

**Abiodun, Abolaji  
Joachim &  
Omotayo Oyeniyi &  
Osibanjo, Omotayo  
Adewale**

[omotayooyeniyi@yahoo.com](mailto:omotayooyeniyi@yahoo.com)

[abijoac@yahoo.com](mailto:abijoac@yahoo.com)

[koyepaul@yahoo.com](mailto:koyepaul@yahoo.com)

Department of Business  
Studies,

Covenant University,

KM 10 Idiroko Road,

P.M.B. 1032, Ota

Ogun State, Nigeria

## **JOB SATISFACTION AND INTENTION TO LEAVE OF NIGERIAN SALESMEN**

### **Job Satisfaction And Intention To Leave Of Salesmen**

#### **Abstract**

*The study deals with the effect of job satisfaction on salesmen intention to leave their organizations. Salesmen effectively play an important role in sales generation and revenue profile of organizations and in building relationships with the firm various publics. His job involves meeting sales targets, deadlines, searching for and retaining contacts which may be strenuous and affect job satisfaction. The objective of this study, therefore include determining whether job satisfaction of salesmen affect organizational commitment and their intention to leave the organization. Survey method was used in collecting data. One hundred and ten (110) respondents were used for this study. The results obtained through Structural Equation Model shows that job satisfaction affect positively organizational commitment, while exhaustion has negative effect on commitment. However, exhaustion has positive effect on salesmen intention to leave the organization. Therefore, strategies should be developed to encourage salesmen commitment to the organization and to reduce burnout and exhaustion of salesmen.*

**Keywords:** Job Satisfaction, Emotional Exhaustion, Organisational Commitment, Intention to leave .

## **Introduction**

The Nigerian economy has been experiencing slow growth in recent years. This is partly due to external shocks from downturn in the economy of most countries in the West and partly because of the neglect of other sectors in favour of petroleum exploration. Consequently, the corporate sector of the Nigerian economy has been experiencing difficult financial conditions, economic and competitive pressures that tasks salesmen as revenue generating staff. In addition, the income level of the Nigerian workers is relatively low which combined with the global recession affect his disposable income and indirectly the ability of corporate sector to sustain and increase the level of sales volume and revenue of most companies. This espoused situation has somewhat magnified the importance of the roles of salesmen in the generation of sales revenue generation, survival and growth of Nigerian companies. In most developing countries salesmen effectively plays an important role in sales generation and the revenue profile of organizations. However, the revenue contributions can be sustained, perhaps improved only if salesmen and relevant employees are satisfied with their work. Therefore, an important aspect of organizational human resource management that connects indirectly with

the prosperity of corporations is the task of securing employees' job satisfaction. It is one of the most widely studied areas of work attitude (Alam and Mohammad, 2011). Besides, results of research on job satisfaction show the positive and negative effects of job satisfaction on work behavior in organizations.

Salespersons are critical resources of organizations in terms of revenue generation and constant interactions with the publics in image building and information generation. Their duties, however, are made difficult by uncertainty of the environmental factors they have to contend with factors that are personal to salesmen and divergence in expectations of various interested groups. Consequently, there is increasing interest in literature not only on salesperson's job satisfaction (Avinash, 2011) but also in the firm ability to retain them or the salesperson intention to leave their job. One of the ways for an organization to maintain continued relevance and visibility in organizational-customer relationships is the ability to retain existing salespersons with that accumulated goodwill built up over the years. Retention of staff is a desirable goal of any organization as high staff turnover is expensive for organizations (Contino, 2002). Cost of new recruit and the use of temporary staff

are reduced when a set of staff is retained for relatively long period of time. Team cohesion is enhanced and work stress is reduced with high staff retention rate (Tzeng, 2002). Indeed, it sounds credible to reason that high labour turnover is both the cause and result of bad management, and a veritable tool for perpetuating bad management.

Job satisfaction is considered an important factor in the salesperson retention in an organization (Mulki, Jaramillo, and Locander, 2006). This may be a narrow way of assessing the reasons accounting for salesmen intention to leave the organization. However, this is because job satisfaction is a multifaceted construct which requires isolation of its variables and their relationships with intention to leave. Job satisfaction of salespersons has attracted considerable research attention in the last decades (Pettijohn, Pettijohn and Taylor, 2007). These researches cover both the antecedents: individual different roles, role perceptions, organizational variables and task variables, (Brown and Peterson, 1993) and consequences of job satisfaction: organizational commitment, intention to leave and organizational citizenship behavior (Brown and Peterson, 1993).

