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Human resource retention strategies to reduce swim instructor turnover intention

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ABSTRACT

Research question: Leisure organisations' most valued staff are often the most likely to leave. Leisure employees (e.g. swim instructors) are resources essential to organisational performance requiring proactive strategies by managers and human resource departments to retain talented individuals. The association between job satisfaction and turnover intention is well supported in the literature. The study aimed to identify and explain the current turnover intention of Victorian, Australia swim instructors.

Methods: Using a modified version of Roodt's Turnover Intention Theory, this study utilised semi-structured interviews with current swim instructors (n = 42; 62% female, 38% male). A deductive content analysis assisted to explain the turnover intention of current swim instructors.

Results: Younger swim instructors (i.e. 18–28 years old) presented a high turnover intention. Older swim instructors (i.e. 45+ years old) presented a low turnover intention.

Implications: Managers of swim schools should contemplate implementing retention strategies to reduce the turnover intention of younger swim instructors and consider the benefits of having a workforce containing older swim instructors. Supporting the industry to manage turnover intention might support in improving ineffective pedagogy and teaching, enable more individuals to participate in swimming lessons, and improve drowning outcomes.

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Introduction

Leisure management comprises several disciplines (e.g. human resource management [HRM]), each including its own theories, principles and skills, which are often analysed independently (Taylor, 2013). Effectively managing individuals is essential to the successful operation of practically all organisations and businesses. Human resources put the material resources (e.g. financial and physical) into use and convert them into recreational and leisure programmes and services. Employee turnover

(occasionally known as “labour turnover”, “wastage” or “attrition”) is a leading subject in leisure management research and organisational behaviour (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020; Mulvaney & Hurd, 2015; Wynen et al., 2017).

Employee turnover may be understood as the employee leaving the organisation or profession voluntarily. Significant employee turnover may be detrimental to both the organisation and the employees (Jha, 2009). Organisations face direct costs (e.g. recruitment, training, and productivity loss) and

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hidden costs (low employee morale, reputation damage, and loss of opportunity) when quality employees leave (Zhang, 2016). However, when inadequate or uninvested employees depart an organisation, it allows current employees to grow and develop with internal recruitment and promotion. Additionally, organisations may acquire fresh insights and new talent through external recruitment (Zhang, 2016).

Turnover intention is widely regarded as a direct precursor to and proxy for actual voluntary turnover behaviour (Wong & Cheng, 2020). Organisations that understand turnover intention are more likely to determine the probability of employees leaving the organisation and discover opportunities to reduce turnover. Job satisfaction (e.g. recognition, feedback, and fair compensation) contributes to turnover intention and actual turnover of employees. Employees who are more satisfied with aspects of their jobs are less likely to leave their employment (Nguyen & Tran, 2021).

Employees in leisure have highly varied backgrounds (e.g. age), and this variety can be both a strength and a potential weakness for employers (Grainger-Jones, 1999). The aquatics industry in Victoria employs around 20,000 individuals, including administrative staff, pool lifeguards and swim teachers (Preiss, 2021). Swim instructors teach individuals of all ages and abilities to develop swimming skills, technique and confidence in the water. Swim instructors are required to work mornings, evenings and weekends. A typical swim instructor in Australia is female, employed casually, and earns less than \$30,000 per year (Royal Life Saving Australia, 2019).

Employee turnover has historically been exceptionally high in the aquatics industry, including swim instructors and pool lifeguards (Butson et al., 2021; Swim Coaches & Teachers Australia, 2022). Concerns regarding retaining swim instructors can be traced back to 2012 (AUSTSWIM & Royal Life Saving Society Australia, 2012; Preiss, 2021; Royal Life Saving Australia, 2021). However, the COVID-19 pandemic

has accentuated the shortage of swim instructors across Victoria (Preiss, 2021). In 2022, 1800 swim instructors were needed to meet the demand for swimming lessons across Victoria (Life Saving Victoria, 2022).

