## Employees' Turnover Intention in Indian Retail Industry-An Exploratory Study

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## Abstract

The idea to investigate the motivation behind the turnover intentions of frontline staff in Indian retail sector stems from the fact the organised retail market in India is characterized by high level of employee turnover. It becomes one among the various threats the retail sector is facing now-a-days. Therefore, it becomes imperative for the employers to initiate strategies that will lower the frequency of turnover. For this, it is necessary to investigate and identify the motives behind their intention to quit. Turnover intention precedes the actual turnover, therefore it becomes important to understand the reasons behind their intention to leave the job and then take corrective measures if needed. Various researchers have identified a plethora of reasons behind the escalating problem of attrition. Thus, contributing to the further knowledge of these related terms, the objective of this study is to ascertain the factors which determine the intention to quit the job among the front-line employees in Indian retail sector using the empirical survey. Therefore, the study is exploratory in nature.Also, the study intended to compare the importance of different factors that results into the motivation to leave the job. To achieve the objective, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) using the Principle Component technique was performed. Through empirical survey, the study extracted eight important factors that results into employees' intention to quit. They were Management practices, Salary and Reward System, Career Growth, Training & Development, Social Support, Working condition, Communication system, and Security measures.

## Keywords

Turnover, Turnover Intention, Organised Retail.

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#### Introduction

Being in a globalised economy, every organisation irrespective of its type and size is facing the problem of employee turnover at every level. Turnover intention as defined by Tett and Meyer (1993) is a "conscious and deliberate willingness to leave the organization". It is one of the major predictors of real turnover (Griffeth et al, 2000). Turnover can be both voluntary and involuntary. Voluntary turnover is initiated by employee themselves. It is the process by which an employee willingly ends their relationship with the organization (Bluedorn, 1978), on the other hand involuntary turnover is employeer initiated. Voluntary turnover can be understood in a better manner through the understanding of employees' intention to leave the job. Employee turnover is a costly affair. When an employee leaves, the organisation has to invest a huge sum of money on hiring new employees, their induction and training programme, even though the cost of losing a trained employee cannot be compensated.

There is no single factor which leads to employee turnover, rather it is the result of a host of factors which may be individual, organisational, environmental or demographic. Various studies found that actual turnover and intention to leave are often correlated (Castle et al, 2007). Turnover intention leads to the actual quitting behavior (Jha, 2014). Since intention to leave is viewed to be the best predictor and the strongest sign of turnover, researchers often use intention to leave as a substitution for turnover (Castle et al., 2007). Also past literature suggested that intention to leave is an indicator that an employee is withdrawing psychologically from the organization as well form the work.

There can be multiple reasons behind employees' intention to quit the job viz. unhealthy work environment, issues related to pay, senior-subordinate relationship or ineffective organisational policies. And so, turnover of employees is a major challenge for organizations. Being a threat, it requires a comprehensive study to understand the employees' viewpoint on what is the motivation behind their intention to leave the organisation.

Several scholars attempted to identify the factors that lead to turnover intention among the employees and develop some managerial implications to find the solution of high employee attrition (Tuzun, 2007). Thus, contributing to the further knowledge of these related terms, the purpose of this study is to find out the factors that motivate an employee to leave their job and then rank those factors in order of their prominence.

#### **RELEVANT LITERATURE**

Since 1950, a number of scholars have tried to identify the reasons of voluntary turnover in different industries. Researchers then established various multivariate models, depicting the relationship of different factors contributing to turnover and retention. Many researches were done on empirically testing those models, so as to envisage why individuals stay or leave in an organization. Going thorough the past literatures, some observations have been noted to comprehend the different factor influencing the turnover intention and an effort is made to present analysis and understand the knowledge available on those factors.

Turnover intention is a cognitive process and is subjective in nature. Employee turnover intention can be termed as a psychological response to a particular organizational condition along a range of organizational withdrawal behaviours, ranging from thinking to quit to actually leaving the organization (Kraut, 1975). It is the individual perception to quit the current job for other available opportunities (Lee, 2008). Carmeli & Weisberg (2006) mentioned that turnover intention refers to three specific elements in the withdrawal thought process.

