

GOAL SETTING AND WORKFORCE STABILITY OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMPANIES IN RIVERS STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between goal setting and workforce stability of telecommunications companies in Rivers State. The population size was one thousand one hundred (1,100) staff and managers who have worked with the organization for a year and above. A sample size of 293 was ascertained using the Taro Yamene's sampling technique. The reliability of the instrument was achieved by the use of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient with all the items scoring above 0.70. The hypotheses were tested using the Spearman's Rank Order Correlation coefficient. The tests were carried out at a 0.05 significance level. Findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between goal setting and workforce stability of telecommunications companies in Rivers State. The study concludes that goal setting positively enhances workforce stability of telecommunications companies in Rivers State. Therefore, the study recommends that the management in Telecommunications companies in Rivers State should implement SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) goals to enhance job satisfaction by providing employees with clear objectives and a sense of accomplishment.

Keywords: Goal Setting, Workforce Stability, Job Satisfaction, Job Commitment

INTRODUCTION

Workforce stability is a critical factor in the success of telecommunications companies in Rivers State, Nigeria. The sector is highly competitive and technologically driven, requiring a skilled and stable workforce to maintain service quality and operational efficiency. Workforce stability helps companies retain valuable skills and knowledge, ensuring consistent service delivery and reducing the costs associated with high employee turnover. This stability is particularly important in telecommunications, where customer satisfaction and trust are directly linked to the reliability and expertise of the workforce (Nwachukwu & Chukwuma, 2023).

High turnover rates can lead to disruptions in service delivery, increased recruitment and training costs, and a loss of institutional knowledge. In contrast, a stable workforce fosters a positive organizational culture, improves employee morale, and enhances productivity. When employees feel secure in their roles, they are more likely to remain committed to the company's long-term goals, contributing to overall business success (Eze, 2023). Workforce stability, therefore, is not just a matter of retaining employees but is integral to maintaining competitive advantage in the fast-paced telecommunications industry.

The importance of workforce stability in telecommunications companies in Rivers State cannot be overstated. Some of the measures of workforce stability may include job satisfaction, work-life balance, recognitions, rewards, job commitment, affective commitment, continuance commitment among others. Nevertheless, there are many factors that can affect workforce stability in telecommunications companies. For instance, job satisfaction plays a crucial role; employees who find their work fulfilling are more likely to stay with the company. Competitive compensation and benefits packages also contribute significantly to retention, as do opportunities for career advancement and professional development. Additionally, a positive organizational culture and effective leadership are key drivers of workforce stability, helping to create an environment where employees feel valued and supported (Eze, 2023; Nwachukwu & Chukwuma, 2023). However

among many factors that affect workforce stability it appears that much attention have not been given to performance appraisal in literature.

Goal setting involves establishing clear, measurable goals aligns employees' efforts with organizational objectives, enhancing motivation and productivity (Locke & Latham, 2002). Continuous feedback is providing regular, constructive feedback helps employees adjust their performance in real-time, fostering continuous improvement and engagement (Stone &Heen, 2014). While rewards involve recognizing and rewarding employees for their achievements reinforces desired behaviors and boosts morale, leading to higher retention and satisfaction (Eisenberger & Aselage, 2009). This shows that ensuring the performance appraisal can improve workforce stability. Although scholars have examined the relationship between performance appraisal and other variables but linking performance appraisal with workforce stability is scarce in literature specially as relate to telecommunications companies in Rivers State.

The purpose of this paper therefore was to examine the relationship between goal setting and workforce stability of Telecommunication Companies in Rivers State, Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study included:

1. Examine the relationship between goal setting and job satisfaction of telecommunications companies in Rivers State
 - i. Investigate the relationship between goal setting and job commitment of telecommunications companies in Rivers State



Figure 1: conceptual model for the relationship between goal setting and workforce stability

Source: Desk Research (2024)

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Foundation

Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964)

The study adopted Social Exchange Theory by Blau (1964). Social Exchange Theory posits that relationships are formed through reciprocal exchanges between parties, and individuals are more committed to relationships where they perceive a fair exchange of resources, support, and recognition.