A shortage of swim instructors suggests facilities will be unable to meet the demand for swimming lessons, resulting in individuals having less access to the lifesaving and lifelong skills learned in swimming lessons. Currently, waiting lists for swimming lessons are up 20 per cent, and many facilities cannot accommodate their existing customer base (Paul, 2021). Arguably, children having access to swimming lessons has never been more critical. In 2020–2021, Victoria recorded its highest drowning toll in 20 years, with young children being over-represented (Life Saving Victoria, 2021).

Employees leave organisations and industries for various reasons. Given the increasingly short-term and transient nature of paid employment in the leisure and recreation industry (Wolsey et al., 2012), it is imperative to consider issues such as employee turnover and turnover intention. Arguably, swim instructors are voluntarily leaving their organisations. That is, they leave the organisation on their terms. On the other hand, involuntary turnover occurs when an employee is dismissed from the organisation. Voluntary turnover can be quite costly for most organisations (Hom et al., 2020).

The aquatics industry has been described as in a crisis due to significant employee shortages and high turnover (Stallman, 2019). A high turnover of swim instructors means inexperienced instructors are common in the industry. Inexperienced teaching causes ineffectiveness in pedagogy and learning (Stallman, 2019). Currently, there is a gap in the scholarly literature regarding human resource management in the aquatics industry. To the authors' knowledge this is the first study to explore turnover intention among swim instructors. Minimal research is particularly problematic during swim instructor shortages, with managers having no guiding literature to understand

needs or access to specific strategies to reduce the turnover intention of swim instructors. Furthermore, managers have few if any insights about how to deal with this problem. As a result, the present study aimed to identify and explain the current turnover intention of Victorian swim instructors. Recognising the critical factors related to turnover intention and understanding could enable aquatic facility managers to develop and manage strategies to reduce swim instructor turnover intention (Gabrielova & Buchko, 2021). Managing turnover intention might assist in improving ineffective pedagogy and teaching, enable more individuals to participate in swimming lessons, and improve drowning outcomes.

Literature review

Turnover among employees is one of the biggest challenges for any organisation and have far lasting effects. It has been seen as a serious issue especially in the field of HRM (Belete, 2018). Employee turnover remains worryingly high in the aquatics industry, with very little literature available to guide managers to overcome high turnover. A shortage of swim instructors indicates facilities will be unable to meet the demand for swimming lessons. An important first step is to identify and explain the current turnover intention of swim instructors.

Turnover intention

Intention is the nearest variable to the actual behaviour that someone will do (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). For example, employees generally decide to leave an organisation before doing so (Ki & Choi-Kwon, 2022). Turnover intention is a multi-stage process initiated by negative psychosocial responses to the working environment, creating a cognitive and behavioural withdrawal process (Kim et al., 2021). Turnover intention ranges from a simple desire to serious thoughts, decision-making and finally, actual planning. The turnover intention is a

process rather than a single, discrete event (Kim et al., 2021).

Turnover intention is the final stage before employees take the initiative to leave their employment (Wang & Wang, 2020), often measured according to a specific time interval (e.g. within the next six months) (Yanchus et al., 2015). Turnover intention is an employee's comprehensive manifestation of dissatisfaction with their employment, thoughts of resignation, preparation for job-hopping, and their search for other job opportunities (Emiroğlu et al., 2015; Rifin & Danaee, 2022). Turnover intention can be seen from several perspectives, such as a tendency to leave the organisation, the possibility of finding another job, the case of an employee seeing themselves out of the organisation both now or in the near future, or where better opportunities exist (Kartono & Hilmiana, 2018). Employee turnover has significant costs and negative consequences for organisations (Cho & Lewis, 2012; Hom et al., 2020; Jerez-Jerez & Melewar, 2020), which may have disruptive implications, including reduced organisational functioning, service delivery, additional administration expenses and increased costs of rehiring and retraining employees (Bothma & Roodt, 2012, 2013).

