

The impact of Word of Mouth on employee turnover rate

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Abstract. In the general environment, many companies have employees leaving or jumping ship en masse is a tremendous challenge for company culture, brand reputation, and team management. A large part of the reason for this is related to the reasons why employees leave. This paper presents the impact of negative emotions and turnover rates due to unfulfilled personal needs (according to Maslow's theory of individual needs). The paper uses questionnaires, in-depth personal interviews, and anonymous back surveys, emphasizing sample collection, primary data acquisition, sampling, and other practical approaches to conclude that negative emotions and word-of-mouth communication are strongly correlated and influence turnover rates and corporate management risks some extent.

Keywords: Word of mouth; NWOM; Emotions; Turnover rate.

1. Introduction

An important aspect of corporate culture and employee management has been the emotional commitment of employees to the organization because they play a major role in attracting and retaining talent, as well as ensuring that the organization is able to innovate and grow sustainably in the future. Affective commitment is an emotional attachment that individuals have to the organizations they identify with and take part in. This attachment can be linked to various organizational outcomes, such as job satisfaction and loyalty. It should be noted, however, that employee turnover is inevitable as part of this process. An important preventive measure that should be incorporated into a company's employee training and management system in order to control the company's reputation after an employee leaves and to reduce mass turnover is to control public opinion after an employee leaf.

Turnover rates are triggered by different reasons in the international job market, and a very important factor in making employees feel negative is fatigue from overwork [2]. A recent "culture clash" between the Chinese management team of TikTok, the international version of Jitterbug, and its London staff has led to a wave of departures, with dozens of TikTok UK employees quitting en masse due to poor working conditions. Members of the e-commerce team in London say they often work more than 12 hours a day [3]. The company boasts that working into the wee hours of the morning and during holidays are good examples. Employees who take time off may face losing customers or being demoted when they return from vacation. London-based employees say the company's heavy workload has left them with declining health. Earlier this year, Joshua Ma, an executive at TikTok's Chinese parent company, bytedance, said at a conference that the company should not offer maternity leave [4]. The comment sparked outrage among the London-based employees. The employees argued that this strong corporate culture at Bytedance clashed with the relaxed office environment that British employees are used to. At least 20 people, or about half of the total, have left the e-commerce team in London since TikTok launched in the UK. The two employees who have already left have received relocation payments related to their working conditions. And some of the rest have said they are ready to quit. So, there is a strong relationship between turnover rates, fatigue, and word-of-mouth communication. Further, according to Jonah Berger's "How to Trigger Word of Mouth Communication," among the six causes of word-of-mouth communication, emotions are an important trigger for word-of-mouth communication. Employees are often hesitant to share negative emotions, such as anger, anxiety, and stress, prompting them to share their experiences with their close colleagues. With the advent of various communication channels on social media, employees have more opportunities to engage with external stakeholders to support or oppose

their organization's brand. According to the relative impact of employees' discrete emotions on employees' negative word-of-mouth (NWOM) and counterproductive workplace behavior (CWB) [1].

In this context, this study focuses on negative word-of-mouth (NWOM) as an employee's negative brand-oriented behavior and aims to identify negative emotions that can act as drivers of NWOM more powerfully than counterproductive workplace behavior (CWB), relying on the perspective of discrete emotions. Based on the relative impact of discrete emotions on employees' negative word-of-mouth (NWOM) and counterproductive workplace behaviors (CWB), anger was more strongly associated with employees' NWOM than withdrawal. Meanwhile, jealousy had a stronger association with CWB toward individuals than employees' NWOM [5]. Employees' perceptions of the brand had a direct negative association with NWOM and CWB. They mitigated the association of negative emotions such as anger and jealousy with CWB, but not with NWOM. This study found a strong association between employees' NWOM and emotional exhaustion based on self-regulation theory. Considering the importance of negative word-of-mouth from internal audiences for brand management, there is a strong association between employees' NWOM and emotional exhaustion based on self-regulation theory. The explanatory power of self-regulation theory can be tested by examining the effect of employee emotional exhaustion on NWOM and intention to leave. Both emotional exhaustion and anger, anxiety, and stress can be due to self-esteem or self-actualization not being maximized. Based on this, we found that the separation brought by emotional exhaustion are external causes and manifestations of failure to satisfy self-actualization, but there is no relevant literature to show the relationship between this and personal fulfillment (Maslow's needs) for the time being. Therefore, this paper will explore the factors that trigger the oral transmission of negative emotions in the workplace through Maslow's needs theory [6]. Through the discussion of the research methodology of the paper, combined with the six principles of word of mouth to identify the drivers of gossip and from which it can be cut off or can be effectively reversed to build a good and efficient working atmosphere, word of mouth and culture for the company and brand.

