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Effects of human resource factors on employee retention in the quick service industry

A Thesis Submitted to
the Faculty of the University of North Georgia
In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Bachelor of Business Administration in Management
With Honors

Taylor Allen

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Accepted by the Honors Faculty of the University of North Georgia in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the title of Honors Program Graduate

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Introduction

Quick-service restaurants (QSRs) play an important role in the overall economy. Globally, this sector accounts for over \$570 billion, with the US bringing in over \$200 billion in revenue in 2015 ("Fast Food Industry Analysis 2016- Cost & Trends," 2016). To put it in perspective, QSRs account for over 50% of sales in the entire restaurant sector ("Fast Food Industry Analysis 2016 - Cost & Trends," 2016). However, while QSRs seem to be a major portion of the food industry, not much research has been done that looks solely at this sector, and even less research aims to look at contributors to voluntary turnover in the quick-service industry (DiPietro, Milman, & Thozhur, 2007).

This study will focus on the human resource practices of the quick-service restaurant sector, specifically with how these practices relate to voluntary employee turnover. The results will help managers direct their human resource practices to better reflect the wants and needs of the employee.

Background

The U.S. Census Bureau (2012) breaks down the food service industry into two main categories: full service restaurants and limited service restaurants. These two categories are broken down into several subcategories. Full service restaurants are organized into fine dining restaurants, casual restaurants and family restaurants. Limited service restaurants are broken down into two categories: fast casual, which includes restaurants such as Panera and Chipotle, and quick-service. Each category of restaurants exhibits distinct differences in food cost, service level, and atmosphere and thus requires distinct human resource practices. This study will look specifically at the quick-service restaurant industry.

According to the US Census Bureau (2012), a quick-service restaurant (QSR)

is a food establishment "where patrons generally order or select items and pay before eating" (para. 1). Some of the largest quick-service chains in the United States include McDonald's (ranked #1), Subway (ranked #2), Taco Bell (ranked #3), Pizza Hut (ranked #8), and Chick-fil-a (ranked #9) ("Largest quick-service chains," 2014).

Turnover is defined as "when an employee leaves their organization or changes to another" (Ismail, 2016, p. 4). Turnover is measured as number of separations divide by the number of employees on payroll times 100 ("How to determine turnover rate," 2015). Turnover is broken down into three categories: voluntary quits, involuntary layover such as discharges, and other separations that include retirement and death. Voluntary turnover occurs when an employee leaves an organization on his/her own will ("How to determine turnover rate," 2015; Hom, Mitchell, Lee, & Griffeth, 2012).

According to the National Restaurant Association (2016), the quit rate in the restaurant industry was 50.3% in 2015, making quitting the major contributor to employee turnover as opposed to being fired or forced to leave. Layoff turnover accounted for 19.5% ("Employee turnover tops," 2016). Unfortunately, labor costs that include turnover are the highest cost in the food industry (Sullivan, 2016). Industry estimates for hourly team member replacement costs are 20 to 30 percent of an entry-level salary and an even greater percentage of a managerial salary (Sullivan, 2016). These expenses come from the costs of recruiting, training, loss of knowledge, and wasted time (Choi & Dickson, 2010). In 2015, the industry average annual employee turnover rate was 72.1% (Sullivan, 2016). This average is considerably higher than other industries. For example, the banking industry had a 19.1% employee turnover in 2015, and the manufacturing industry had a 14.8% turnover (Sullivan, 2016).

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The fast food industry tends to have an even higher turnover rate than the other restaurant types ("Employee turnover tops," 2016). Several reasons contribute to the high turnover. First, one-third of employed fast food workers are teenagers, who will go on to have a career "with a different employer" ("Employee turnover tops," 2016, para. 8). Second, upward mobility in the industry typically occurs when an employee moves from one restaurant to another. The relative closeness of restaurants makes this mobility easy and convenient for employees seeking higher positions in the industry. Third, the restaurant industry is a major creator of seasonal jobs, with more than 400,000 seasonal jobs created during the summer season ("Employee turnover tops," 2016). These seasonal workers, including students who do not work the full year, contribute to the high yearly turnover rates. Additionally, the low social status attributed to working in the industry, along with the harsh working conditions such as varying hours and stress, contribute to high turnover rates (Mohsin & Lengler, 2015).

The above-average turnover rate in the fast food industry is negatively affecting the industry both financially and mentally (DiPietro et al., 2007). As voluntary turnover rises, the company productivity, employee performance, service quality, service speed, social capital and therefore profit significantly decrease (Kacmar, Andrews, Van Rooy, Steilberg, & Cerrone, 2006; Ozolina-Ozola, 2014; DiPietro et al., 2007). Higher turnovers cause an increase in managerial stress as their time is taken away from improving service quality and instead focused on the cycle of recruiting, hiring, and training to replace the employees that quit (DiPietro et al., 2007).

It is clear that low employee retention rates are a challenge for quick-service restaurants. There is a need for restaurants to improve their employee retention rates.

One way to approach employee retention is through human resource practices. By lowering employee turnover, restaurants would expect to see an increase in profits as well as an increase in worker productivity. While it is clear that restaurants should seek to lower employee turnover, the question then becomes how managers of QSRs can develop human resource strategies to foster employee retention. This study will look at this overarching question through the human resource strategies of Chick-fil-a. Chick-fil-a is known to have one of the highest employee retention rates in the quickservice restaurant industry (Schmall, 2007), and thus one of the lowest employee turnover rates. However, operators of different Chick-fil-a locations have the freedom to set their own human resource practices. Recruiting, hiring, training, career development, compensation, and other factors can all be personalized based on the location and operator. Certain operators have better employee retention rates than other operators, and these variations may be explained by differences in human resource practices. This study will take a closer look into why some managers are doing a better job at keeping employees than others and why certain locations have lower turnover rates than others. Additionally, the gathered data will also see if there is a correlation between business profitability and employee retention rates. The insight gained from this study will help other restaurants learn what human resource techniques are beneficial in decreasing employee turnover.

Employee Turnover Theory

March and Simon (1958) first proposed that voluntary employee turnover was motivated by job satisfaction and perceived availability to move to another job, either in the same market or a different one (Bowen & Siehl, 1997). Employees were more likely to leave a company if they were not satisfied with their job or believed there were better opportunities elsewhere. Porter and Steers (1973) added on to the turnover

turnover. These factors include extrinsic rewards, advancement opportunities, and additional influences such as "effective supervision" and "positive group relations" (Bowen & Siehl, 1997, p. 4). Furthermore, studies support that voluntary employee turnover can be predicted by the intentions of employees to leave the organization (Ismail, 2016; Liu, Wu, Chou, Chen, Yang, & Hsu, 2016). Therefore, the turnover-influencing factors that will be looked at in this study will be training satisfaction, supervisor satisfaction, compensation satisfaction, job satisfaction, job stress, social integration, parent company commitment and local operation commitment, and intent to leave.

Training satisfaction. Training is defined as "an organization's planned efforts to help employees acquire job-related knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviors, with the goal of applying these on the job" (Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart, Wright, 2016, p. 536). Mohsin & Lengler (2015) mention how managers of quick-service restaurants are reluctant to provide proper training to employees since turnover is high. However, research indicates that increased training satisfaction does lower employee intentions to leave (Beynon, Jones, Pickernell, & Packham, 2015; Choi & Dickson, 2010; Ismail, 2016; Dockel, Basson, & Coetzee, 2006; Kang, Gatling, & Kim, 2015). Moreover, training programs that are targeted towards growing the skills and career development specifically within the organization are more effective than programs that are for increasing general knowledge (Beynon et al. 2015).