Researchers have documented several factors that might contribute to an individual's increased consideration of leaving an organisation, including levels of job satisfaction (Gebregziabher et al., 2020; Yanchus et al., 2015; Yu & Kang, 2016). For employees, levels of job satisfaction (or dissatisfaction) are influenced by several factors (e.g. the quality of leadership and management, skill variety, high job motivation, involvement, and organisational behaviour [Armstrong & Taylor, 2020; Rukh et al., 2015]).

Turnover intention and job satisfaction

Turnover intention will exist when employees are dissatisfied with their current working environment. Hoppock (1935, p. 47) defined job satisfaction as "any combination of

psychological, physiological, and environmental circumstances that causes a person truthfully to say, I am satisfied with my job". More recently, job satisfaction has been described as the "attitudes and feelings people have about their work, positive and favourable attitudes towards the job indicate job satisfaction and negative and unfavourable attitudes towards the job indicate job dissatisfaction" (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020, p. 257).

The association between job satisfaction and turnover intention is well supported in the literature (Allen & Bryant, 2012; Armstrong & Taylor, 2020; Yücel, 2012). Different studies conducted among employees in Australia consistently show a negative and significant relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention (Duraisingam et al., 2009; Halcomb et al., 2021). Further, job satisfaction plays a prominent role in almost all turnover theories (Lee et al., 1999) and operates as the critical psychological predictor in most turnover studies (Trevor, 2001).

Job satisfaction is the feelings and attitudes towards employment and the function of several diverse factors (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020). These factors include flexibility to balance life and work, job characteristics (e.g. task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback); favourable working conditions (e.g. the physical environment); opportunities to use one's knowledge, skills and abilities; personal development opportunities; constructive relationships (e.g. open communication); support from management; adequate compensation; and job security (Hee et al., 2018; Heimerl et al., 2020; Parvin & Kabir, 2012; Raziq & Maulabakhsh, 2015).

Generational variations cause differences in how employees value their jobs, leading to higher turnover. Moreover, variable age demographics tend to generate different expectations in the workplace. Therefore, when managers understand generational differences in the workforce, they can implement better

policies that meet the needs of each generation (Skelton et al., 2020).

Generational expectations and job satisfaction

Expectancy Confirmation Theory (ECT) argues that individuals enter the workforce with expectations and values, and if these expectations are met, they will likely remain with the organisation (Ngo-Henha, 2017). Existing studies suggest that younger generations have different expectations and motivating factors than the earlier generations (Dangmei & Singh, 2016). Younger generations typically have a shorter job tenure than older generations and a higher turnover intention (Jahya et al., 2020; Shah et al., 2020). However, this is not always explained by an absence of organisational commitment. For younger generations, turnover can be influenced by a yearning for variety, challenge and change. Most younger generations typically have multiple jobs and careers and pursue lifelong learning and entrepreneurship (McCordle & Fell, 2019). Human Capital Theory (HCT) also suggests that education, training, and development are essential in increasing job satisfaction and productivity of younger employees (Ngo-Henha, 2017). Organisations that devote resources to providing and supporting quality training and development can decrease employee turnover intention behaviour (Haque, 2021; Rawashdeh & Tamimi, 2019).

An increasing number of employees, notable in younger generations, will quit their jobs if employers do not act on important issues (ATLASSIAN, 2021). Younger generations feel passionate about social issues and have been experiencing the effects of climate change, extremism, financial crisis, and rainbow and me-too movements since a young age (Jayathilake et al., 2021; Schroth, 2019). Matters surrounding diversity, equity and inclusion are more significant than in any other generation. Younger generations are demanding greater

organisation involvement in driving change on equality issues (ATLASSIAN, 2021). The concept of equality is fundamental, with younger generations believing everyone is equal and should be treated as such (Schroth, 2019).

The literature categorises older generations as those who must work (e.g. for health or money); those who want to work (e.g. to maintain and create social networks, to use their knowledge and skills, or contribute); and those who are working for both reasons. Sometimes older generations are referred to as “contributors” (Smyer & Pitt-Catsouphes, 2007, p. 27). These older employees live to work. Contributing to society is a crucial motivation, and remuneration is less critical (Hardardottir & Bjornsdottir, 2019).