Generally intention to leave refers to employees' perceived probability of

leaving an organization, or his willingness to voluntarily and permanently withdraw from the organization. One of the best predictors of labour turnover or turnover behavior is worker's intention to leave (Samad, 2006). It has been argued in literature that there is a strong and significant positive relationship between turnover intentions and the actual turnover (Lambert, Hogan, & Barton, 2001; Samad, 2006). One of the reasons that cause an individual turnover intention is closely related to job satisfaction. However, despite the richness of literature on job satisfaction most of the researches in this area were conducted in the developed countries. In particular, very little research can be identified in respect of the relationship between job satisfaction and intention to leave of the salespersons in developing economy like Nigeria. Consequently, little research evidence exists regarding how job satisfaction relates to intentions to leave among salesmen in most countries in the Sub Sahara Africa. This short coming in literature is surprising because of the economic pressure most companies in sub Sahara Africa are facing and the strategic nature of the performance of salesmen in affecting the economic prosperity of companies. Therefore, the central objective of this study is to determine the relationship that could be said to exist

between job satisfaction and the intention to leave of salesmen in Nigeria and to rectify the dearth of empirical evidence in Sub Sahara Africa on salesmen job satisfaction and intention, therefore the study intend to fill a gap in the literature.

### **Literature Review**

There is no universally acceptable definition of job satisfaction, however one common feature in most of the definitions is that job satisfaction is a multidimensional construct. Job satisfaction simply put indicates the extent to which people like or dislike their jobs. Expectedly, the intensity of individuals' like or dislike for their jobs will affect not only the individual worker concerned but also team spirits and the organization (Avinash, 2011). There are several definitions of job satisfaction in literature. One definition given by Churchil, Ford and Walker (1974), posit job satisfaction as consisting of all characteristics of the job itself and the work environment that the worker finds rewarding, fulfilling and satisfying as well as that part of the job that he finds frustrating and/or unsatisfying. This definition appears sufficiently broad to encompass both contextual and job content variables as viewed by employees.

Various aspects of job satisfaction antecedents had been studied in literature. Some of these antecedents include role conflicts, role anbiquty, among others. Apart from this a number of studies had attempted to cover the relationship between job satisfaction and intention to quit of salemen. The diverse areas of job satisfaction studied in literature include job characteristics (Campion and McClelland, 1991); pay (Mensah and Wham, 2005); job stress (Cooper and Cartwright, 1994); work-family conflict (Mazeroke, Bruening, Casa, Burton and Heest, 2006); organizational constraints (Laff, 2000) and personal factors for example, personality, previous experience and tenure. Job satisfaction has also been studied to have a number of potential consequences. One direct consequence of job satisfaction is workers' intention to leave. A major challenge of examining job satisfaction from the reviewed literature is its very nature. This is because job satisfaction as a construct is not only complex there are a number of problems associated with it when attempts are made to capture it properly. Some of these problems include inconsistency in definitions, method of assessment, sources and consequences (Coober and Barriball, 2006).

Job satisfaction refers to the context and nature of the job itself. The worker's

satisfaction with his job can be affected in positive and negative ways based on several factors and sources. For example, pay could have both positive and negative influence on job satisfaction (Mensah and Wham, 2005) while employers' feedback may increase job satisfaction (Hachman and Oldham, 1976). Other variables identified in literature affecting job satisfaction include interesting work environment, the use of skills and abilities to accomplish tasks with high demand. There are several dimensions which are used in literature to measure job satisfaction in line with the pioneering efforts of Churchill, Ford and Walker (1974). These dimensions include satisfaction with supervisor, overall job activities, company policies, promotion and advancement, pay, co-workers, and customers (Alam and Mohammad, 2010).