Ismail (2016) and Dockel et al. (2006) attribute the social-exchange theory to why training increases organizational commitment and therefore decreases intentions to leave. When the company invests in the employee's growth, the employee feels

that he/she is indebted to the company for the added investment. Therefore, the employee pays back the company by staying, rather than immediately looking for another job. Furthermore, Dockel et al. (2006) remarks that employees perceive effective training as company concern for the employee. This concern and support of the company towards the employee contributes to employee satisfaction and therefore decreases the intention to leave.

Supervisor satisfaction. Supervisor support is defined as "the level to which employees recognize that their supervisor is affording support and encouragement for work performance and concerns of employees" (Kang et al., 2015, p. 76). Satisfaction with supervisors incorporates feelings of encouragement and support from the supervisors as well as feelings of concern for the well-being of the employees (Kang et al., 2015). Employees who are indeed satisfied with their supervisors have a more positive work attitude and exhibit more positive behaviors because they feel appreciated and understood when compared to employees who are not satisfied (Kang et al., 2015). The employee may exhibit a greater sense of loyalty to the company due to supervisor satisfaction (Dockel et al., 2006), which thereby reduces intentions to leave the organization (Kang et al., 2015).

Compensation satisfaction. Compensation is defined as "every type of reward individuals receive in exchange for performing organizational tasks" (Michael, Prince, & Chacko, 2016, p. 1). Dockel et al. (2006) states that an employee's perception of compensation payouts and policies is more important than the actual pay rate. Dockel et al. (2006) and Mohsin & Lengler (2015) agree there is a positive link between the degree of satisfaction with compensation and the degree of organizational commitment and loyalty. Therefore, compensation does play a role in predicting intentions to leave (Dockel et al., 2006; Ozolina-Ozola, 2014).

Intention to leave. Intention to leave is defined as "an individual's awareness of the likelihood of leaving an organization in the near future, and it is the greatest predictor of actual turnover behavior" (Kang et al., 2015, p. 76). Turnover intentions are good predictors of actual turnover (Liu et al., 2016; Ismail, 2016; Kang et al., 2015). Behaviors linked to turnover intentions include high stress, decreased job satisfaction, poor work-life balance, and decreased sense of community (Ryan, Ghazali, & Mohsin, 2011; Michael et al., 2016; Dockel et al., 2006).

Job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is defined as "the degree to which an employee likes his/her job" (Hausknecht, Rodda, & Howard, 2009, p. 271). There is much research that supports the link between job satisfaction and employee retention, where increases in job satisfaction may increase the employee's desire to stay at the company for a longer period of time (Michael et al., 2016; Mohsin & Lengler, 2015; Hausknecht et al., 2009). In one study conducted by Hausknecht et al. (2009), 51% of the respondents said that job satisfaction was the number one reason why they stayed in the organization. Influencers of job satisfaction include "job involvement, pay, promotional opportunities and social support" (Al-Emadi, Schqabenland, & Qi, 2015, p. 10).

Feelings of stress. Job stress can be defined as "the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the worker" (Sauter et al., 1999, para. 6). Research supports a positive relationship between job stress and intention to quit (Ryan et al., 2011; Al-Emadi et al., 2015; Mohsin & Lengler, 2015). Consequently, job stress also can have a negative effect on job satisfaction (Al-Emadi, Schqabenland, Qi, 2015). Antecedents of job stress include burnout, demanding workloads, conflicts with managers and coworkers, (Al-Emadi et al., 2015; Hadadian & Zarei, 2016).

Social integration. A negative relationship exists between feelings of work group support and feeling stressed. In other words, if a respondent feels that he/she is working within a supportive social setting, he/she has reduced intentions to leave a job (Ryan et al., 2011). In addition, coworkers may influence retention because they can provide support and encouragement to employees to help them adjust to the work environment, thereby facilitating attachment to the organization (Dockel et al., 2006).

Parent company commitment vs. local operation commitment. There is some research that supports a negative correlation between organizational commitment and intentions to leave an organization (Gregerson & Black, 1992; Chen, Tsui, & Farh, 2002). However, there is little research to support the idea that parent company commitment or local operation commitment have correlations with intentions to leave an organization. Furthermore, it is not clear the complete duality between parent company commitment and local operation commitment. The question still remains of "how can we get our people to be committed to the local operation they are assigned to and yet still identify with the parent company?" (Gregerson & Black, 1992, p. 67). Gregerson and Black (1992) explain that there may be a correlation between tenure of an employee and parent company commitment. Furthermore, the researchers noted that the differences in policy, culture, and procedures between parent company and local operation may play a role in the level of commitment experienced by the employee. This study will seek to discover a potential correlation between differences in commitments with intentions to leave in hopes to add to the organizational commitment literature.

This study will focus on how training satisfaction, supervisor satisfaction, compensation satisfaction, social integration, job stress, job satisfaction, parent

company commitment and local operation commitment affect an employee's intention to leave the organization, in this case the company Chick-fil-a (See Figure 1). By analyzing these eight factors against turnover intentions, this study can predict the reasons why employees at Chick-fil-a locations are choosing to leave the organization in hopes of proactively keeping employees and reducing turnover costs.

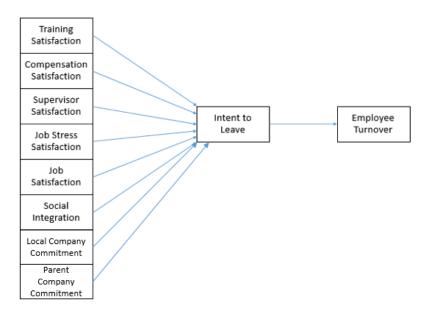


Figure 1. Model of study

Hypotheses:

Based on literary research, the following hypotheses are composed.

- 1. The Chick-fil-a location with the highest profitability is also the location with the highest employee retention rate.
- 2. There is a negative correlation between the following factors:
 - a. Training satisfaction and intent to leave
 - b. Compensation satisfaction and intent to leave
 - c. Job satisfaction and intent to leave
 - d. Social integration and intent to leave
 - e. Parent company commitment and intent to leave

- f. Local operation commitment and intent to leave
- 3. There is a positive correlation between job stress and intent to leave
- 4. The Chick-fil-a location with the highest employee retention rate scores higher on compensation satisfaction, training satisfaction, job satisfaction, social integration, parent company commitment, and local organization commitment, but it scores lowest on job stress and overall employee intention to leave compared to the location with the lowest employee retention rate.

Method

Participants

The sample consisted of 80 team-member Chick-fil-a employees from four Chick-fil-a restaurants located in the metro-Atlanta area. The four stores were chosen based on ease of accessibility to the researcher and willingness of the operator to participate. Since Chick-fil-a is a privately-owned company, the operators were not obligated to share employee retention rates and other operational information. A few operators did not want to give the exact employee retention rates of their restaurants. Therefore, as a compromise, the annual employee retention rate was revealed by each operator as either being around the company-wide average of 83%, below the company-wide average, or above the company-wide average.