Since younger generations experienced continuous learning during their childhood, they expect continuous learning when entering the workforce (D’Amato & Herzfeldt, 2008). Therefore, younger generations prefer a work environment that supports mentoring, learning and professional development opportunities (D’Amato & Herzfeldt, 2008; Yeager & Wisniewski, 2017). If younger employees experience “meaningfulness” during employment, they are more willing to remain and support organisational sustainability. Meaningfulness in work is the subjective experience of employees perceiving employment as purposeful and significant (Popaitoon, 2022). Work meaningfulness is the mechanism that can attract and retain employees, keep employees intrinsically motivated and engaged and enhance employee performance. A positive relationship between an employee and an organisation determines the degree of meaningfulness of work (Kaur & Mittal, 2020). Work meaningfulness can be driven by job design, workload, autonomy and development opportunities (e.g. mastering new skills and obtaining new knowledge [Popaitoon, 2022]).

Research shows that younger generations are highly self-confident and optimistic about their future and professional life (Iorgulescu,

2016). When managers understand employee career ambitions, this reduces employee turnover intention (Yang et al., 2012). Transparency, self-reliance, flexibility, and personal freedom are non-negotiable characteristics for younger generations in the workplace (Dangmei & Singh, 2016). They expect to be informed and advised by managers, be responded to, and have their responses heard and acknowledged (Dangmei & Singh, 2016). They need managers to value their feelings and beliefs. This indicates that younger generations expect the workplace to be less about age and more about ideas, opinions and contributions. Moreover, they want to work for honest managers.

Managers must be open and accessible and not hide information from younger employees because of their age or job title (Gaidhani et al., 2019). According to The Theory of Organizational Equilibrium (TOE), turnover intention is influenced by the perception of an individual’s contribution to an organisation against one’s perception of the contribution of the organisation to oneself (Ngo-Henha, 2017). Therefore, job dissatisfaction increases when employees consider an imbalance in the relationship between the organisation and management (Ngo-Henha, 2017).

Older generations tend to focus on generativity motives (e.g. guiding and promoting the next generation) (Kollmann et al., 2020). Therefore, older generations value the opportunity to demonstrate their experience and transfer their knowledge and skills to younger generations (Kollmann et al., 2020). Similarly, accomplishment and achievement at work become more critical for older generations (Kollmann et al., 2020).

Older generations appear more resilient to workplace stressors than younger employees, who still need to fine-tune the appropriate coping strategies for moderating demands. Older generations expect their employer to offer an environment of autonomy (Raab, 2020). Older workers also place a higher value on respect and recognition in the workplace

(Cavanagh et al., 2020). The source of older generations' recognition can be individuals lower or higher in the organisational structure. Recognition and respect in the workplace can be perceived in various ways by older adults (e.g. recognition of work and achievements, acceptance and reassurance from colleagues, and internal feelings of satisfaction for providing for others) (Taneva et al., 2016).

The aquatics industry

The aquatics industry in Victoria, Australia, employs around 20,000 individuals, including pool lifeguards and swim instructors (Preiss, 2021). Employee turnover has been significantly high in the aquatics industry, including swim instructors (Butson et al., 2021; Swim Coaches & Teachers Australia, 2022), and these issues can be traced back to 2012 (Preiss, 2021; Royal Life Saving Australia, 2021). A high turnover of swim instructors means inexperienced instructors are common in the aquatics industry. Inexperienced teaching causes ineffectiveness in pedagogy and learning and has long-term consequences. At the hands of inexperienced instructors, even an appropriate amount of time may be insufficient to produce desired performance (e.g. improved swimming and water safety techniques) (Stallman, 2019). Arguably, swim instructors have never been more critical across Australia.