Intention to leave has been described as behavioural intention of a worker to voluntarily leave his job, profession or organization (Coomber and Barriball, 2006). Intentions are the critical determinants of workers' actual behavior. Empirical studies support the fact that intention to leave is inversely related to job satisfaction. Intention to leave is high when job satisfaction is low. However, this may not be true in all cases, particularly when unemployment is high, a worker

may choose to remain in the present employment despite being less satisfied with the job (Vecchio, 2000). More importantly, the relationships between job satisfaction and intention to leave had been studied in several industries for example among nurses (Alam and Mohammed, 2009); family practice (Mazerolle, Bruening, Casa, Burton, and Heest, (2006); accountants (Chatzogiou et al, 2011); health workers Coomber, B. and Barriball, K. L. (2006)).

Satisfaction with superior dimension deals with the extent to which a worker is satisfied with the information or guidelines provided by the superior (Alam and Mohammad, 2010). This has been extended to include supervisory trust (Mulki, Jramillo and Locander, 2006) and supervisory behavior types (Kohli, 1989). Experienced salesmen are sensitive about the quality of supervision. In terms of satisfaction with work itself Alam and Mohammad (2010) argued that job satisfaction of the workers is affected by variety of task the salesman is expected to perform as against routine tasks. They argued further that performance of variety of task helps the workers to perceive opportunities inherent in the organization and hence satisfaction. According to Churchill, *et. al* (1974) this dimension is related to the extent to which the salesman

feels that his skill is adequately utilized and is given opportunity to grow.

One major extrinsic variable that is commonly used to measure satisfaction is compensation (Alam and Mohammad, 2010). This dimension helps to determine from the workers' perspective how secured they are with the financial security provided by the organization. Compensation dimension includes the total compensation package offered by the organization compared to what is being paid elsewhere in relation to work load, responsibility and prospect of future high compensation package. Along with this is the worker satisfaction with his colleagues at work. This dimension is explained by the workers' perception of the level of support he gets from his colleagues in the process of performance of tasks including his assessment of presence or absence of such behavioural traits as selfishness, friendliness and other supportive behavior of his colleagues (Alam and Mohammad, 2010; Purani and Sahader, 2008). The overall job satisfaction of workers is equally affected by company's overall human resource policies. This dimension includes the extent to which the salesman trusts in the organization's favourable disposition towards employees. Satisfaction with overall company policies covers such issues as personnel strategy

and the relative favourable policies of the organization compare to those obtainable in other organizations. Consequently, we posit that:

**H<sub>1</sub>: The higher the salesman is satisfied with various aspects of his job the more committed he is.**

Organizational commitment of sales employees is important for a number of reasons. One of such reasons is that committed salesmen are less likely to quit the organization and second committed employees are likely to perform better (Bashaw and Grant 1994). There are a number of researches on the effect of organizational commitment on salesmen (Ingram and Lee 1990; Sager 1991). Ingram and Lee (1990) argued that organizational commitment was a significant determinant of sales force behavior. However in their studies McNeilly and Russ (1992) found that organizational commitment was negatively related to salesmen turnover intentions. Therefore it can be argued that a committed staff is less likely to quit (Pettijohn, Pettijohn, and Taylor 2002).

Extant literature had used organizational commitment to ascertain the intensity and stability of an employee's dedication to the organization (Lumley, *et al* 2010). Organizational commitment is regarded as