Each participating store conducted 20 team-member surveys. While full-time and part-time employees were allowed to participate, the employees must have been employed for over 6 months at that particular location. This work duration ensured their full onboarding into the organization. The participants must have been at least 18 years of age, and there was no maximum age criterion or any other stipulating criteria

for participation. Gender, race, job position, education, and income level were not factors in participation eligibility. Demographic information such as age, gender, and job position was not gathered in order to protect employee confidentiality, as stated in the approved IRB proposal. The average number of persons employed at each Chickfil-a was 85 employees, therefore the 20 employees per location participating in the survey satisfies the sample size criterion needed for statistical analysis.

The human resource manager at each location sent out a mass email to all employees prior to my coming to let them know who I was and what my research was about, as well as to let them know to be on the lookout for me in the coming weeks if they wished to participate. For each location, I chose one morning shift, one afternoon shift, and one evening shift on different days of the week to conduct the surveys. I collected 5-8 surveys per shift per location until 20 surveys were gathered. I met with each shift during their pre-shift meeting to explain my study and survey procedure. Then, as employees had breaks, I asked potential participants if they would take my survey, as long as they met participation criterion. When someone declined, I selected another participant to take his/her place.

Procedure

Chosen team-member participants were given a numbered packet containing all testing materials. All materials in a single packet had the same number as the number on the packet. This ID number served a two-fold purpose: 1) allowed the surveys to remain anonymous while letting me keep track of the number of responses 2) organized the data so I can keep track of which responses go to which Chick-fil-a location. The testing materials in the packet included a survey consent form, survey instructions reiterating the importance of confidentiality, and the Factors Influencing

Intention to Leave Survey (Appendix A), placed in the packet in that order. The surveys were filled out with the researcher proctoring and answering any questions.

To ensure employee confidentiality, certain protocols took place. First, managers and the operator were kept separate from the selecting process for participants. Second, I stressed the importance of not discussing the survey to other people, even other participants. I also ensured that all testing materials were placed back in the packets and sealed immediately upon completion of the survey. I kept all completed testing materials in a locked box under my supervision. Once each survey was completed, the participant was given a copy of the consent form in case he/she had further questions or wanted to contact the researcher. As the paper surveys were transcribed onto an Excel spreadsheet, the paper surveys were shredded. The consent forms were kept in the lock box at a location known only to the researcher. Additionally, the managers and operators were not allowed to receive individual responses, even anonymously completed surveys.

Test Apparatus

The employee survey is a 45 question self-report inventory based on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5) (see Appendix A). The survey takes about 5-8 minutes to complete. The questions that compose the survey came from previously validated and credible sources (see Figure 2). Gregerson and Black (1992), Dockel et al. (2006) and Ryan et al. (2011) validated the items in their studies. However, the wording on some of the questions for this study was modified to match the QSR environment and ensure better understanding for the Chick-fil-a employees participating in this study.

Figure 2. Survey question breakdown

Survey Factor	Survey Question	Reference		
Parent company commitment	1 through 4	Gregerson & Black (1992)		
Local operation commitment	5 through 8			
Training satisfaction	9 through 13	Dockel et al. (2006)		
Supervisor satisfaction	14 through 18			
Compensation satisfaction	19 through 20			
Social integration	23, 24, 43, 44, 45			
Job satisfaction	25 through 31	Ryan et al. (2011)		
Job stress	32 through 34			
Intent to leave	35 through 42			

Statistical Analysis

Data were stored using Microsoft Excel. The data were stored as 1 through 5 numerical datum reflecting the responses of the participants. Eight of the questions on the survey were reverse coded. Therefore, the reverse coded reponses were flipped to reflect the appropriate non-reversed response. Once the reverse coded responses were flipped, the participant's numerical responses were added up for each of the 9 factors so that the participant had one score for each factor being analyzed. This was done for all participants' responses, and the resulting data were then ready for statistical testing.

Statistical analyses were performed using Mircrosoft Excel and SAS JMP.

Line of best fit, linear correlations, and R² statistics were produced using Microsoft Excel. The ANOVA tests, all-pair Tukey HSD *post hoc* tests, and t-tests were performed using SAS JMP.

Results

Retention Rate

The retention rates of the four Chick-fil-a's are as follows:

- Location 1 has a retention rate above 83%
- Location 2 has a retention rate below 83%
- Location 3 has a retention rate above 83%
- Location 4 has a retention rate around 83%

Profitability

The annual gross profit margin percentage of the four Chick-fil-a's are as follows:

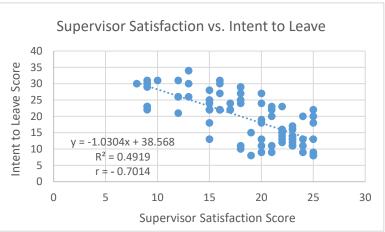
- Location 1 has 15.6% annual margin
- Location 2 has 15.3% annual margin
- Location 3 has 16.1% annual margin
- Location 4 has 14.8% annual margin

Correlation Results

The correlation, line of best fit, R² values and r values were retrieved using

Microsoft Excel. To find the results between supervisor satisfaction and intent to leave, the two factors were graphed (see Figure 3). The supervisor satisfaction scores were





placed on the x-axis and the intent to leave scores were placed on the y-axis.

Microsoft Excel calculated the line of best fit to be y = -1.0304x + 38.568, the R^2 value to be 0.4919, and the r value to be -0.7014. These results show that supervisor satisfaction and intent to leave have a moderate negative correlation. 50% of the variation in intent to leave can be explained by supervisor satisfaction. When looking at job satisfaction, supervisor satisfaction showed a strong positive correlation with job satisfaction (r = 0.7127, $R^2 = 0.5079$). The process described above was performed for other factor correlation analyses (see Appendix B for all correlation graphs).

Training satisfaction showed a moderate positive correlation with job satisfaction (r = 0.61). Additionally, 37% of the variation in job satisfaction can be explained by training satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.3647$). When comparing training satisfaction with intent to leave, there is a moderate negative correlation (r = -0.6074, $R^2 = 0.3689$).

Compensation satisfaction showed a positive correlation with job satisfaction (r=0.6148). 38% of the variation in job satisfaction can be accounted for by compensation satisfaction $(R^2=0.3708)$. Compensation satisfaction showed a negative correlation with intent to leave (r=-0.6243), and 39% of the variations in intent to leave can be accounted for by compensation satisfaction $(R^2=0.3898)$.

Job satisfaction showed a moderate negative correlation with job stress (r = -0.6160), while job satisfaction showed a strong negative correlation with intent to leave (r = -0.8080). 38% of the variance in job stress can be accounted for by job satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.3795$). 66% of the variance in intent to leave can be attributed for by job satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.6529$).

Job stress showed a positive correlation with intent to leave (r = 0.6316). 40% of the variations in intent to leave can be explained by job stress ($R^2 = 0.3989$).

Social integration showed a moderately negative correlation with intent to leave (r = -0.4162). 18% of the variation in social integration can be explained by intent to leave ($R^2 = 0.1732$).

Parent company commitment showed a positive correlation with local operation commitment (r = 0.7119, $R^2 = 0.5068$). Additionally, parent company commitment showed a negative correlation with intent to leave (r = -0.6596). 44% variation in intent to leave can be accounted for by parent company commitment ($R^2 = 0.4351$). Local operation commitment showed a positive correlation with intent to leave (r = 0.6215). 39% of the variation in intent to leave can be accounted for by local operation commitment ($R^2 = 0.3863$).