2. Variable Descriptions and Models

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs was proposed by American social psychologist and humanistic psychologist Abraham Harold Maslow in his book *Motivation and Personality* published in 1954. He believed that needs of various natures constitute personal motivation, and he divided personal motivation into five levels: physiological needs, security needs, love and belonging needs, respect needs, and self-actualization needs. He presupposes the survival needs of individuals [7]. He argued that unmet needs determine individual behavior, that there are differences in conditions at different levels, and that the most pressing needs will be the primary motivators and drivers of human action. On the positive side, Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory shows to a large extent the common laws of human behavior and psychological activities, which are in line with the general process of human development, especially in terms of levels, reflecting the growth process of individuals from simplicity to maturity [8]. The needs of belonging, respect and self-actualization are highly related to the problems encountered in individual career development. Among the common reasons why employees leave their jobs: there is no sense of belonging to the company, the inability to meet the needs and values of personal fulfillment, the content of the work done does not match what they have learned, etc [9]. Thus, the main independent variables can be concluded that the sense of belonging, the need for respect and the need for self-actualization are not met, and the consequent changes in the generation of negative emotions eventually contribute to the verbal spread of negative emotions and lead to the collective departure of employees [10].

2.1 Independent Variable

The main reasons for not being able to meet the needs and values of personal fulfillment are the long working years, the mismatch between job content and emotional skills, and not being satisfied with the current promotion, thus not creating a sense of belonging and the need to be respected. Due

to the long working years of employees, they are bored with their positions' repetitive work and feel bored. Employees who have been working for 1-3 years are still generally in the rising period and hope to get development in the company. These people typically still have strong work motivation. Still, their educational background and lack of working ability are very passive in their work. They cannot understand the tasks precisely, leading to delivery failure. So eventually I will choose to leave the job. However, due to personal pride and incompatibility with the corporate culture, they will encounter many unsolvable problems in their daily work. They will feel the pressure multiplied by the need to work overtime to complete. Overtime is also an essential part of Negative word of mouth for working employees. In teamwork, if the communication is not smooth, dissatisfaction with the leadership task assignment will become one of the needs that cannot meet self-fulfillment. The measurement of this independent variable can be accomplished by working years, promotion time and regular appraisal tests to test.

The main reasons for not being able to meet the needs and values of personal fulfillment include the long working experience in this job, the mismatch between job content and emotional needs not being satisfied with the current promotion; thus, not creating a sense of belonging and the need to be respected. Each employee's working years, promotion time, and critical assessment results are independent variables, and the reasons for not having a sense of belonging and being needed for the company are different. For employees who have been working for 1-3 years, their work should be in a state of high-speed of self-developing. However, some young employees are very passive in their work due to the mismatch of personal ability and job content. Miscommunication will also lead to failure delivery and delay of understanding. The overload tasks will cause employees to have very anxious and negative feelings toward work environment. Overtime it will bring fatigue among employees and the culprits of negative word-of-mouth. For employees with more than three years of service, the claim of leading a team is part of self-actualization. Therefore, promotion time and regular assessment results should be used as the independent variables. In addition, the future development of the industry will also be the main factor for this part of the employees to consider. For example, due to the long working years, there will be employees who think that the development space is limited, and therefore create a sense of degradation. This can also have a negative impact on brand loyalty. Length of service can classify employees according to their growth stages, which coincides with Maslow's theory of needs. On the other hand, promotion time as well as regular assessment results can pinpoint specific problems: for example, whether it is personal ability over job position, whether the job content is in line with it, and the sense of belonging to the company.

2.2 Dependent Variables

The dependent variable is the generation of negative emotions, such as internal emotional conflict, jealousy, anxiety, and tension generation, which increases turnover. The generation of negative emotions can be measured by lower productivity and increased negative verbal communication. Negative emotions are more likely to spread than positive emotions, as people need to prove themselves suitable for self-esteem reasons, all due to external causes of the present unhappiness. Negative emotions not only affect the mood and efficiency of employees at work but also spread quickly and damage the company culture and threaten the brand image.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the reasons for leaving the company for employees who have gone and those who are about to leave regarding the company's word of mouth. The lack of personal value and satisfaction can lead to negative feelings of complaints over time. Many industry giants have realized the lack of unity in organization due to negative feelings of dissatisfaction of internal employees with the company, and the company wants to improve not only the company culture but also the effective management of word of mouth and brand image as a result of the research study.