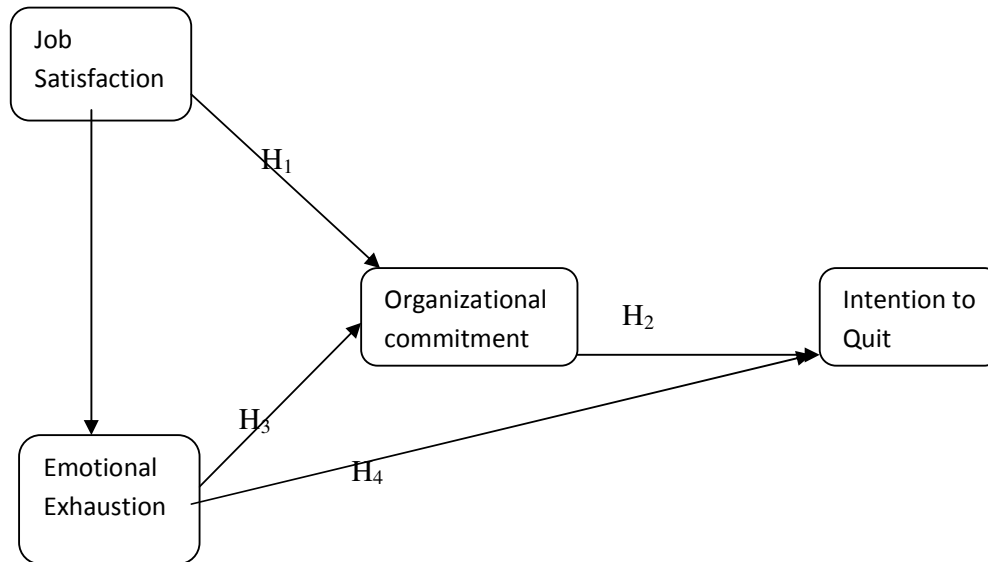
an attitude about the individual mindset about the organization (Allen and Meyer 1990). This is confirmed by Gbadamosi (2003) argument that a worker is more likely to accept the goals of the organization if he is favourably disposed towards the organization. It suggested in literature that organizational commitment helps to reduce the extent of abandonment of work and intention to leave of staff. More importantly, committed employees are willing to make sacrifice for extra activities, which enhance the organization's competitiveness. Therefore, it can be argued that organizational commitment is a psychological connection between the organization and the worker that makes the worker to be strongly attached to the organization and be willing to contribute to its accomplishment (Meyer and Allen, 1991). Organizational commitment is conceived as a three-dimensional construct: affective, continuance and normative commitment (Meyer and Allen, 1991). Affective commitment is defined in terms of workers reference towards the organization and his

alignment and internalization of the organizational standard (Beck & Wilson 2000); continuance commitment measures the cost of leaving the organization while normative commitment relates to the ethical issues of staying or leaving the organization.

Strong positive relationships have been established between organizational commitment and job satisfaction. Satisfied workers tend to be more committed to the goals and policies of the organization (Aamodt 2007). For example, Kotze and Roodt (2005) established a strong correlation between job satisfaction, employee commitment and retention. Riggio, ( 2009) argued that organizational commitment is affected by type and variety of work, the autonomy involved in the job, the level of responsibility associated with the job, the quality of the social relationship at work, rewards and remuneration, and the opportunities for promotion and career advancement in the company. From the above the following hypothesis is proposed

**H<sub>2</sub>: Organizational commitment relates significantly and positively to workers' intention to leave.**

**Figure 1: Proposed Model**



The nature of salesman's work particularly field and intinery salesmen is strenuous. Salesmen work involves target meeting maintain strong inter-personal activities and searching for and retaining contacts, the combination of which could lead to stress and burnout. Studies have identified burnout as related to stress on the job (Singh, et al. 1994). Burnout is described as a condition that manifest as a result of chronic stress by people who provide services (Aiken, Clarke, Sloane, Sochalski, and Silber, 2002). Burnout can be captured in three ways: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and personal accomplishment. According to Rutherford, *et al.* (2009) emotional exhaustion is the feeling of depletion of energy and being drained of sensation as is often related to burnout. Personal accomplishment is the level of inefficacy, reduced motivation and

low-esteem experience by a worker in the work place. Depersonalization, however, is the tendency to dehumanize others. Two constructs commonly use to capture emotional exhaustion are depersonalization and declining personal accomplishment of workers. More importantly, emotional exhaustion is used to measure burnout. Conflicting results had been reported in literature in respect of the relationship between emotional exhaustion and organizational commitment on one hand and intention to leave on the other hand (Rutherford, et al. 2009).

**H<sub>3</sub>: Emotional exhaustion is positively related to Organizational commitment and intention to leave.**

**H<sub>4</sub>: Emotional exhaustion is positively related to salesmen intention to leave.**



## **Methods**

The study made use of salesmen who were on a part-time MBA course in a public university in southwestern part of Nigeria. Survey method was used to collect responses from the respondents. In all two hundred and fifty three (253) copies of questionnaire were administered to the MBA class, majority of who are salesmen of various organizations including insurance, manufacturing, and services. Therefore, the MBA course offers a rich concentration of salesmen from diverse sectors of the economy. The advantage of the sample is the opportunities for comparison it offers elements in the sample to evaluate their job experiences, remunerations and other conditions of service. The population of the class is six hundred and sixty-five (665).