ANOVA and Tukey HSD post hoc Results

The ANOVA and Tukey HSD *post hoc* analyses were performed using SAS JMP. The store locations (independent variable) were placed on the x-axis as the categorical factor with four levels: location 1, location 2, location 3, and location 4. Each numeric variable (dependent variable) was placed on the y-axis. Testing the ANOVA of training satisfaction by store (Figure 4), the calculated variance is 0.0287, making the variance of training satisfaction by location significant at the .05 level. Additionally, the highest mean training satisfaction score a location could receive was 25; a chart with all the mean scores for each location can be found in Figure 6.

Because training satisfaction by location is statistically significant (p = 0.0287), a Tukey HSD *post hoc* test is performed to see which locations have significant differences in score (Figure 5). The Tukey HSD *post hoc* test shows that the differences between Location 3 and 4 are statistically significant at the .05 level (p = 0.0369).

The process described above for ANOVA and Tukey HSD *post hoc* analyses was performed for each survey section, with nine sections in total (see Appendix C for all ANOVA graphs and Tukey HSD *post hoc* charts). If a factor was not statistically significant by location, then the Tukey HSD *post hoc* test was not performed.

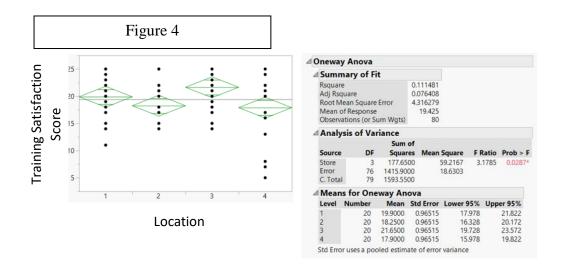


Figure 5

Ordered Differences Report-Training Satisfaction by Location

Level	- Level	Difference	Std Err Dif	Lower CL	Upper CL	p-Value
3	4	3.750000	1.364927	0.16461	7.335388	0.0369*
3	2	3.400000	1.364927	-0.18539	6.985388	0.0694
1	4	2.000000	1.364927	-1.58539	5.585388	0.4634
3	1	1.750000	1.364927	-1.83539	5.335388	0.5771
1	2	1.650000	1.364927	-1.93539	5.235388	0.6232
2	4	0.350000	1.364927	-3.23539	3.935388	0.9940

Figure 6

Mean Scores of Each Numeric Factor by Location

					1				
Local	Operation	Commitment	(s = 2.86)	1.04	0.3810	17.60	16.45	17.85	16.85
Parent	Company	Commitment	(s = 2.67)	3.83	0.0130*	17.70	16.65	18.80	16.35
Intent to	Leave	(s=7.18)		2.56	0.0610	20.40	22.10	16.20	20.15
Social	Integration	(s = 2.93)		1.60	0.1972	21.05	19.20	20.75	20.55
Job	Stress	(s = 3.06)		2.16	0.0994	7.45	8.20	5.85	7.35
Job	Satisfaction	(s = 4.66)		3.46	0.0205*	29.00	25.45	29.25	26.60
Supervisor	Satisfaction	(s = 4.89)		6.13	*6000.0	20.40	15.10	20.10	17.60
Compensation	Satisfaction	(s = 4.9)		3.92	0.0118*	13.15	9.25	13.95	11.6
Training	Satisfaction	(s = 4.5)		3.18	0.0287*	19.90	18.25	21.65	17.90
				Н	ignificance	Location 1	Location 2	Location 3	Location 4

Supervisor satisfaction by location is statistically significant (p = 0.0009). The highest mean supervisor satisfaction score a location could receive was 25. See Figure 6 for the mean score of each location. The Tukey HSD *post hoc* test revealed that Locations 1 and 2 had statistically significant differences in responses (p = 0.00019). Locations 2 and 3 also had significant differences in responses (p = 0.0038).

Compensation satisfaction by location is statistically significant at the .05 level (p = 0.0118). The highest mean compensation satisfaction score a location could receive was 20. See Figure 6 for the mean score of each location. The Tukey HSD *post hoc* test revealed that Locations 3 and 2 had statistically significant differences in responses (p = 0.0113), while Locations 1 and 2 also have significant differences (p = 0.0487).

Job satisfaction by location is statistically significant at the .05 level (p = 0.0205). The highest mean score a location could have with job satisfaction was 35. See Figure 6 for the mean score of each location. The Tukey HSD *post hoc* test revealed that Locations 3 and 2 had statistically significant differences in responses (p = 0.0420).

Job stress by location is not statistically significant because the ANOVA test shows a p-value of 0.0994. Therefore, a Tukey HSD *post hoc* test was not performed. The highest mean score a location could have for job stress is a 15. See Figure 6 for the mean score of each location.

Social integration by location is not statistically significant (p = 0.1972). A

Tukey HSD *post hoc* test was not performed for the differences in social integration
by location. The highest mean score a location could have for social integration was a

25. See Figure 6 for the mean score of each location.

Intent to leave by location is statistically significant at the .10 level (p = 0.0610). Locations 2 and 3 have significant differences in intention to leave scores (p = 0.0444). The highest mean score a location could have for intent to leave is 40. See Figure 6 for the mean score of each location.

Parent company commitment is statistically significant at the .05 level (p = 0.0130). The Tukey HSD *post hoc* test revealed that Location 3 and Location 4 have significant differences in parent company commitment (p = 0.0163) as did Location 3 and 2 (p = 0.0442). The highest mean score a location could have for parent company commitment is 20. See Figure 6 for the mean score of each location.

Local operation commitment is not statistically significant (p = 0.3810). The highest mean score a location could have for local operation commitment is 20. See Figure 6 for the mean score of each location.

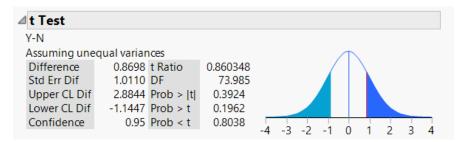
T-tests

The t-tests were performed using SAS JMP to look to see if the number of years that an employee worked at a location had significance to the responses. If the employee had been working at the location of current employment for greater than one year, a "Y" was recorded in the data. If the employee had been working at that location for one year or less, a "N" was recorded in the data.

As Figure 7 shows, number of years at a location is not statistically significant to training satisfaction scores (p = 0.1962). This process was performed for the other eight factors (see Appendix D).

Figure 7

Number of Years Working at Location vs. Training Satisfaction



The number of years at the Chick-fil-a location is not statistically significant with supervisor satisfaction, job satisfaction, job stress, intent to leave, social integration, local company commitment, parent company commitment, or compensation satisfaction. However, the two-sided t-test of the number of years at Chick-fil-a compared to compensation satisfaction showed a p-level acceptable at the .10 level (p=0.0547). Therefore, compensation satisfaction and number of years would have been statistically significant if the t-test had been one-sided. Because, however, there was not enough prior knowledge to logically support a one-sided t-test, this study only performed the two-sided t-test.

Analysis

Hypothesis 1: The Chick-fil-a location with the highest profitability is also the location with the highest employee retention rate.

Hypothesis 1 is supported. Locations 1 and 3 have above the company annual employee retention rate average of 83%, and these locations also have the two highest annual gross profit margin percentage of the four locations.

Hypothesis 2: There is a negative correlation between intention to leave and training satisfaction, compensation satisfaction, supervisor satisfaction, job satisfaction, social integration, parent company commitment, and local operation commitment.