Along with other strategies, Surf Life Saving Australia and Royal Life Saving Society Australia are urgently re-prioritising swim programmes to teach more individuals swimming skills and water safety (Royal Life Saving Australia, 2021). However, this could be problematic in the short term with a high turnover and shortage of swim instructors to deliver the programmes. With minimal research to guide the industry and ongoing concerns with recruitment and retaining swim instructors, a practical first step is to understand turnover intention better and identify how swim instructor

turnover occurs. This study aimed to determine the current turnover intention among Victorian, Australia swim instructors.

Methods

This exploratory study used the qualitative research method of semi-structured interviews to gain insights into the turnover intention of current Victorian swim instructors. An exploratory study was appropriate as there is little research available concerning the turnover intention of current Victorian swim instructors.

Participants

A purposeful and snowball sampling technique was used to recruit respondents. Purposeful sampling allowed for identifying and selecting information-rich cases related to the phenomenon of turnover intention (Palinkas et al., 2015). Consequently, participants were not chosen at random but were drawn using snowball sampling. Snowball sampling involved referrals from initial interviewees to generate additional participants. This method of sampling was efficient and cost-effective in accessing participants who were otherwise difficult to find (Naderifar et al., 2017).

The sample included 42 participants. To effectively understand the turnover intention of current swim instructors, all participants were currently employed in the aquatics industry as swim instructors. Twenty-nine participants were recruited using the purposeful sampling technique and thirteen by the snowball sampling technique. The appropriate sample size was determined by data saturation with mounting examples of the same codes but no new emerging codes or themes (Saunders et al., 2018).

Research instruments

Instruments for recording interviews for documentation and analysis included Otter.ai (a real-time transcription programme) and

writing field notes. Field notes were used to document researcher impressions as they occurred, facilitate preliminary coding, and increase rigour and trustworthiness (Phillippi & Lauderdale, 2018). The researchers adapted Bothma and Roodt's (2013) Turnover Intention Theory in this study to understand the turnover intentions of swim instructors. For this study, the quantitative TIS-6 scale was adapted to a qualitative semi-structured interview and open-ended questions to answer the research question effectively.

The TIS-6 scale assesses employees' intentions to stay with or leave an organisation. This theory was selected to guide the method as others often used a single-item or three-item scale to measure turnover intention (Fox & Fallon, 2003; Lambert et al., 2001). The scale is reliable and valid to assess turnover intentions and can therefore be used in research to validly and reliably assess turnover intentions (Bothma & Roodt, 2013). To the author's knowledge, this is the first study to explore the turnover intention of swim instructors. Therefore, a qualitative, exploratory research design was necessary. Structure of the TIS-6 scale items made for a simple adjustment to qualitative interview questions. Qualitative research generated a more profound understanding than what could have been obtained through quantitative analysis. Close-ended TIS-6 questions were modified to open-ended questions to elicit detailed responses, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the current turnover intention of swim instructors (Newcomer et al., 2015).

Only a few predetermined questions were included, allowing the interviewers to explore issues brought forward by the interviewee (McGrath et al., 2019). Examples of questions included, how important is your wage when deciding to leave or stay? Or to what extent is this job satisfying your personal needs? We engaged multiple researchers to ensure rigour and trustworthiness and to reduce and account for researcher bias. Multiple

researchers were used to code and interpret the data, allowing coding inconsistencies among researchers to be discussed and resolved. We included meticulous record-keeping, indicating a clear decision trail, rich verbatim data to support our findings, and invited participants to comment on their interview transcripts. Four transcripts were returned to participants, each confirming it was an accurate reflection of the interview (Noble & Smith, 2015).

Procedure

The research included semi-structured interviews exploring participants' current turnover intention. Research commenced once approved by the lead author's Human Research Ethics Committee project number 30111. Pilot interviews were completed with two current swim instructors. The pilot interviews identified two limitations (i.e. an additional demographic question was included and language changes to elicit less generalised responses), so the interview guide was modified accordingly. Participants recruited using purposeful sampling were initially approached to partake via email and provided an explanatory document. Participants recruited by snowball sampling were provided with an explanatory statement by the researchers or other participants. Participation was confirmed via email. Before interviews commenced, participant consent was obtained through a signed consent form (by email). Semi-structured interviews were completed on the online meeting platform Zoom. Interviews lasted approximately 30 min.