The main and only criterion for inclusion in the sample is that the student must be a salesman. The reason for this restriction was because the study is limited to the effect of job satisfaction on salesmen. In all two hundred and fifty three (253) students who are salesmen in various organizations in the Nigerian economy form the sample size of this study. One hundred and ten copies of questionnaire were received and adjudged suitable for this study which translates to 44.47% response rate. The response rate appears

reasonable given the nature of the assignments of salesmen. A cross-sectional design was used in this study to survey salesmen currently undergoing MBA programme.

The items in the research instrument used for this study were adopted from extant literature particularly from the work of Rutherford, Boles, Hamwi, Madupalli and Rutherford (2009). The instrument covers such issues as the respondents' propensity to stay, organizational commitment, satisfaction with supervisor, satisfaction with overall job, company policy, promotion and advancement, and pay. Intention to quit was measured with four question items on a 5-points Likert scale, including whether the respondents would rate any chance of leaving the organization in the next three to six months; and whether the reason not to leave is related to organizational commitment or emotional exhaustion. Organizational commitment was measured with three question items, emotional exhaustion with four items and various components of satisfaction with nineteen items

A pre-test sample of twenty students was used to test the reliability of the items in the instrument. The responses from the pre-test were adopted into the final draft of the instrument used. The questionnaire

was administered in the course of a lecture after the motive of the study was explained to the respondents and was collected after a week. The time lag was to make space for individuals' thoughtful responses and reevaluation of responses. Notwithstanding, a non-response bias analysis was conducted by comparing the characteristics of students that did not respond in terms of nature of company they worked for, experience and possible likes and dislikes of job, no possible significant differences was detected in the two groups. Data generated from the study was subjected to further analysis with the use of AMOS software. Factor analyses were tested for validity and reliability and path-analysis is used to test the hypotheses using various fit model indices to verify the overall fit of the model.

## Results and Discussion

Internal reliability of the items in the instrument is subjected to Cronbach's Alpha measurement, majority of which fall within acceptable limits (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007): propensity to stay ( $\alpha=0.848$ ), emotional exhaustion ( $\alpha=0.839$ ), organizational commitment ( $\alpha=0.800$ ), various satisfaction levels are also measured. For example satisfaction with supervisor ( $\alpha=0.751$ ), job ( $\alpha=0.813$ ), policy ( $\alpha=0.812$ ), promotion ( $\alpha=0.149$ ), pay ( $\alpha=0.575$ ), co-workers ( $\alpha=0.824$ ).

From the above the variables that did meet up with acceptable limit are pay and promotion with 0.149 and 0.575 respectively see table 1. Cronbach Alpha is one of the commonly used instruments to test the internal reliability of an instrument. The item by item reliability test ranges between 0.734-0.957 which falls within acceptable standard (Hair, Anderson, Tatham and Black, 2006). This suggests the adequacy of the measurement. Table 1 shows the Cronbach's Alpha value for each variable.

The suitability of factor analysis for the data was tested using Barlett's Test of Sphericity ( $p=0.000$ ) and Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy was discovered to be within acceptable limits. The minimum acceptable value for KMO is 0.050 (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). All the observed significance level of all factors is 0.000. To test for construct validity factor analysis was used in line with suggestion of Hair, et. al (1992). Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was used as a further evidence of convergence validity (McColl-Kennedy and Fetter, 1999). Reliability is a necessary condition for validity as unreliable measure lessens correlation between research measures (Hair, et. al 1992). All factors have an alpha score higher than 0.70 which indicate the

adequacy of internal consistency of the measuring instrument.