They are feelings of leaving the job, the intention to hunt for another job, and then intention to quit. In theory, many researchers (Mobley et al., 1979; Arnold & Feldman, 1982; Shore and Martin, 1989; Lum et al,

1998; Griffeth et al., 2000; Khatri et al. 2008) holds the view that intention to leave is the best predictor of actual turnover and also it is an appropriate dependent variable as it is associated with the actual turnover. Turnover as stated by Gustafson (2002) is "the ratio of the people who resigned in a specified period in an organization and the number of average workers working in the organization in the same period". While turnover brings many direct and indirect cost for the organisation, at the same time it also results in social capital loss (Kuria et al., 2012; Magnini et al., 2011; Mohsin et al., 2013).Kuşluvan and Kuşluvan (2004) categorised turnover into eight types. They were voluntary, reluctant, functional, non-functional, evitable, inevitable, planned and unplanned. The turnover intentions have been examined from several view point. Dissatisfaction from job, poor salary structure, lack of career development, lengthy work hours, unhealthy work environment, relationships at workplace are the most commonly stated reasons of high turnover (Chalkiti and Sigala, 2010). These factors affects the employees' intention to quit the job. Identifying such factors becomes vital for an organisation in order to minimise such behaviour (Vandenberg and Nelson, 1999).

Many variables such as age, length of service, gender, education, environmental factors, and organisational factors have been studied and it was found that they play an important role for an employee in deciding whether to continue working for a particular organisation for to quit. Some important factors are mentioned below.

#### Career growth and turnover intention

Literatures in organisational behaviour, psychology and management contains a number of thoughts about the concept of career (Adamson et al, 1998). Each field has a different notion regarding the definition of career, however, career as defined by Arthur (2008) is the sequence of work experiences during an individual's lifetime and 'career growth' is the "progression through a sequence of jobs, involving continually more advanced or diverse activities and resulting in wider or improved skills, greater responsibility and prestige, and higher income" (Bloomsbury Business & Management Dictionary 2007). As defined by Jans (1989), Career growth refers to "one's perception of the chances of development and advancement within an organisation" (cited in Daud, 2014). Weng & McElroy (2012), abstracted four factors of career growth. They were career goal progress, professional ability development, promotion speed, and remuneration growth. Opportunity of the long-term career development can yield a positive and committed employees' for organisations (Ballout 2009). March and Simon (1958) debated that if the organization is large enough to provide the growth opportunities then the employees would tend to stay. Employees are likely to stay in organisations with clear career hierarchies and with opportunities for personal growth and development, than in organisations where career path are static, with few or no opportunities of growth. A person's career may advance within the current organisation where they are working and/or, by changing the job, in various organisations. Previous researches emphasised on career development within the organisation. The reason being, that an employee holds a long term employment relations with a particular organisation. But today because of globalisation, technological changes and many other factors, nature of career has undergone a substantial change where employees are having frequent switchovers, thus short term employment with an organisation (Arthur, 2008; Granrose & Baccili, 2006; Sturges et al, 2000).

#### Leadership and turnover intention

Direct relationship exists between leader's behaviour, job satisfaction and organisational commitment, which in turn influence the employees' intention to leave or stay. Supervisor's behaviour at workplace, to a

greater extent determines the behaviour of employees. One important aspect of leadership is ethical behaviour (Trevino et al, 2003). There is an affirmative relation between the leadership effectiveness, job performance and the organizational performance (Smith et al, 1984). Also, leader's behaviour determines the organizational productivity. Leader's behaviour guides the other employees toward the objective and mission of the organisation. Therefore, a leader must be truthful, responsible, rational and kind. They must be transparent and engage in open communication both upward & downward. Then only a healthy and friendly employer-employee relation can be developed (Brown et al., 2005). When the bond between superior and subordinate is stronger, it creates a congenial work environment which, in turn builds a sense of commitment among the employees and reduces their intention to quit (Mulki et al, 2007).

#### Promotional opportunities and turnover intention

Traditional management theories gave emphasis on the importance of promotional opportunities and the probable growth for improving employees' performance. Perceived career prospects outside the organization and absence of career growth opportunities inside the organization enhances the employee's intention to quit the organization (Stahl et al, 2009). Career growth within the organisation can be understood by four factors: career goal progress, or the degree to which one's present job is relevant to and provides opportunities to realize their career goals; professional development, that is the degree to which one's present job facilitates acquisition of new skills and knowledge; promotional avenues, an employee's perceptions of the rate and the chances of being promoted (Weng, McElroy, Morrow, and Liu, 2010).