Data analysis

The research utilised a deductive and inductive analysis. The deductive analysis was based on an analysis of pre-existing theory (i.e. Roodt's Turnover Intention Theory) (Azungah, 2018). Roodt's Turnover Intention Theory is a reliable and valid theory to assess current employees'

turnover intentions (Bothma & Roodt, 2013). The inductive analysis involved looking for patterns in the data to connect with relevant theory and existing literature (e.g. aspects of job dissatisfaction). Data was collected as digital recordings via the Zoom Digital Meeting Platform and transcribed using the software Otter.ai. Further, written field notes were taken. Finally, research data was reduced and coded with the qualitative data analysis software NVivo.

The coding process involved data immersion, primary coding, and secondary coding (Tracy, 2020). Data immersion involved reading and re-reading all transcribed documents, sifting and sorting data, and becoming familiar with the body of collected material (Bryman & Burgess, 2002). Primary coding began with examining the data, assigning words or phrases that captured their essence, and creating codes. Secondary coding required critically examining the codes to clarify and synthesise while identifying patterns. Finally, a codebook in a table format was developed to display the data and start making conclusions (Tracy, 2020). As this research relied heavily on researcher interpretations to generate data, it was essential to use multiple researchers to code and interpret the data (Archibald, 2016). The subsequent section will explain the results of the semi-structured interviews.

Results

This study aimed to identify the current turnover intention among Victorian, Australia swim instructors. Participants were asked two background questions (i.e. years of experience as a swim instructor and age). The years of experience were 2.4 years, and the average age of the 42 participants was 37.3 years. The results indicate a clear distinction in turnover intention according to age. There is no consensus on what age constitutes a younger or older employee (Bryson et al., 2020). Therefore, we adopted the age of 45 and over for older employees and between 18 and 28 for

younger employees. The deductive analysis indicated younger swim instructors ($n = 14$) are currently demonstrating a high turnover intention. However, older swim instructors ($n = 15$) demonstrate a low turnover intention.

An inductive analysis effectively explained the reasons for high or low turnover intention. Younger swim instructors explained a high turnover intention because of poor relationships with management, poor working conditions, and the swim instructor role not being a long-term position (see Table 1). Older swim instructors described a low turnover intention as a result of having respect and recognition and the swim instructor role being rewarding (see Table 2). Participants aged 29–44 ($n = 13$) did not express particular views concerning turnover intention. Therefore, this article has focused on swim instructors who showed a strong desire to leave (i.e. younger swim instructors) and those who discussed a lower turnover intention (i.e. older swim instructors) to understand better what leads to turnover intention or a decision to stay.

Discussion

The aquatics industry is experiencing high levels of voluntary employee turnover including pool lifeguards and swim instructors (Butson et al., 2021). A shortage of swim instructors suggests facilities will be unable to meet the demand for swimming lessons, resulting in individuals having less access to the life saving and lifelong skills learned in swimming lessons. To our knowledge, this study is the first to examine the turnover intentions of current swim instructors. In doing so, the study contributes to the limited research in ARCs, particularly concerning employee turnover. The results of the current study will be discussed in line with several of the key themes identified (e.g. poor management and high turnover intention, poor career perspectives and high turnover intention, and older swim instructors and respect in the workplace).

Table 1. High turnover intention (younger swim instructors).