Descriptive statistics results for the various factors show the following results: intention to leave has a satisfactory average mean score of 4.77, while the various variables used in measuring intention to leave have mean scores ranging from 4.57 to 4.87. The overall mean score of emotional exhaustion (4 items) is 4.74. The responses range from “I am emotional drained from my work” ( $\mu=4.35$ ); “I am burned out from my work” ( $\mu=4.65$ ) which are considered satisfactory. In examining organizational

commitment (3 items), it is found that the overall mean score is 4.63 with “I find my values and organizational values similar” having a mean score of 4.17; “this organization really inspired me” mean score of 4.74. Different levels of satisfaction were measured: satisfaction with supervisor ( $\mu=4.79$ ); job ( $\mu=4.98$ ); policy ( $\mu=4.15$ ); promotion ( $\mu=4.64$ ); pay ( $\mu=4.48$ ); co-workers ( $\mu=4.79$ ) and customers ( $\mu=4.71$ ). Explanation for some of these results indicates that workers have a propensity to stay, experience high exhaustion, are committed to their organizations and are satisfied with the various dimensions of measurements.

**Table 1: Summary of data**

Variable	Factor Loading	KMO	Sign.Of Bartlett Test	Cronbach's Alpha	Mean
Intention to leave 1. Quit now 2. Next 6 months 3. Net year	0.957 0.855 0.815	0.562	0.000	0.848	4.77
Emotional Exhaustion 4. Drained 5. Used up 6. Fatigue 7. Burned	0.870 0.859 0.787 0.769	0.767	0.000	0.839	4.74
Organizational Commitment 8. Values 9. Inspired 10. Possible	0.842 0.805 0.456	0.832	0.000	0.820	4.63
Satisfaction with 11. supervisor 12. job 13. policy 14. promotion 15. pay 16. workers 17. customers	0.716 0.811 0.757 0.734 0.872 0.829 0.769	0.642	0.000	0.751	4.79

The correlation analysis as shown in Table 2 indicates a low but positive relationship between emotional exhaustion and intention to leave ( $r=0.231$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) and between job satisfaction and organizational commitment ( $r=0.567$ ;  $p<0.05$ ). The relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment appears stronger than what exist between emotional exhaustion and intention to leave. However, there is negative correlation between commitment and intention to leave ( $r= -0.254$ ;  $p<0.001$ ) and exhaustion ( $r= -0.047$ ). The negative relationship somewhat affirm earlier

Table 2: Correlation

	Intention to leave	Exhaustion 1	Commitment 1	Satisfaction 3
Intention to leave	1			
Exhaustion 1	.231*	1		
Commitment 1	-.254*	-.047	1	
Satisfaction 3	.030	-.029	.467**	1

\* $p<0.001$ ; \*\* $p<0.05$

Model fitting a data can be obtained in part through the non-significant  $\chi^2$  (Tabachnick and Fidel, 2001). The overall model of the data suggests good fit within acceptable standard and limits. In addition to the  $\chi^2$  test of the model fit was further assessed with the Normed Fit Index (NFI), CMIN,

Table 3: Overall Model Fit

Model-fit Index	Score	Recommended Cut-off Value
Chi-square/Degree of Freedom ( $\chi^2/df$ )	3	>3 Straub(1989)
Goodness-of-fit Index (GFI)	0.984	>0.9(Bentle and Bonett, 1980)
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	0.937	>0.9 (Bentle and Bonett, 1980)
Root Mean Square Residual (RMR)	0.067	<0.05(Marsh, et al., 1988)
Normed Fit Index (NFI)	0.917	>0.9

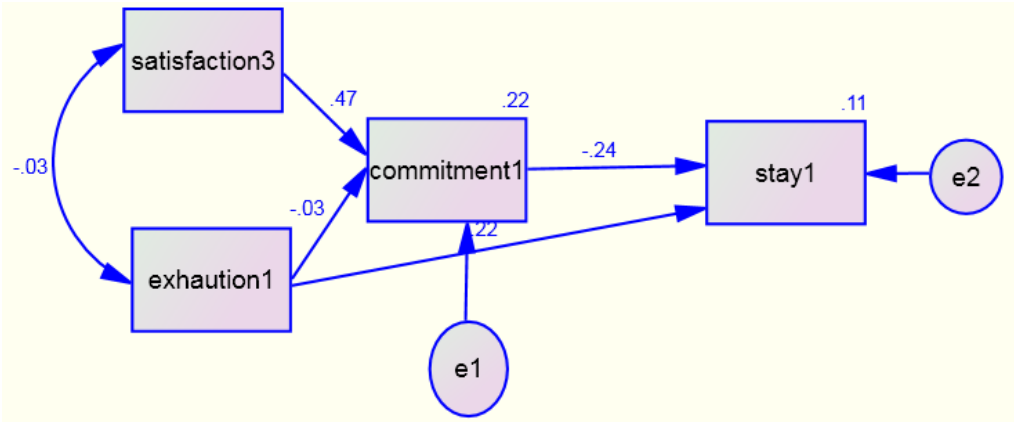
findings that committed salespeople are less likely to leave. This thought may be quite relevant in developing economy where unemployment rates are relatively high. Intention to leave is positively related to exhaustion though the relationship is low it is, however, statistically significant suggesting that stress management have implications for the retention of salesmen. In addition, intention to leave has low association with job satisfaction and it is statistically not significant but negatively related to commitment.