#### **Compensation and turnover intention**

Compensation includes all forms of pay, reward, bonus, commission, benefits, medical insurance etc. (Sherman et al., 1998). Monetary compensation is viewed as an important variable that determines employees' intention to stay or quit. In order to retain employees', Organisations should must recognize compensation and reward mechanism as a chief motivator (Popoola & Ayeni, (2007). Specifically the younger generation, who are so called millennials are supposed to be very money-oriented and this results in switching from one job to the other for a few extra penny (Campbell and Campbell, 1997). Also a positive relationship exists between the reward practices and the employees' performance (Shahzad et al. 2008). Therefore, the compensation mechanism must be fair and proportionate with the employees' skills, experiences and knowledge. Presently the employees are hired at a set salary; this trend needs to be shifted to compensation based on knowledge, performance and their overall contribution. Performance based pay can go a long way towards making employees more accountable for their work, in addition to providing an attractive incentive for increased productivity.

#### Methodology of the study

The objective of this study is to ascertain the factors which determine the intention to quit the job among the front-line employees of Indian retail sector using the empirical survey. And so, the study is exploratory in nature. Besides, the study intends to compare the prominence of different factors that results into the turnover intention.

Further, primary data was collected from the frontline employees of Indian retail sector. A structured questionnaire was designed which was divided into two sections. First part dealt with the general demographic

characteristics of employees, such as age, gender, education and length of service. The second part of the questionnaire contained statements related to organisational factors. For the organisational factors, the items were identified based upon previous studies (Flex, 2012; Herbert, Donald, John, and Lee, 2000; Jane, Namusonge, & Mike, 2012; David and Stephen, 200; Mark, 2011; Balzer et al. 1997; Dabke et al. 2008)

The respondents were asked about the different variables and they had to evaluate it on a 5 point Likert scale, where 5= strongly agree and 1= strongly disagree.

Random sampling was used to select the respondents. A total of 450 respondents were approached. Final study comprised of only 430 respondents. The respondents were selected from organised retail outlets located in Mumbai and NCR regions. In order to reduce the number of variables an explorative factor analysis (EFA) using the 'Principle Component technique' was performed.

Variables	Frequency	Percent (%)
Age		
Upto 25 years	140	32.56
Upto 35 years	200	46.51
More than 35 years	90	20.93
Total	430	100
Gender		
Male	260	60.46
Female	170	39.54
Total	430	100
Education		•
Up to 12 <sup>th</sup>	230	53.49
Graduate	120	27.91
Post graduate and above	80	18.60
Total	430	100
Length of service		
0-1 Years	180	41.86
2-3 Years	150	34.88
4-5 Years	55	12.79
More than 5 Years	45	10.47
Total	430	100

 Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Significant relationship exist between the demographic factors and turnover intention and so they must be given due consideration. In this study four demographic variables were considered. They were: age, gender, education level and length of service.

Among the above demographic factors, age and length of service shows negative association with the turnover intention (Arnold & Feldman, 1982; Mobley et. Al, 1979; Price & Mueller, 1986) while positive relation exists between the level of education and intention to quit, that means the more educated the employees are, higher will be their intention to quit (Berg, 1991; Cotton & Tuttle, 1986). Association of gender with turnover intention revealed assorted results. Cotton and Tuttle (1986) and Weisberg and Kirshenbaum (1993) were of the view that females were more likely to quit as compared to males. Robinson (1998) found no relationship between gender and turnover. However the factors of employee turnover differs from organization to organisation and from person to person (Ongori, 2007).

In order to perform the principle component analysis, first of all it is pertinent to check the reliability of the measurement scale. The reliability of the scale as measured by Cronbach's alpha was found to be 0.857. Since its value is above 0.6, the scale is highly reliable.