Hypothesis 2 is supported. Training satisfaction has a moderately negative correlation of -0.6074. Compensation satisfaction has a moderately negative correlation of -0.6243 with intention to leave. Supervisor satisfaction has a strong negative correlation of -0.7014 with intent to leave. Job satisfaction has a strong negative correlation of -0.8080 with intent to leave. Social integration has a moderately negative correlation of -0.4162 with intent to leave. Parent company commitment has a moderate negative correlation of -0.6596 with intent to leave. Local company commitment has a moderate negative correlation of -0.6215.

The hypothesis is supported, meaning that the correlations between the 7 factors and intent to leave have negative correlations. These results support previous research stating that the above 7 factors can correlate with an employee's intention to leave an organization. Training, compensation, supervisors, social integration, job satisfaction, parent company commitment, and local operation commitment can play a role in whether or not an employee stays at an organization or quits.

Hypothesis 3: *There is a positive correlation between job stress and intent to leave.*

Hypothesis 3 is supported. Job stress has a positive correlation of 0.6316 with intent to leave. This result supports previous research that states job stress may increase an employee's intention to leave an organization.

Hypothesis 4: The Chick-fil-a location with the highest employee retention rate scores higher on compensation satisfaction, training satisfaction, job satisfaction, social

integration, parent company commitment and local organization commitment, but scores lowest on job stress and intention to leave, when compared to the location with the lowest employee retention rate.

Hypothesis 4 is partially supported. The locations with the highest employee retention rate is Location 3 and Location 1, which both have employee rates above the company average of 83% annual retention. Location 2 has the lowest employee retention rate, since the reported annual rate is below the company average of 83%.

The biggest difference in training satisfaction scores is between Location 3 and Location 4. Location 3 has a higher annual retention rate than Location 4, and the two locations also have a statistically significant difference in training satisfaction scores. These results indicate that training satisfaction may be a contributor to Location 3 having a higher retention rate than Location 4. The employees who are overall more satisfied with training may be less likely to leave.

The biggest differences in supervisor satisfaction scores are between Location 1 and Location 2 as well as between Location 2 and Location 3. Location 1 and Location 3 have a higher annual employee retention rate than Location 2.

Additionally, Location 1 and 3 have higher mean scores on supervisor satisfaction than Location 2 as well as have significantly different scores when compared to Location 2. Therefore, these results indicate that supervisor satisfaction may play a role into the annual employee retention rates at these Chick-fil-a locations. The higher the supervisor satisfaction, the less likely an employee will have intentions to leave or quit.

The greatest differences on compensation satisfaction scores are between Location 1 and Location 2 as well as between Location 2 and Location 3. Location 1 and 3 have higher annual employee retention rates compared to Location 2, and these

two locations have higher compensation satisfaction scores compared to Location 2. Therefore, these results indicate that compensation satisfaction may in fact play a role in the annual retentions rates. It can be supported that the higher the compensation satisfaction of an employee, the less likely he/she will have intentions to leave the organization.

The statistically significant difference on job satisfaction scoring is between Location 2 and Location 3, with Location 3 having the highest mean job satisfaction score. This result indicates that level of job satisfaction may play a role in an organization's annual retention rates, where the higher the job satisfaction the less likely an employee will leave the organization.

Because variances in job stress scores and social integration scores across the four locations were not statistically significant, we cannot suggest that job stress or social integration plays a role in the differing annual retention rates.

The variance of parent company commitment scores was significant with the most significant differences being between Location 3 and 4 as well as between Location 3 and 2. Location 3 has a higher retention rate compared to Locations 2 and 4. Location 3 also has the highest mean score of 18.80, while Locations 2 and 4 have the lowest mean scores of 16.65 and 16.35, respectively. Therefore, the results indicate that parent company commitment may be a contributing factor as to why Location 3 has a higher employee retention rate than Locations 2 and 4. The more committed an employee feels to the overall parent company culture, processes, and procedures, the more likely an employee will not have intentions to leave the restaurant.

Because variances in local operation commitment scores across the four locations were not statistically significant, we cannot suggest that an employee's

commitment to his/her local restaurant plays a role in the differing annual retention rates among the four locations.

The greatest difference on intent to leave scores is between Location 2 and Location 3. Location 3 has a higher annual employee retention rate than Location 2, and Location 3 has a lower mean intent to leave score than Location 2. In fact, Location 3 has the lowest mean intent to leave score out of all four locations. This low intent to leave score parallels the location's higher employee retention rate.

The employee participants of Location 3 have the lowest intent to leave score as well as one of the highest annual retention rates. This study's results indicate that training satisfaction, supervisor satisfaction, compensation satisfaction, job satisfaction, and parent company commitment all may contribute to Location 3's lower intention to leaves scores and indirectly to the location's higher annual retention rate. Job stress, social integration, and local operation commitment were not as significant contributors to the differences in intention to leave between locations. Therefore, hypothesis 4 is partially supported.

Other Findings

There is a strong positive correlation between training satisfaction and supervisor satisfaction (r = 0.7069, $R^2 = 0.4997$). This may have to do with the fact that the supervisors are usually the ones giving the training to employees.

Job satisfaction findings. There is a moderate positive correlation between training satisfaction and job satisfaction (r = 0.6039, $R^2 = 0.3647$). There is a strong positive correlation between supervisor satisfaction and job satisfaction (r = 0.7127, $R^2 = 0.5079$). There is a moderate positive correlation between compensation satisfaction and job satisfaction (r = 0.6148, r = 0.378). There is a moderate negative correlation between job satisfaction and job satisfaction (r = -0.6160, r = 0.3795).

There is a moderate positive correlation between parent company commitment and job satisfaction (r = 0.5890, $R^2 = 0.3469$). There is a moderate positive correlation between local operation commitment and job satisfaction (r = 0.5968, $R^2 = 0.3562$). These findings support literary research that greater training satisfaction, greater supervisor satisfaction, greater compensation satisfaction, greater parent company and local operation commitment as well as lower job stress may contribute to greater job satisfaction for an employee.

Parent company versus local operation commitment. It is interesting to note that this study did not find significant correlations between an employee's tenure at a location and the survey responses to the different factors. More specifically, there is not a significant relationship between tenure and level of employee's commitment to the parent company nor local operation. Therefore, this study's findings did not support Gregerson and Black's (1992) research that showed a correlation between tenure and commitment levels.

Conclusion

This study aimed to see what employees at four Chick-fil-a locations valued in correlation with their intent to leave the organization. It was hypothesized that the Chick-fil-a location with the highest retention rate would be the location with the highest mean scores on seven variables- training satisfaction, supervisor satisfaction, compensation satisfaction, job satisfaction, social integration, parent company commitment and local operation commitment- and lowest mean job stress score as well as intention to leave score. It was also hypothesized that the location with the highest employee retention rate would have the highest annual gross profit margin percentage.

Location 3, which had one of the highest annual employee retention rates of the four locations, had statistically significantly higher scores on training satisfaction, compensation satisfaction, supervisor satisfaction, job satisfaction and parent company commitment. Therefore, we can suggest that Chick-fil-a employees value training, compensation, supervisor relationships, overall job satisfaction and parent company culture when deciding to stay at their current location or quit. Managers of Chick-fil-a restaurants, and potentially managers of other fast food restaurants, should know that employees may be more willing to stay if the location they work for provides satisfactory training, supervisor roles, and compensation. Additionally, employees may be more likely to stay if they are satisfied with their jobs and feel a commitment to the parent company culture. Social integration, local operation commitment, and job stress did not seem to be as strong of indicators of intent to leave as the other factors.

