go because their role is no longer necessary for the organization (Allen, 2022). Employee reduction is a strategy involving the reduction of workforce to cut costs and stabilize the financial status of an organization (Boxall, 2021).

Employee reduction is the process of restructuring and reducing the workforce to ensure that the remaining employees are better aligned with the company's strategic goals (Sull, 2020). Employee reduction is the act of reorganizing the legal, ownership, operational, or other structures of an organization for the purpose of making it more profitable or better organized, often leading to job reductions (Balogun, 2021). Employee reduction is the termination of employees from an organization, usually accompanied by a compensation package (Bamber, 2021). Employee reduction is the practice of hiring external firms to perform tasks, handle operations, or provide services for the company, which often results in internal job cuts (Lacity, 2020).

Employee reduction is a strategic process implemented by organizations to decrease workforce size in order to cut costs and improve efficiency (Cascio, 2021). Employee reduction refers to the deliberate downsizing of an organization's workforce, typically as a response to economic pressures or organizational restructuring (Robbins & Judge, 2020). Employee reduction is the process of minimizing the number of employees through layoffs, attrition, or voluntary separation, aiming to streamline operations (Noe et al., 2019). Employee reduction involves the downsizing of staff numbers to align with organizational goals, improve profitability, and enhance competitive advantage (Armstrong & Taylor, 2017). Employee reduction is a tactical measure to reduce payroll expenses and improve organizational efficiency, often involving redundancy and severance packages (Bratton & Gold, 2015). Employee reduction entails strategically reducing the workforce to maintain the financial stability of an organization and ensure long-term sustainability (Ivancevich et al., 2012). Besides there are indicators employee reductions such as follows:

Layoff: Employee layoffs refer to the termination of employees as a result of organizational restructuring aimed at improving economic efficiency and reducing operational costs. Layoffs are

often utilized as a strategy to manage economic downturns and enhance competitiveness. However, this approach can lead to a loss of institutional knowledge and negatively impact employee morale (David & Geiger, 2022). Layoffs are a component of organizational downsizing, which involves reducing the workforce to streamline operations and increase productivity. While downsizing can lead to short-term financial gains, it may also result in long-term detrimental effects such as decreased employee loyalty and increased job insecurity (McKinley & Scherer, 2021). Layoffs are deliberate actions taken by companies to reduce the workforce as part of a strategic plan to align resources with organizational goals. Strategic layoffs can help realign the workforce to better match the company's evolving needs, but they must be carefully managed to avoid adverse impacts on remaining employees (Cascio & Boudreau, 2023).

Employee layoffs are cost-cutting measures implemented to reduce expenses and improve financial stability. Though effective in reducing short-term costs, layoffs can undermine employee trust and commitment, potentially affecting future organizational performance (Vickers & Parris, 2021). Layoffs are considered a survival strategy for organizations facing severe financial distress or economic downturns. While necessary for survival in some cases, layoffs can have severe social and economic consequences for the affected employees and their communities (Kim & Sung, 2022). Layoffs are responses to organizational decline, where workforce reduction is necessary to address reduced demand or financial instability. Responding to decline through layoffs can stabilize finances temporarily but may also damage the organization's reputation and long-term viability (Lee & Hom, 2022).

Voluntary Departures: Maertz and Boyar (2023) define voluntary departure as an employee's resignation, where the decision is self-initiated and not coerced by external factors like layoffs or dismissals. Their work explores the psychological and organizational antecedents to resignation, including job dissatisfaction, lack of career advancement, and unmet expectations. Sullivan and Al Ariss (2023) describe voluntary departure as a career transition, involving a deliberate move from one job to another, often for personal or professional growth. This transition is part of a broader life-course perspective, considering the impact of life stages and personal circumstances on career decisions. Van der Heijden and Gorgievski (2022) highlight voluntary departure as a form of job mobility, where employees proactively seek new employment opportunities to advance their careers. This perspective underscores the role of individual career ambitions and labor market conditions in driving voluntary departures.