No. of	Cronbach a if Item
Items	is Deleted
41	0.857

#### Table 2: Reliability Test

After confirming the reliability of the scale, the researcher proceeds further to check for the feasibility of performing factor analysis. Two statistical measures were used to assess the factorability of the data. They were Bartlett's test of sphericity (Bartlett, 1954), and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy (Kaiser, 1970, 1974).

To perform factorial analysis on the data, to assess whether the scale is one-dimensional or multidimensional, the Bartlett's test of Sphericity was performed to test whether the correlation matrix is an identity matrix and to show that items are related and therefore suitable for structure detection. The Bartlett's test of sphericity should be significant (p<0.05) for the factor analysis to be considered appropriate. The KMO statistics tests whether the proportion of variance accounted for by factors is large enough and might be caused by underlying factors. The KMO index ranges from 0 to 1, with 0.6 suggested as the minimum value for a good factor analysis (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001).

Both the KMO statistics and results of Bartlett's Test of Sphericity are shown in table 3.

 Table 3: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.723
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	26279.246
	Df	820
	Sig.	0.000

Table 3 illustrates that KMO index is 0.723 (> 0.05) and more than the required value of 0.6. For Bartlett's test, the chi square value is 26279.246 with 820 Degree of Freedom and is statistically significant at p < 0.05. Therefore, factor analysis can be performed to achieve the objective of our study.

There are several techniques to perform factor analysis, of which we are performing Principle Component Analysis. The purpose of principal component analysis is to take P original variables (X1, X2, ..., Xp) and find combination of these to produce new variables (X1, X2, ..., Xp). These new variables are uncorrelated in order of their importance, and describe the variation in the data. The lack of correlation means that the indices are estimating different "dimensions" of the data, and the ordering is such that  $Var(X1) \ge Var(X2) \ge ... \ge Var(Xp)$ . The new variables are then the principal components. The results of factor analysis are shown in table 4. The rotated component matrix shows the factor loading of respective variable on the eight factors called principle components. Factor loadings describes the relation of the variables and the factor.

	Factor Loadings							
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Factor 6	Factor 7	Factor 8
Items	МР	SRS	CG	TD	SS	WC	CS	SM
Recruitment & selection process	.886							
Induction Programmes	.880							
Person organisation fit	.857							
Recognition	.853							
Challenging task	.849							
Organisations rules and regulations	.754							
Work life balance	.733							
Organisational values	.667							
Performance based pay		.899						
Competitive salary		.897						
Compensation		.888						
Bonus		.875						
Rewards		.839						
Non-monetary benefits		.604						
Consistent Career growth			.828					
Identification of career			.824					
prerequisites								
Defined Career Progression path			.809					
Career Development Programmes			.802					
Transparent promotion policies			.687					
Opportunities for personal growth			.687					
Assessment of employee needs				.859				
Effectiveness of training				.854				
Performance appraisal practices				.808				
Timely feedback				.757				
Skill development opportunities				.695				
Supportive colleagues				.050	.871			
Relationship with managers					.836			
Trustworthiness of managers					.739			
Supervisory support					.727			
Team support					.706			
Flexible work hours						.883		
Autonomy						.870		
Nature of work						.731		
Workplace discipline						.708		
Effectiveness of Communication							.869	
System								
Involvement in decision making							.868	
Grievance redressal mechanism							.825	
Feeling of being heard							.793	
Job security								.766
Social security								.725
Health safety measures								.631
N = 430; Extraction Method: Princip			is.	1	1	I	1	
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kais	er Normali	zation.						
Source: Researcher's own calculation								

#### Table 4: Result of Principle Component Analysis

#### • Factor one: Management Practices

Management practices covers factors such as recruitment & selection process, induction programmes, challenging task, person-organisation fit, organisations rules and regulations, organisational values etc. These factors if not considered may act as an important catalyst in influencing the employees' decision to leave their job. The managerial policies therefore should not be too rigid. They should be fair and clear. Due consideration must be given in recruiting and selecting an employee. There should not be person-job mismatch; else it will motivate the employee to leave. Person-organisation fit is the extent to which job suits the individuals and their environmental characteristics (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005). Social outcomes such as recognition, admiration etc. are also significant. These will certainly minimize the turnover intentions of the employee. Person-organization talks about the compatibility between the job assigned and the values held by the employees and the culture of an organization.