Managers should consider the work environment factors that are valued to employees when developing human resource programs and procedures. By fine-tuning human resource practices to better suit employees, the organization should expect to see an increase in employee retention. This increase in employee retention should increase production efficiencies, increase production output, improve quality and customer service ratings, decrease waste, and therefore increase profits.

Limitations of this study must be recognized. For one, the survey was not translated in Spanish, which automatically excluded portions of the population from each location for sampling. Additionally, the survey did not ask for demographic information such as age, gender, job position, education because of the procedure approved by the IRB. The study was not able to verify that each sample was representative of the location population. Furthermore, the type of sample selection

must be addressed. Self-volunteered participants are more likely to self-select if they have strong opinions either negatively or positively about the topic of the survey.

Therefore, the data collected from this study could be skewed towards one of these extreme opinions, leaving out the middle perspective. The data could also be skewed by dishonest answers or by participants guessing as to what the researcher would like to see as responses, rather than truthfully assessing their opinion of each item.

Another limitation is that Chick-fil-a is a private company, so they are not required to reveal financial information such as retention rates. This constraint made it difficult to get accurate measurements of each location's retention rates. Future studies will consider surveying public companies where this type of information is more easily accessible.

Concerning the sample population, the scope of the research is limited. While the findings of this study may be significant for the four Chick-fil-a locations in the northeast Georgia region, the findings may not be the same if another geographical region was studied, or if more Chick-fil-a locations were included in this study. It would be a stretch to apply these findings to all Chick-fil-a locations or to all quick-service restaurants.

This study presents lots of opportunities for potential future studies. Future studies should conduct this study on a much larger scale by including Chick-fil-a locations from a broader geographic area and by including more locations. Future studies should also conduct the survey at different quick-service restaurant chains. It would be interesting to see if comparing the survey results across different chains revealed similarities or differences in how employees feel about certain human resource practices.

Closing Remarks

Conducting this thesis research has been a great learning opportunity for me. I have learned how to create a statistically sound survey that does not overwhelm the participants with the number of questions asked. I learned how to correctly set up a data spreadsheet for analysis. I have gained a greater understanding of statistics, and I have learned how to perform statistical tests that have not been covered in elementary statistics classes. After concluding my results, I have a greater passion for wanting to improve the human resource practices of the fast food industry. It would be a great opportunity to expand this research further by exploring other fast food restaurants and gathering data from larger sample sizes. It has been a challenging yet enjoyable experience, and I would like to thank the mathematics and business professors at University of North Georgia for mentoring me throughout this endeavor.

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Appendix A

Factors Influencing Intention to Leave Survey

For each of the following statements, please indicate the degree of your agreement or disagreement with each statement by choosing one of the five alternatives: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral/no opinion, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree.

1.	The reason I prefer Chick-fil-a to others is because of its values, or what it stands for.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	I really care about the fate of Chick-fil-a.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	I talk up Chick-fil-a to my friends as a great place to work.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	What Chick-fil-a stands for is important to me.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	What my <u>local</u> Chick-fil-a stands for is important to me.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	I really care about the fate of my <u>local</u> Chick-fil-a.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	I talk up my <u>local</u> Chick-fil-a to my friends as a great group to work with.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	The reasons I prefer $\underline{\textbf{this}}$ Chick-fil-a location to others is because of its values, or what it stands for.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	This company is providing me with job specific training	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Sufficient time is allocated for cooking and order training.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	There are enough development opportunities for me in this company.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	Sufficient money is allocated for training.	1	2	3	4	5
13.	I have the opportunity to be involved in activities that promote my professional development.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	My supervisor looks for opportunities to praise positive employee performance privately.	1	2	3	4	5
15.	My supervisor looks for opportunities to praise positive employee performance in front of others	1	2	3	4	5
16.	I feel undervalued by my supervisor.	1	2	3	4	5
17.	The supervisor gives me any "feedback" about how well I complete my work.	1	2	3	4	5
18.	My supervisor rewards a good idea by implementing it and giving the responsible employee(s) credit.	1	2	3	4	5
19.	I am satisfied with my benefits package	1	2	3	4	5
20.	I am satisfied with my most recent raise	1	2	3	4	5
21.	I am satisfied with the information about pay issues provided by the company	1	2	3	4	5
22.	I am satisfied with my current total salary package (base pay, benefits, incentives)	1	2	3	4	5
23.	I feel comfortable around my co-workers.	1	2	3	4	5
24.	My co-workers seem to accept me as one of them.	1	2	3	4	5

25. This job gives me an opportunity to meet new people.	1	2	3	4	5
26. I work here because I enjoy it.	1	2	3	4	5
27. I would like to get a promotion in this company.	1	2	3	4	5
28. I work here because it was easy to get this job.	1	2	3	4	5
29. I work here on a temporary basis to earn some extra money.	1	2	3	4	5
30. All in all, I am satisfied with my job.	1	2	3	4	5
31. In general, I don't like my job.	1	2	3	4	5
32. I feel frustrated at my job.	1	2	3	4	5
33. I feel "burnt-out" at my job.	1	2	3	4	5
34. I work here because my friends are working here.	1	2	3	4	5
35. I am happy working at this Chick-fil-a location.	1	2	3	4	5
36. I am proud to work for this Chick-fil-a location.	1	2	3	4	5
37. I often care about the future of this Chick-fil-a location.	1	2	3	4	5
38. I often think of working in some other industry.	1	2	3	4	5
39. I often think of leaving my present job.	1	2	3	4	5
40. I hope I can work in this industry until retirement.	1	2	3	4	5
41. I am likely to actively look for a new job in the next year.	1	2	3	4	5
42. I often think about quitting.	1	2	3	4	5

Please indicate the response that best matches your feelings on each statement.

1.	What would you say about the atmosphere in your immediate work group in
	terms of friendliness?

1 = not friendly at all; 2 = very little; 3 = somewhat; 4 = quite; 5 = very friendly

2. To what extent do people in your immediate work group help you find ways to do a better job?

1 = never; 2 = seldom; 3= sometimes; 4 = quite often; 5 = very often

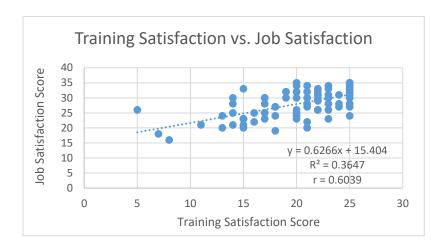
3. To what extent do you discuss personal problems with individuals in your immediate work group?