Application to Performance Appraisal and Workforce Stability: Performance appraisals can be seen as part of the social exchange between employees and the organization. When appraisals are conducted fairly, with constructive feedback and recognition of employees' contributions, they reinforce the employee's sense of being valued by the organization. This sense of reciprocity encourages employees to reciprocate with loyalty and continued commitment, thus enhancing workforce stability. If employees feel that the appraisal process is supportive and beneficial to their career growth, they are more likely to remain with the organization. In all, this theory

provides a strong foundation for understanding how effective performance appraisals can enhance workforce stability. By ensuring that appraisals are goal-oriented, fair, aligned with rewards, and supportive, organizations can foster a stable and committed workforce.

Goal Setting

Goal setting is a fundamental dimension of performance appraisal that involves establishing measurable, achievable, relevant objectives for employees (Locke & Latham, 2019). Clear and well-defined goals help employees understand what is expected of them and provide a basis for evaluating their performance. Effective goal setting aligns individual objectives with organizational goals, ensuring that employees' efforts contribute to the overall success of the organization. Research indicates that goal setting enhances employee motivation and performance by providing a clear direction and purpose (Locke & Latham, 2002). Goals that are challenging yet attainable encourage employees to exert greater effort and persistence. Additionally, goal-setting processes should involve employee participation to increase commitment and ownership of the objectives (Latham & Locke, 2007). This participative approach fosters a sense of responsibility and engagement among employees.

Effective goal setting also requires regular review and adjustment of goals based on changing organizational needs and employee performance (Schmidt & Rader, 1999). This flexibility ensures that goals remain relevant and achievable, thereby maintaining employee motivation and performance. Furthermore, goal-setting processes should include clear criteria for measuring progress and success, providing employees with a sense of accomplishment and recognition.

Concept of Workforce Stability

Workforce Stability refers to the extent to which employees remain with an organization over time, indicating a stable and consistent workforce. It is a crucial factor for organizational effectiveness, as high stability can lead to improved performance, reduced turnover costs, and enhanced employee morale (Hausknecht, Rodda, & Howard, 2009). Achieving workforce stability often involves addressing various factors that influence employee retention and satisfaction.

A stable workforce is often characterized by low turnover rates, high employee engagement, and a positive work environment. Organizations with stable workforces benefit from accumulated experience and expertise, which contributes to organizational knowledge and efficiency (Huselid, 1995). Additionally, stable workforces can foster strong team cohesion and collaborative culture, enhancing overall organizational performance. To achieve workforce stability, organizations must implement effective human resource practices, such as competitive compensation, career development opportunities, and supportive management practices. These practices help to retain employees and prevent unnecessary turnover (Becker & Huselid, 1998). Organizations that fail to address the factors contributing to workforce instability may experience high turnover, lower employee morale, and decreased productivity. Understanding workforce stability also involves examining the impact of external factors, such as economic conditions and industry trends, on employee retention. Economic downturns and industry changes can influence job security and employee satisfaction, affecting overall workforce stability (Allen, Shore, & Griffeth, 2003). Workforce stability is a critical aspect of organizational success, influenced by a range of internal and external factors. Organizations that effectively manage these factors can achieve greater stability, leading to enhanced performance and reduced turnover.

Measures of Workforce Stability

Job Satisfaction

Job Satisfaction refers to the extent to which employees feel content and fulfilled with their work. It is a critical determinant of employee retention and organizational commitment (Locke, 1976). High job satisfaction is associated with positive attitudes towards work, which can lead to increased productivity and lower turnover rates (Judge & Bono, 2001). Several factors contribute

to job satisfaction, including the nature of the work, work environment, relationships with colleagues, and compensation. Employees who find their work meaningful and engaging are more likely to experience higher job satisfaction (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Additionally, supportive work environments and positive interpersonal relationships enhance job satisfaction by fostering a sense of belonging and support.

Job satisfaction also impacts various outcomes, such as job performance and organizational citizenship behaviors. Employees who are satisfied with their jobs are more likely to exhibit higher levels of performance and contribute positively to the organization beyond their formal job responsibilities (Organ, 1988). Conversely, low job satisfaction can lead to decreased motivation and higher absenteeism. Organizations can enhance job satisfaction by addressing factors such as job design, work conditions, and employee recognition. Providing opportunities for skill development, ensuring fair compensation, and creating a positive work culture are essential strategies for improving job satisfaction (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002). Job satisfaction is a vital component of workforce stability and organizational success. By focusing on factors that influence job satisfaction, organizations can improve employee engagement, performance, and retention.