#### • Factor two: Salary and Reward System

Salary is the prime motive for any employee, for both to join a particular organisation or to leave. Therefore it is considered as the principal hygiene factor. According to Johnson & Yang (2010), salary is an important factor for employees in deciding whether to stay or leave. In a meta-analysis conducted by McDaniel, and Nguyen (2006), to determine the antecedents and consequences of pay level satisfaction, it was found that the turnover and the intention to leave were the consequences dissatisfaction from their pay. Singh and Loncar (2010) made an attempt to determine the relationship between pay satisfaction, job satisfaction, and turnover intention. The study revealed that all the dimensions of pay satisfaction were negatively associated with turnover intention. Carraher (2011) examined the attitude of employees towards pay and other monetary benefits and found that monetary benefits and satisfaction from pay were important in affecting the decision to stay or to leave and therefore useful in retaining employees. That study of baakile (2011) was also in line with Carraher (2011) which also found that pay satisfaction was an important predictor for turnover intention. Therefore remuneration should be appropriate and equitable. That means it must be equal and competitive with those in the same industry in the same domain.

#### • Factor three: Career Growth

Career growth in an organisation is a strong predictor of turnover intention. Employees' perception regarding their career prospect is an important factor that builds their intention to stay or quit. The employees who perceive their organization to be interested in their career growth respond positively on behalf of their organization (Wang et.al, 2014). Lambert & Hogan (2009) observes that the absence of career progress in an organisation is an important factor that influences the employee turnover decision. How do employees see them in a defined time span? And is there ample growth opportunity? These are two important factors from the employees' point of view. The degree to which an employee can meet their career development needs within the organization shapes their turnover intention. Employees' who perceives better career option in their organisations tends to continue with that organization as compared to employees whose career expectations are not met by the organizations. Such individuals tends to look for employment opportunities elsewhere. (Weng & McElroy, 2012).Organizations must realise the potential of career growth in controlling turnover (Weng & McElroy, 2012).

#### Factor four: Training and Development

Training is defined as the advancement of the knowledge, skills, and abilities that an employee requires to perform their job efficiently (Nordhaug, 1989). Training is closely related with career progression prospects. When a new employee enters the organisation training is a serious concern. Training is required to learn the basic skills required to perform one's job as well as to enhance career options too. Effective training increases the chance of promotion within the organisation and also enables the employee for getting jobs at other organisations. All the investment which an organisation bears on account of training and development of their employees is futile, if an employee leaves that organisation (Mello, 2011).

#### • Factor five: Social Support

Social support is something that is experienced by every employee in their work environment. It includes three aspects, support from co-workers, support from family and support from the Supervisor. All the three aspects are equally important when seen from the employees' perspective. Several scholars holds the view that workplace relationship is one among the various possible reasons that leads to turnover intention among employees' (Brunetto et. al., 2013; Morrison, 2004). The presence of communal senior-subordinate relationships and healthy cohesions with the co-workers helps the employees to build a strong affiliation not only with seniors and colleagues, but with the organization too which further shapes the turnover intention of employees (Brunetto et. al., 2013). Informal relationships at workplace and the degree of association perceived by employees' leads to increased job satisfaction, more commitment employees and consequently reduced turnover intentions (Morrison, 2004). However, Ackroyd et al., (2007), is of the view that informal linkages as workplace acts as a barrier between organizational demands and the workplace expectations. Therefore, where at one place cordial social support is necessary for organizational growth; dissonant relationships are a curse to the long term existence of employees with the particular organization. (Hill, Smith, & Lewicki, 1989; Markus, Smith, & Moreland, 1985).

#### • Factor six: Working condition

The Work itself is an important factor. The nature of the job has important impact on overall job satisfaction. Monotonous, unchallenging or boring job increases the employees' intention to leave, therefore job must be flexible. Employee must be given the flexibility of rotating their jobs to avoid the monotony. The physical working conditions should be safe, clean and hygienic. The work equipment's should be updated and well-maintained. Further, working hours should not be more than 8 hours a day. For this, there should be the provision of different shift and employees must be given the flexibility to choose their shift as per their convenience. If not, this may create work-life imbalance leading to intention to quit. Prior studies show that longer working hour can result in poor performance, illness and reduced productivity which will ultimately result in enhanced tendency to leave their job.