Klotz and Bolino (2021) frame voluntary departure as an "organizational exit," where an employee chooses to leave an organization due to push factors (like poor work environment) and pull factors (such as more attractive job offers elsewhere). Their research emphasizes the dual role of these factors in influencing the decision to exit. Han and Yin (2022) define voluntary departure as part of a broader category of withdrawal behaviors that include actions like absenteeism, reduced effort, and eventual resignation. They argue that voluntary departures often stem from cumulative dissatisfaction and a desire for better alignment between personal and organizational goals. Hom and Griffeth (2021) describe voluntary departure as a decision-making process that leads an employee to intentionally and willfully leave an organization. This process is often influenced by factors such as job dissatisfaction, better external opportunities, and personal reasons. Understanding these intentions is critical for organizations aiming to retain talent and reduce turnover costs.

Closure of Department: Employee closure of a department as part of organizational downsizing refers to the strategic reduction of the workforce to improve efficiency and cut costs. This approach often involves evaluating the performance and necessity of different departments and closing those that are underperforming or redundant. The goal is to streamline operations and focus resources on core activities (Cascio, 2021). Employee closure of a department during strategic realignment involves shutting down certain departments to realign the organization's strategic objectives. This

process includes identifying departments that no longer align with the organization's long-term goals. Realignment often focuses on innovation, market demands, and shifting business models (Johnson & Scholes, 2022).

Employee closure of a department involves shutting down redundant departments post-merger or acquisition. Mergers and acquisitions often lead to overlap in departmental functions. Closing these redundant departments helps in integrating the organizations more efficiently and reducing operational costs (Weston et al., 2022). Closing a department to improve cost reduction involves shutting down units that are inefficient or duplicative. Organizations continuously seek to optimize operations by eliminating inefficiencies. This might involve closing down departments that do not contribute effectively to the overall productivity of the company (Hammer, 2023).

Concept of Employee Commitment

Employee commitment refers to the emotional attachment and identification employees have with their organization. It is characterized by a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values, leading to a desire to remain a part of the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Employee commitment can also be seen as the perceived cost associated with leaving the organization. Continuance commitment reflects an employee's awareness of the sacrifices they would have to make if they were to leave their current job, such as loss of benefits or seniority (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Employee commitment includes a sense of obligation to remain with the organization due to a belief in moral and ethical standards. Normative commitment arises from the employee's feeling that they ought to stay with the organization because it is the right thing to do (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001).

Employee commitment encompasses the psychological attachment employees develop towards their organization. It reflects the extent to which employees feel psychologically connected to, involved in, and engaged with their work and the organization (Mowday et al., 1982). Employee commitment can be understood as the manifestation of behaviors that indicate loyalty, engagement, and a willingness to exert effort on behalf of the organization. Behavioral commitment is demonstrated through consistent performance, extra-role behaviors, and a proactive approach to tasks" (Meyer et al., 2002). Ojo (2023) showed that employees who feel aligned with their organization's values are more likely to exhibit strong commitment levels, which is essential for organizational success in Nigeria's competitive market.

Employee commitment is a multi-dimensional construct encompassing affective, continuance, and normative dimensions (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Mitchell et al. (2001), employee commitment refers to the combined forces that make employees feel they cannot easily leave their jobs, including links (connections to people), fit (compatibility with the organization), and sacrifice (what they would give up by leaving). The intention to stay with an organization for a specific period or until a particular goal is achieved (Stanley et al., 2002). Employee commitment emphasizes the duration of an employee's commitment, which may be influenced by short-term goals or project timelines.

Relationship between Employee Reduction and Employee Commitment

The influence of employee reduction on employee commitment has been a critical area of research in organizational behavior and human resource management. Employee reduction, often through layoffs or downsizing, can significantly undermine remaining employees' commitment to the organization. When a company undergoes downsizing, it often creates an environment of uncertainty and insecurity among the surviving employees, leading to a decrease in their trust and commitment to the organization (Spreitzer & Mishra, 2002). These employees might feel overburdened by the increased workload resulting from reduced staffing levels, and fear that they might be the next to lose their jobs, which can lead to decreased morale and productivity (Wiesenfeld, et al., 2000). Additionally, the emotional strain caused by seeing colleagues and friends lose their jobs can negatively impact their attachment and loyalty to the organization (Kivimäki et al., 2003). Moreover, the perceived breach of the psychological contract, where employees believe

that their loyalty and performance should secure their employment, can further erode their commitment (Robinson & Rousseau, 2000). When organizations reduce their workforce, employees may perceive this action as a violation of implicit agreements and promises, leading to feelings of betrayal and a significant decline in organizational commitment (Datta, et al., 2010). This perceived breach can result in a decline in job satisfaction, organizational citizenship behaviors, and increased turnover intentions (Macky, et al., 2008). Therefore, managing the aftermath of employee reduction through transparent communication, support systems, and fair processes is crucial in mitigating its adverse effects on employee commitment and maintaining organizational stability.