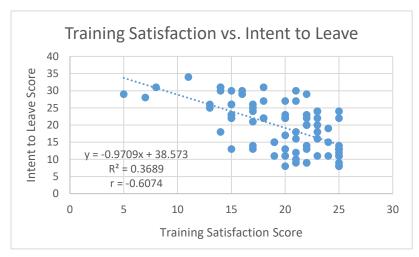
1 = never; 2 = seldom; 3= sometimes; 4 = quite often; 5 = very often

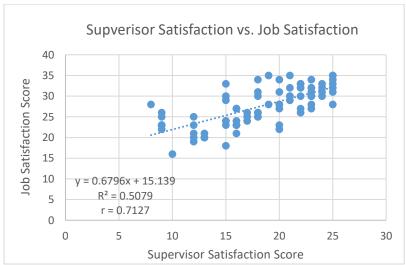
Demographic Information

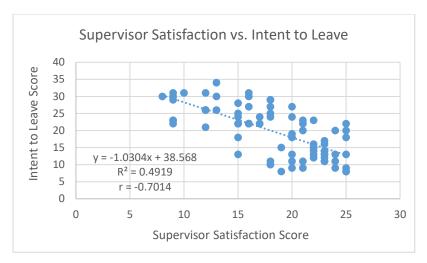
How many years have you been working at a Chick-fil-a restaurant?
How many years have you been working at <i>this</i> Chick-fil-a restaurant?
How many years have you been working in the fast food industry overall?

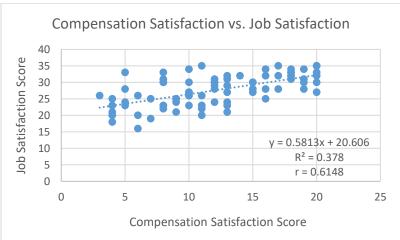
Appendix B

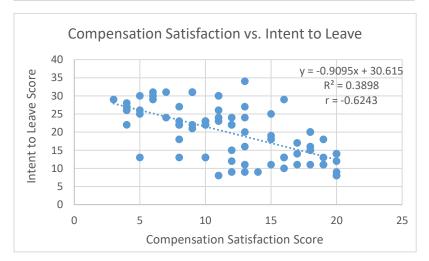




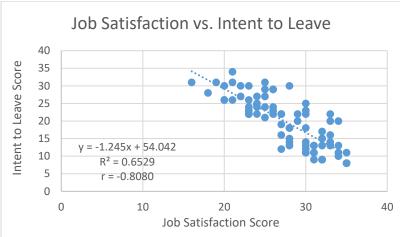




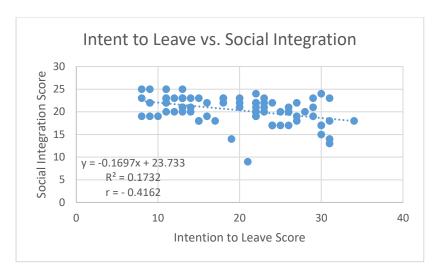


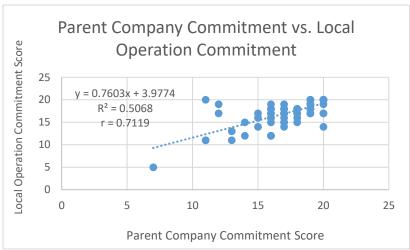


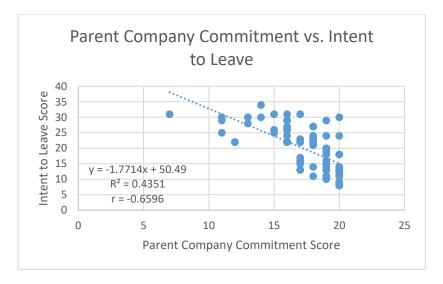


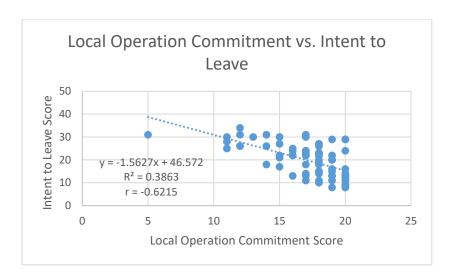






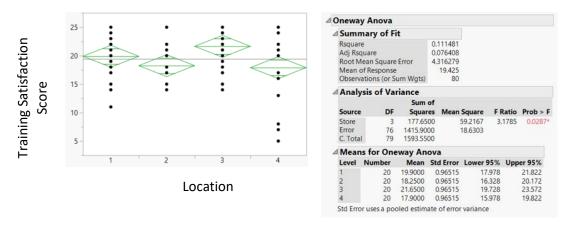






Appendix C

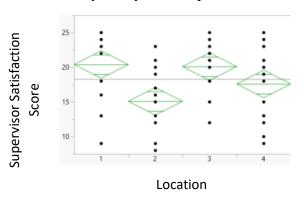
1Ca. One-way Analysis of Training Satisfaction by Location

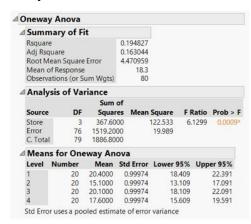


1Cb. Ordered Differences Report-Training Satisfaction by Location

Level	- Level	Difference	Std Err Dif	Lower CL	Upper CL	p-Value
3	4	3.750000	1.364927	0.16461	7.335388	0.0369*
3	2	3.400000	1.364927	-0.18539	6.985388	0.0694
1	4	2.000000	1.364927	-1.58539	5.585388	0.4634
3	1	1.750000	1.364927	-1.83539	5.335388	0.5771
1	2	1.650000	1.364927	-1.93539	5.235388	0.6232
2	4	0.350000	1.364927	-3.23539	3.935388	0.9940

2Ca. One-way Analysis of Supervisor Satisfaction by Location

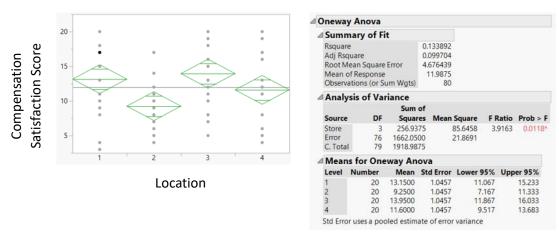




2Cb. Ordered Differences Report- Supervisor Satisfaction by Location

Level	- Level	Difference	Std Err Dif	Lower CL	Upper CL	p-Value
1	2	5.300000	1.413841	1.58612	9.013875	0.0019*
3	2	5.000000	1.413841	1.28612	8.713875	0.0038*
1	4	2.800000	1.413841	-0.91388	6.513875	0.2044
4	2	2.500000	1.413841	-1.21388	6.213875	0.2966
3	4	2.500000	1.413841	-1.21388	6.213875	0.2966
1	3	0.300000	1.413841	-3.41388	4.013875	0.9966

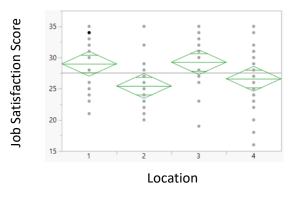
3Ca. One-way Analysis of Compensation Satisfaction by Location

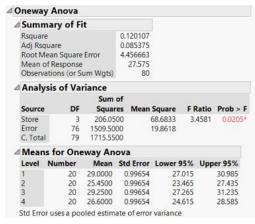


3Cb. Ordered Differences Report- Compensation Satisfaction by Location

Level	- Level	Difference	Std Err Dif	Lower CL	Upper CL	p-Value
3	2	4.700000	1.478820	0.81544	8.584560	0.0113*
1	2	3.900000	1.478820	0.01544	7.784560	0.0487*
3	4	2.350000	1.478820	-1.53456	6.234560	0.3909
4	2	2.350000	1.478820	-1.53456	6.234560	0.3909
1	4	1.550000	1.478820	-2.33456	5.434560	0.7218
3	1	0.800000	1.478820	-3.08456	4.684560	0.9487