#### Factor seven: Communication System

Communication system though most neglected organisational factor in most of the organisation plays an important role in determining employees' intention to stay or quit. Organisations must ensure a proper channel of communication where the employees can propose and give their opinion about improving the day-to-day activities of the business. Employees have a strong need to be informed. This gives them a sense of

belongingness and increases their commitment for their job as well as the organisation. Committed employee is less likely to leave. Therefore they must be communicated about what job is assigned to them, whom they need to communicate, review on their performance, any minor change in business routine etc. If a strong communication system is developed by the organization, this will certainly minimise the turnover rate (Labov, 1997).

#### • Factor eight: Security Measures

The organization must provide job security to the employees. Job insecurity is a "personal concern about the continuity of the job" (Hesselink et al., 1999). An employee sometimes perceives job insecurity even though no reasons for it exist. Hesselink et al. (1999) discussed two dimensions that can cause job insecurity, first is the perceived probability and second is the perceived severity. They stated that "the more likely it is that a person will lose his or her job and/or the more severe the consequences of the loss are, the stronger his or her feelings of job insecurity will be" (Hesselink et al., 1999). Job insecurity results into decreased work effort, resistance to change and intention to job mobility, hence adversely impact organizational effectiveness (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984).

For further analysis, factors having Eigen values of 1.0 or more were considered using Kaiser's Criterion. The Eigen value of a factor implies the sum total of variance explained by a particular factor. Using this criterion, eight factors that summarise the different motivation of intention to quit among the employees of retail sector were identified. All the eight variables were checked for reliability using Cronbach's alpha. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients for all the eight dimensions were .751, .768, .811, .721, .714, .659, .692 and .843 respectively.

Table 5 presents the summary of Eigen Values, Variance explained, cumulative variance as well as the Cronbach's alpha of all the eight factors.

Factors	Eigen Values	Variance Explained (%)	<i>Cumulative</i> Variance (%)	Cronbach's Alpha
MP	11.790	14.952	14.952	.751
SRS	8.188	12.719	27.952	.768
CG	4.615	11.637	39.307	.811
TD	2.329	10.750	50.057	.721
SS	1.954	8.742	58.799	.714
WC	1.814	8.624	67.424	.659
CS	1.571	8.425	75.848	.692
SM	1.178	4.547	80.395	.843
Source: Researcher's	own calculation from prin	nary survey		
N = 430; Total varian		traction Method: Principa	l Component Analysis.	

# Table 5: Summary of Eigen Values, Variance explained, cumulative variance and the Cronbach's alpha of the identified factors

#### Ranking of different factors of intention to quit

The second objective of the study was to identify the relative prominence of factors which govern the intention to quit their job among the employees of Indian retail sector. Table six summarizes the mean values of the different factors along with their respective ranks.

Factors	Mean	Rank
Management practices	2.98	4
Salary and Reward System	4.87	1
Career Growth	3.90	2
Training & Development	2.60	6
Social Support	2.87	5
Working condition	3.15	3
Communication system	1.90	7
Security measures	1.39	8
Source: Researcher's own calculation	1	1

Table 6: Ranking of different factors

In terms of ranking of the various factors which determine the intention to quit, salary and reward system was identified as the most important factor with mean value of 4.87. Career Growth is the second most important factor with the mean value of 3.90, followed by working condition (3.15), Management Practices (2.98), Social Support (2.87), Training and Development (2.60), and Communication system (1.90). Security Measures is the least important factor with mean value of 1.39.

### **Concluding Remarks**

Managerial practices works as a mirror, which built the image of the organisation among the employees. The companies providing opportunity to educate the employees and nurture their talents are not only ready to meet future uncertainty but also guiding the right path to their employees. Organisations giving higher weightage to the internal assessment and development routes for senior position are creating growth oriented culture. Developing better relationship with employees by helping them financially and psychologically is mantra to reduce employees' turnover. The organisations are rewarding more for excel rather the salary earn to retain the employees. To overcome with monotony in working environment, organisations are giving employees higher challenges, which create future leadership with better exposure. On the whole if an organisation offers the career rather than just a job there will be least turnover.

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