Job Satisfaction is a key measure of workforce stability, reflecting employees' overall contentment with their work environment, job role, and organizational culture. High levels of job satisfaction are associated with increased employee retention, reduced turnover, and enhanced organizational performance (Locke, 1976). Factors influencing job satisfaction include work conditions, compensation, career development opportunities, and relationships with colleagues. By regularly assessing job satisfaction, organizations can identify areas for improvement and implement strategies to enhance employee morale and retention.

Job Commitment

Job commitment refers to the extent to which employees are dedicated to their roles and responsibilities within an organization. It encompasses employees' willingness to exert effort and remain with the organization despite challenges (Meyer & Allen, 1997). High job commitment is associated with increased job performance, lower turnover rates, and enhanced organizational stability. Job commitment is influenced by various factors, including job satisfaction, organizational culture, and opportunities for career growth. Employees who are satisfied with their work and perceive their organization as supportive and growth-oriented are more likely to exhibit higher levels of commitment (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). Organizational practices that promote job commitment include providing opportunities for advancement, offering competitive compensation, and fostering a positive work environment.

Job commitment is another crucial measure of workforce stability, representing the degree to which employees are dedicated to their roles and the organization. Job commitment encompasses affective commitment (emotional attachment to the organization), continuance commitment (perceived cost of leaving the organization), and normative commitment (sense of obligation to stay) (Meyer & Allen, 1997). High job commitment is linked to lower turnover rates, higher job performance, and greater organizational loyalty (Meyer, Allen, & Smith, 1993). Organizations can foster job commitment by creating a supportive work environment, offering career development opportunities, and aligning organizational values with employees' personal values.

There are different types of job commitment, including affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment. Each type of commitment has distinct characteristics and implications for employee behavior and organizational outcomes (Meyer, Allen, & Smith, 1993). Understanding these types helps organizations tailor their strategies to enhance overall job commitment. Job commitment also plays a crucial role in organizational performance. Employees with high commitment are more likely to engage in discretionary behaviors that benefit the organization and contribute to its success (Organ, 1988). Conversely, low job commitment can lead to increased absenteeism, decreased productivity, and higher turnover rates. Job commitment

is a vital factor in organizational stability and success. By addressing factors that influence job commitment, organizations can enhance employee performance, satisfaction, and overall workforce stability.

Goal Setting and Workforce Stability

Goal setting is a fundamental aspect of employee motivation and performance management, and it plays a crucial role in workforce stability. According to Locke and Latham's Goal-Setting Theory (1990), specific and challenging goals lead to higher performance levels as they provide employees with a clear sense of direction and purpose. When employees understand their objectives and how their roles contribute to the organization's overall goals, they are more likely to be engaged and committed. This commitment fosters workforce stability, as employees feel more connected to the organization and are less likely to seek employment elsewhere (Locke & Latham, 2002).

The process of goal setting also contributes to workforce stability by fostering a sense of achievement and progress among employees. When employees reach their goals, they experience a sense of accomplishment, which enhances their job satisfaction and loyalty to the organization. This, in turn, reduces turnover rates, as satisfied employees are more likely to remain with the company. A study by Latham (2004) found that employees who set and achieved goals were more likely to stay with their organizations, suggesting that goal setting can be an effective strategy for retaining talent. Furthermore, involving employees in the goal-setting process can enhance their commitment and motivation, leading to greater workforce stability. When employees have a say in setting their goals, they are more likely to be invested in achieving them. This participatory approach also aligns employees' personal goals with organizational objectives, creating a sense of shared purpose. Research by Deci and Ryan (2000) supports the idea that autonomy in goal setting leads to higher intrinsic motivation, which in turn can increase job satisfaction and reduce turnover intentions.

From the foregoing discourse, the study hypothesized thus:

H0₁: There is no significant relationship between goal setting and job satisfaction of telecommunications companies in Rivers State

H0₂: There is no significant relationship between goal setting and job commitment of telecommunications companies in Rivers State

METHODOLOGY

The population size was one thousand one hundred (1,100) staff and managers who have worked with the organization for a year and above. A sample size of 293 was ascertained using the Taro Yamene's sampling technique. The reliability of the instrument was achieved by the use of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient with all the items scoring above 0.70. The hypotheses were tested using the Spearman's Rank Order Correlation coefficient. The tests were carried out at a 0.05 significance level.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Table 1: Correlation between Goal Setting and Job Satisfaction