2.3 Data Collection from Primary sources

It is expected that the survey will be conducted by as many employees from different industries as those who have left or are about to leave the company. The company will listen to past employees' opinions, which is also the primary source. More than 80% of the questionnaire will cover employee-related characteristics such as length of service, team atmosphere, and personal pursuits. In addition, the questionnaire will include open-ended and multi-level questions that address the concerns of these employees, thus allowing the company to obtain direct input from departing employees. Sometimes we'll also include the mix combination of the two to ensure the objectivity and comprehensiveness of the issue. In the case of group separations, primary data is necessary for their study. Alternatively, companies may choose to summarize subjective opinions of the needs or wants of departing employees based on observations; however, this does not accurately reflect the attitudes and opinions of all departing employees, which is most important. In general, the sample selected will accurately represent the entire industry because they are all equal company employees; of course, the larger the sample, the more accurate the data will be in terms of expressing employee needs.

In addition, the survey is designed to reflect a better understanding of employee satisfaction with their jobs by structuring the order. A vital part of the raw data was understanding the word-of-mouth tendencies of departing/exiting employees in table 1.

Table 1. The word-of-mouth tendencies of departing/exiting employees.

Question Type	Open-ended	multiple choice	Combination	
Sample Questions	Are you satisfied with your past work experience with the company?	What were the three main factors that led to your departure?	"If you were to write a letter to the CEO, what would you write?"	
Positions have been interviewed	Algorithm Engineers	Public Relationship	Operations	KOLs
How many years have they worked in the previous company	5 years	3 years	1 year	2.5years

After we interviewed 30 departing employees from 14 industries (including technology, trade, construction, finance, marketing, production, education, fashion industry, etc.) with varying lengths of service, we received over 20 categories of critical reasons for their desire to change to a new work environment. Each one-on-one in-depth interview took about 30 minutes to complete. However, most employees felt nervous and preferred not to answer some questions. However, as time went on and the conversation unfolded, they were more open to questions and gave detailed answers under the facilitator's guidance. In the end, we recorded their 3,000-word responses. In the deeper stages of the study, group chat would have been a better option because it facilitated efficiency in receiving answers and created a safer environment for participants to release anxiety and concerns. At the same time, participants from different backgrounds not only stimulated more ideas throughout the conversation. Hence, as departing employees filled out the survey, we mimicked the order of the questions so that as they filled out the questions, the next question the departing employee got depended on that population's answer to the previous question (a logical leap). This will help to understand the opinions in the original data source, as it will provide further justification for optimizing company culture and effectively controlling the impact of brand word-of-mouth.

2.4 Sampling

As the survey will likely not cover all leavers/leavers in all industries, we considered our sample data when designing the study. The departing population exists in a diverse range of sectors and ages and is a diverse group of people. Again, after studying the population in this category, we realized

that they strive to be equally representative of all leavers. With this in mind, we knew we wanted to configure the questionnaire to include the number of years of experience, country, background, and job content of the people leaving the company to help the company's future management apply to the diversity of the employee population. The study of the sample will not only allow them to gain knowledge about the people of leavers but also propose potential analysis for the optimization of their refined future structure, which is one of the main objectives of their study.

3. Conclusion

This paper discusses the importance of investigating and analyzing the increased turnover rates associated with negative word-of-mouth communication among departing employees due to their inability to meet their fulfillment needs. In particular, it focuses on the relationship between negative emotions, Maslow's needs theory, and negative word-of-mouth communication. The survey was conducted mainly in the form of a market survey for a sample of people who were about to leave or had already left. Ultimately, it was found that the inability of employees to achieve personal fulfillment in the company was a common reason for leaving and was more likely to trigger negative emotions and bad words about the company. To reduce the management risk caused by negative word-of-mouth, the best way is to conduct such interviews before employees leave, understand the core demands, and quickly improve the department's rules and regulations to minimize the unknown risks.

Therefore, flattening management will reduce management costs and enable employees to work efficiently and realize the value of individuals in the enterprise. On the other hand, the use of mature management systems, the development of standards, such as OKR, and regular cross-departmental surveys and tests will increase the transparency of corporate management, better reflect the problems, and improve.

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