Psychological Contract Theory

The Psychological Contract Theory was founded by Rousseau in 1989. This theory assumes that:

- i. There is an unwritten set of expectations and obligations between employees and employers.
- ii. When organizations engage in downsizing (such as layoffs or restructuring), it can disrupt the perceived fairness and mutual obligations of this contract.

Justification of Psychological Contract Theory to the Present Study

Psychological Contract Theory posits that the relationship between employees and employers is shaped by unwritten expectations and mutual obligations. In the context of organizational downsizing in five star hotels, this theory provides a framework to understand how changes in employment relationships impact employee commitment. When a luxury hotel undergoes downsizing, employees may perceive a breach of their psychological contract, particularly if they believe their loyalty and hard work were not reciprocated by job security. This perceived breach can lead to decreased job satisfaction, reduced organizational commitment, and increased turnover intentions. Consequently, five star hotels must be mindful of how their downsizing strategies affect employee perceptions of fairness and equity, as maintaining open communication and transparent decision-making can mitigate negative outcomes and foster a sense of commitment even during turbulent times.

Thus, downsizing often violates the psychological contract by breaking perceived promises of job security, career advancement, and mutual loyalty. This can lead to decreased employee commitment because employees may feel betrayed or undervalued. They might respond with reduced effort, lower morale, or even actively seeking alternative employment.

Empirical Review

Oluwaseun and Ogunsanya (2023) examined the relationship between organizational downsizing and employee commitment within the Nigerian banking sector. The authors used a quantitative approach, surveying 300 employees across different banks. The findings revealed that downsizing negatively affected employee commitment, primarily due to increased job insecurity and reduced morale. The study suggests that effective communication and support systems during downsizing can mitigate negative impacts on employee commitment.

Emmanuel and Adebayo (2023) investigated the impact of downsizing on employee commitment within the Nigerian telecommunications sector. Using a survey of 250 employees, the results show that downsizing significantly reduces employee commitment levels, primarily due to perceived organizational injustice and lack of support. The authors advocate for transparent communication and involvement of employees in the downsizing process to sustain commitment.

Adetunji and Sulaimon (2022) investigated effects of downsizing strategies on employee commitment in the Nigerian manufacturing industry. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, the study surveyed 200 employees and conducted interviews with human resource managers. Results indicated that downsizing leads to diminished employee commitment due to fears of future layoffs and altered job roles. The authors recommend implementing retention strategies and employee engagement programs to foster commitment during downsizing.

Okwu and Iwu (2022) explored the effects of organizational downsizing on employee commitment in selected public institutions in Nigeria. A sample of 150 employees was surveyed, and findings indicated a significant negative relationship between downsizing and employee commitment. The authors emphasize the importance of management practices that prioritize employee welfare and communication to enhance commitment during downsizing periods.

Abayomi and Enitan (2021) investigated the association between organizational downscaling and survivor performance in the banking industry in Nigeria. This research draws on equity theory (Adams, 1963) and Herzberg's two-factor theory (Herzberg, Mausner & Snyderman, 1959). Methodology-The survey research design was adopted in conjunction with the non-probabilistic technique. 159 structured questionnaires were distributed and 132 (83%) were found usable for the analysis. The responses is measured in Likert type scales. Findings-Three hypotheses were tested, one divulges no relationship between technological advancement and survivor performance while career advancement opportunities and economic costs both have a relationship with survivor performance. Conclusion-The study thus recommends that managers involved in downsizing should display a high level of truthfulness, uprightness, candidness to ideas, and maintain a notch of unbiased to both the survivors and those that are disengaged.