4Ca. One-way Analysis of Job Satisfaction by Location

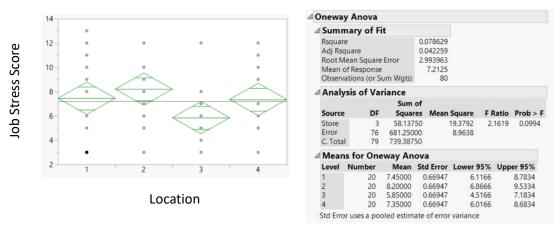




4Cb. Ordered Differences Report- Job Satisfaction by Location

Level	- Level	Difference	Std Err Dif	Lower CL	Upper CL	p-Value
3	2	3.800000	1.409320	0.09800	7.502000	0.0420*
1	2	3.550000	1.409320	-0.15200	7.252000	0.0650
3	4	2.650000	1.409320	-1.05200	6.352000	0.2451
1	4	2.400000	1.409320	-1.30200	6.102000	0.3293
4	2	1.150000	1.409320	-2.55200	4.852000	0.8467
3	1	0.250000	1.409320	-3.45200	3.952000	0.9980

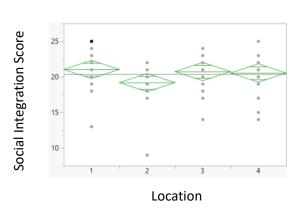
5Ca. One-way Analysis of Job Stress by Location

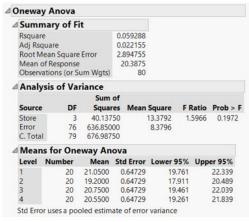


5Cb. Ordered Differences Report- Job Stress by Location

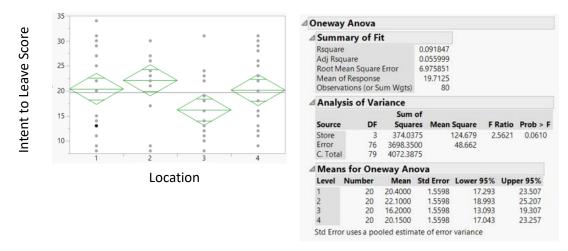
Level	- Level	Difference	Std Err Dif	Lower CL	Upper CL	p-Value
2	3	2.350000	0.9467743	-0.13698	4.836985	0.0709
1	3	1.600000	0.9467743	-0.88698	4.086985	0.3361
4	3	1.500000	0.9467743	-0.98698	3.986985	0.3936
2	4	0.850000	0.9467743	-1.63698	3.336985	0.8060
2	1	0.750000	0.9467743	-1.73698	3.236985	0.8578
1	4	0.100000	0.9467743	-2.38698	2.586985	0.9996

6Ca. One-way Analysis of Social Integration by Location





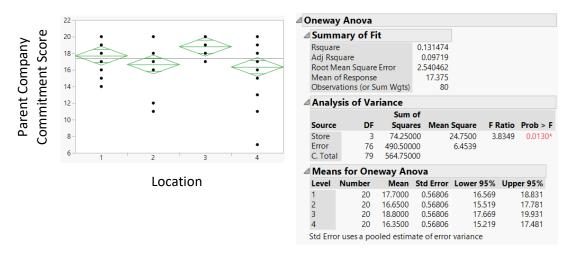
7Ca. One-way Analysis of Intent to Leave by Location



7Cb. Ordered Differences Report- Intent to Leave by Location

Level	- Level	Difference	Std Err Dif	Lower CL	Upper CL	p-Value
2	3	5.900000	2.205958	0.10540	11.69460	0.0444*
1	3	4.200000	2.205958	-1.59460	9.99460	0.2351
4	3	3.950000	2.205958	-1.84460	9.74460	0.2858
2	4	1.950000	2.205958	-3.84460	7.74460	0.8132
2	1	1.700000	2.205958	-4.09460	7.49460	0.8674
1	4	0.250000	2.205958	-5.54460	6.04460	0.9995

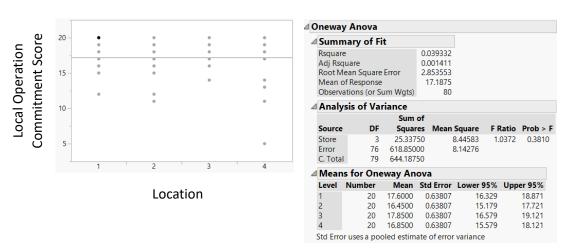
8Ca. One-way Analysis of Parent Company Commitment by Location



8Cb. Ordered Differences Report- Parent Company Commitment by Location

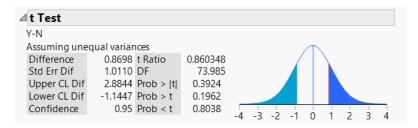
Level	- Level	Difference	Std Err Dif	Lower CL	Upper CL	p-Value
3	4	2.450000	0.8033646	0.33972	4.560276	0.0163*
3	2	2.150000	0.8033646	0.03972	4.260276	0.0442*
1	4	1.350000	0.8033646	-0.76028	3.460276	0.3411
3	1	1.100000	0.8033646	-1.01028	3.210276	0.5224
1	2	1.050000	0.8033646	-1.06028	3.160276	0.5614
2	4	0.300000	0.8033646	-1.81028	2.410276	0.9821

9Ca. One-way Analysis of Local Operation Commitment by Location

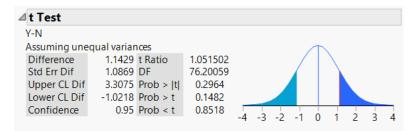


Appendix D

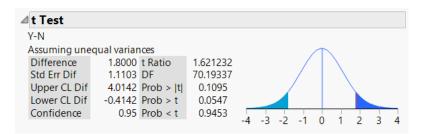
1D. Number of Years Working at Location vs. Training Satisfaction



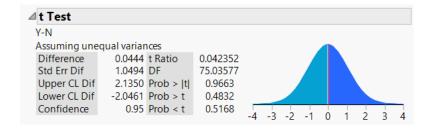
2D. Supervisor Satisfaction by Number of Years Working at Location



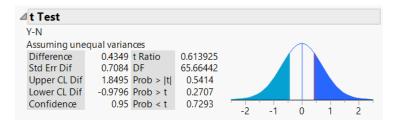
3D. Compensation Satisfaction by Number of Years Working at Location



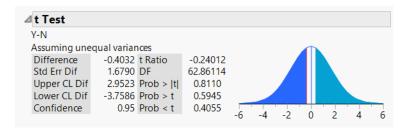
4D. Job Satisfaction by Number of Years Working at Location



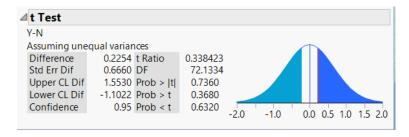
5D. Job stress by Number of Years Working at Location



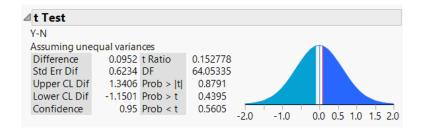
6D. Intent to leave by Number of Years Working at Location



7D. Social integration by Number of Years Working at Location



8D. Parent Company Commitment by Number of Years Working at Location



9D. Local Operation Commitment by Number of Years Working at Location