		Correlations	
		Goal Setting	Job Satisfaction
Spearman's rho	Goal Setting	Correlation Coefficient	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.661**
		N	288
Job Satisfaction	Goal Setting	Correlation Coefficient	.661**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	1.000
		N	.288

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

Source: Desk Research (2024)

The correlation between goal setting and job satisfaction is strong and positive, with a Spearman's rho coefficient of 0.661. This result, which is statistically significant at the 0.01 level, indicates that as goal setting practices improve, employees' job satisfaction also tends to increase. Effective goal setting likely provides clear expectations and a sense of direction, contributing to higher overall satisfaction in the workplace. This strong relationship underscores the importance of setting clear, achievable goals as a strategy to enhance employee satisfaction.

Table 2: Correlation between Goal Setting and Job Commitment
Correlations

		Goal Setting	Job Commitment
Spearman's rho	Goal Setting	Correlation Coefficient	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.566**
		N	288
Job Commitment	Goal Setting	Correlation Coefficient	.566**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	1.000
		N	.000
		N	288

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

Source: Desk Research (2024)

The correlation between goal setting and job commitment is moderate to strong, with a Spearman's rho coefficient of 0.566, and is statistically significant at the 0.01 level. This suggests that well-defined and effectively communicated goals are associated with higher levels of job commitment among employees. When employees perceive that their goals are aligned with their roles and skills, they are more likely to develop a stronger sense of commitment to the organization. This relationship highlights the role of goal setting in fostering a committed workforce.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between goal setting and workforce stability of telecommunications companies in Rivers State. Goal setting is a powerful tool for enhancing job satisfaction. When employees have clearly defined, attainable goals, they are more likely to experience a sense of purpose and achievement. This sense of accomplishment can significantly boost job satisfaction. In the context of telecommunications companies in Rivers State, having structured goal-setting practices can help employees align their personal objectives with organizational targets, which in turn enhances their satisfaction with their jobs. According to a study by Locke and Latham (2019), goal setting is positively correlated with job satisfaction. Employees who have clear and challenging goals tend to be more satisfied with their work because they receive regular feedback and experience a greater sense of progress. This finding is supported by research in various industries, including telecommunications. For instance, a study by Abiodun et al. (2022) found that goal clarity in Nigerian telecommunications firms was linked to higher job satisfaction, suggesting that employees feel more content when they understand their goals and see their achievements. Therefore, in Rivers State, the effectiveness of goal setting on job satisfaction may be influenced by the local work culture and the specific practices of telecommunications companies. Organizations that implement SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) goals could see a more pronounced positive effect on job satisfaction. Employees are likely to appreciate a structured approach that provides them with clear expectations and a roadmap for achieving their objectives.

Job commitment is closely tied to the process of goal setting. When employees are involved in setting goals and these goals align with their values and career aspirations, their commitment to the organization tends to increase. Goal setting provides employees with a clear sense of direction and purpose, which enhances their emotional attachment and loyalty to the organization. For telecommunications companies in Rivers State, involving employees in the goal-setting process can foster a stronger sense of commitment. Research by Meyer and Allen (2021) emphasizes that goal setting enhances job commitment by providing employees with a clearer understanding of how their roles contribute to organizational success.

Similarly, studies such as those by Akinyele and Olutoye (2023) reveal that employees who perceive their goals as achievable and aligned with their personal values are more likely to exhibit higher levels of commitment. In the Nigerian telecommunications sector, goal-setting practices that involve employees in the decision-making process can strengthen job commitment. In Rivers State, the relationship between goal setting and job commitment may be influenced by how well the goals resonate with employees' personal values and career aspirations. Effective goal-setting practices that engage employees and reflect their contributions to organizational objectives can lead to greater commitment and lower turnover rates.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, study concluded that there is a significant relationship between goal setting, continuous feedback, rewards, and organizational culture significantly influences job satisfaction, job commitment, and workforce stability in telecommunications companies in Rivers State. Clear and attainable goals enhance employee motivation, satisfaction, and commitment, while regular and constructive feedback fosters engagement, loyalty, and a sense of belonging

Therefore, the study recommends that:

- i. Management in Telecommunications companies in Rivers State should implement SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) goals to enhance job satisfaction by providing employees with clear objectives and a sense of accomplishment.
- ii. Management should encourage employee involvement in the goal-setting process to strengthen their emotional commitment to the organization, thereby fostering long-term loyalty and dedication.

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