Mapira et al. (2014) assess the impact of downsizing on employee commitment in selected cooking oil manufacturing companies in Zimbabwe. The research was carried out in the form of a case study in which a sample of 98 employees from a population of 108 employees was used. Stratified random sampling procedure was employed in selecting elements from 8 top management, 20 middle managers and 80 general workers. A combination of questionnaires and interviews were used to collect data from the sample. Basing on the findings from Mashwede Refinery and Surface Investments the study revealed that downsizing had negatively impacted on employee commitment as evidenced by decrease in productivity, disciplinary hearing increase and decrease in employee morale. The research also found that the task of managing survivors syndrome and employee commitment would not be difficult if the leadership recognized that survivors have special needs, provides the emotional support they deserve to ensure continuous and honest communication. In light of these findings the study recommends that for any change strategy to produce desired results companies should embark on job counselling, climate survey to check morale and provide frequent and transparent communication before, during and even after downsizing in order to retain employee commitment.

Asuman and Ayse (2009) examined organizational downsizing and survivors' commitment to the organization in manufacturing industry in Kayseri, Turkey. The purpose was to examine how organizational downsizing affected survivors' commitment to the organization. A survey was conducted using five firms in the manufacturing industry in Kayseri (Turkey) that were undergoing downsizing. The preliminary surveys revealed that 250 employees had experienced the downsizing process and are thus included in the sample. Structured questionnaire forms were used in this initial survey. Although 250 questionnaire forms were sent to respondents, 170 forms were filled out and returned. Seven questionnaire forms were eliminated because they did not meet prescribed requirements. Consequently, data obtained from 163 questionnaires was analyzed using SPSS 15.0. Data were obtained from 163 employees and was analyzed using SPSS 15.0. The survey revealed that employees' positive perceptions of organizational downsizing increased organizational commitment, including affective, continuance, and normative commitment.

Tinashe and Wilfred (2022) studied the relationship between organizational downsizing and employees' continuance commitment in the transport and logistics industry in Zimbabwe. This paper aims to establish the nexus between organizational downsizing and employees' continuance commitment in the transport and logistics industry in Zimbabwe. There has been an ongoing economic downturn in many Sub-Saharan African countries over the years, which has directly impacted on industrial growth. Faced with harsh economic realities, many organisations in Zimbabwe have resorted to frantic organisational downsizing to stay afloat. This paper used an Explanatory Sequential Mixed Method, and collected data in a sequential manner starting with

surveys and then following up with interviews. The study's results demonstrated that frantic organisational downsizing in Zimbabwean transport and logistic organisations was exacerbated by the economic crisis faced by almost every sector of the economy.

Naveed et al. (2015) studied the impact of downsizing on organizational commitment and turnover intentions of surviving employees in the moderating role of social support. This study intends to examine the impact of downsizing on organizational commitment and turnover intentions of surviving employees in the moderating role of social support. The target audience for this study was four public and private sector organizations located in Islamabad. The sample size consisted of 333 employees of upper and middle level management which were selected through simple random sampling. The result shows that downsizing is positively related to employee turnover intention and has significant negative impact on employee commitment. However, social support as a moderator enhanced employee commitment. This study will help the managers to comprehend when and how to apply downsizing so as not to harm the employee's commitment.

Njoki (2018) examined the impact of organizational downsizing on employees' performance in selected commercial banks in Nyeri County, Kenya. The objective of the research was to investigate the effect of organizational downsizing on employees' performance in selected commercial banks in Nyeri County, Kenya. The study used descriptive research design since it determines means and other statistical data of the population. The study targeted 168 employees from the selected commercial banks in Nyeri County and since the target population is of manageable size, a census was conducted to all the respondents. Semi-structured questionnaire was administered to the respondents to collect primary data. To ease analysis, the Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) computer software was applied. Descriptive, correlation and inferential analysis was used to show relationships amongst the variables. The study found that employees feel part of the bank family at all times and that they would like to work in the same bank for a longer time.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that there is a significant positive relationship between employee reduction and employee commitment in five star hotels in Rivers State. While organizational downsizing has a generally positive impact on employee commitment, the strength and nature of the organizational culture can significantly mitigate these effects.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Management of five star hotels adopt and implement strategies that supports employee hard work in terms of task execution and reward them appropriately to boost their morale and commitment
2. Management of five star hotels should invest in building a strong, supportive culture before engaging in downsizing.
3. Management of five star hotels should implement clear and empathetic communication strategies to explain the reasons for downsizing.

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