df, CMIN/df, p-value, and GFI. The results of the path analysis are presented in Figure 2. The result provided a ground to test the hypotheses indicated above. The fit indices show that the model fit the data quit well (see Table 3).

An appraisal of the fit model index indicates that organizational commitment is affected directly by both job satisfaction and exhaustion. Intention to stay in turn is affected by organizational commitment

and exhaustion. Job satisfaction has a strong positive effect on organizational commitment stronger than the effect of exhaustion on commitment.

Figure 1: Structural Model Path Diagram



It does appear that exhaustion negatively co varies with job satisfaction and the positive impact of exhaustion on the sales intention to leave suggests the need for management to consciously design

strategies that restrain exhaustion in the salesmen. The investment of the organization in the personal lives and trauma of the salesmen should affect the positive retention of the salesmen.

Table 3: Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	Path Coefficient	Remark
H1: Job satisfaction→Commitment	.47	Accepted
H2: Commitment →Intention to leave	-.24	Rejected
H3: Exhaustion→Commitment	-.03	Rejected
H4: Exhaustion →Intention to leave	0.22	Accepted

### Managerial Implications and Conclusion

The present study examined the relationships between job satisfaction, commitment, emotional exhaustion and intention to quit of sales men in the Nigerian business environment. Current study shows no direct positive relationship

between emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction. This finding is in line with Babakus, et al , (1999) and Jaramillo et al,(2006) findings. However, Rutherford, et al 2009 found the opposite. Emotional exhaustion has both direct and indirect impact on the workers intention to quit. Intention to quit can be affected through

organizational commitment. Salesmen that are satisfied with their jobs are most predisposed to be committed to their organizations and consequently shared negative disposition to leave the organization. Consequently, investment in ensuring salesmen job satisfaction have dividend in terms of affecting the organisation's prosperity through their commitment and retention of their goodwill with the organization and can influence intention to quit directly. The findings of the current study show results that are somewhat less expected. For example, job satisfaction does not have direct impact on intention to leave of the sales men. That is except satisfied salesmen have a sense of commitment to the organization; his intention to leave may remain unaffected. This thought is particularly relevant for salesmen who see the job as career and the organization as a vehicle. Consequently, career fulfillment could be in any desired organization. However, it indicates that when a worker is satisfied he or she is likely to be committed to the organization which in turn affects the workers intention to quit. Ordinarily, it may have been thought that a dissatisfied worker will have a high propensity to quit his job. These findings are in line with similar findings in literature (Rutherford, et al, 2009).

The job satisfaction scale does not show the same type of relationship with intention to leave. In fact, job satisfaction does not even demonstrate a significant relationship with turnover. The results regarding the relative importance of organizational commitment measures vis-à-vis job satisfaction certainly support the sociological position put forward by Lincoln and Kalleberg (1990). That is, many organizations will get the most result for their efforts by strengthening organizational strategies that promote commitment. Though these strategies are not the focus of this study, but they should be further investigated in future research.

Organizational commitment was found to be a significant predictor of workers' relevant behavior, in this case, turnover. This certainly lends support to the position of those such as Lincoln and Kalleberg (1990) who argue for the importance of organizational commitment. Conversely, there was no evidence from this study to support that job satisfaction has direct effect on voluntary turnover.

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