Theme	Summary	Respondent characteristics	Quote
High Turnover Intention	Younger swim instructors (i.e. 18–28 years old) presented a high turnover intention compared to any age group.	Male, aged 22	"All the time I think about leaving, I want a new job ..."
		Male, aged 19	"Yes, often [think about leaving], I know that I will be leaving this job very soon."
		Female, aged 26	"Every day I consider it ... This afternoon I was looking for other jobs ..."
High Turnover Intention – Poor Relationships with Management	For younger employees, poor relationships with management have resulted in a high turnover intention.	Female, aged 23	"... quite a bit [considered leaving], due to the culture and the team, like negative relationships and negative relationships with management."
		Female, aged 28	"Yes often ... because of management, the way they treat swim instructors. Management needs to consider that we are the ones out the front performing the work."
High Turnover Intention – Working Conditions	For younger employees, working conditions have led to increased turnover intentions.	Male, aged 20	"... all the time [considered leaving], I want a job where I do not have to be in the water ... this kind of environment for long periods of time takes its toll on your body."
		Female, aged 21	"Often ... there is now more demand on us instructors, the hours are longer, the expectation to work shifts has increased ..."
High Turnover Intention – Not a Long-Term Position	For younger employees, the position is not considered long-term. Rather, a job done while completing university.	Female, aged 20	"I will be leaving this teaching job soon after I finish studying. I know that will be my end date. The job isn't a long-term thing."
		Male, aged 21	"It is just a steppingstone this job, to be honest, I will be quitting as soon as I finish university ..."
High Turnover Intention – Higher or Equal Wage	For some younger employees, turnover intention increased further when they considered a position of an equal or higher wage.	Female, aged 22	"... Yes! I would leave for a higher-paying job ... I know many people in the past left for more money in swim teaching or other jobs."
		Female, aged 27	"Absolutely, I would accept another job tomorrow if I was going to be paid more money."

Younger swim instructors and high turnover intention

The leisure and aquatics industries must recognise that individuals (notably younger employees) are changing jobs with greater frequency than ever before. The propensity to stay or leave an organisation is impacted by an employee's age (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020). As younger employees have entered the workforce, organisational HR practices have not evolved to address their concerns (Jayathilake et al., 2021). When managers fail to meet younger swim instructors' expectations, dissatisfaction will result and the probability of

turnover increases. Porter and Steers (1973) describe this "as a process of balancing perceived or potential rewards with desired expectations" (p. 171). To reduce the turnover intention of younger swim instructors, aquatic facility managers should consider current management practices and HR retention strategies in line with younger employee expectations.

Poor management and high turnover intention

There is a relationship between management and employee engagement and satisfaction.

Table 2. Low turnover intention (older swim instructors).

Theme	Summary	Respondent characteristics	Quote
Low Turnover Intention	Older swim instructors (i.e. 45+ years old) presented the lowest turnover intention compared to any age group.	Female, aged 58	"Never! I don't think, it is not something I have considered [leaving their current role]."
		Male, aged 46	"No, I don't think it is something I consider, it has not been forefront for me ..."
		Male, aged 51	"Maybe a while ago I was ready to leave ... But it is much better now ... It is a great place to be now."
Low Turnover Intention – Swim Instructing is a Rewarding Role	For some older instructors, the turnover intention is low as the role is rewarding.	Female, aged 54	"No, not often, [swim instructing is] very rewarding when you finally teach your students something new ... , it just gives you so much happiness."
		Female, aged 61	"No, look, I love my job, and when I am actually teaching, I love it, and I do not want to do anything else ... I love seeing my students succeed."
		Female, aged 47	"... I really enjoy my work, it is something I am passionate about and it's rewarding ... I am not considering leaving ..."
Low Turnover Intention – Respect and Recognition	For some older adults, their turnover intention was low as they had respect and recognition in the workplace.	Female, aged 49	"No ... I do not consider leaving ... I get respect and recognition from management and other [swim instructors], that is enough for me."
		Female, aged 45	"... is a great place to teach ... I have respect from my bosses and my co-workers."
Low Turnover Intention – Higher or Equal Wage	For some older instructors, the idea of additional or equal wages was not an incentive to obtain another job.	Male, aged 48	"... It is not important [money], I am not fussed about money ... I don't want to leave."
		Female, aged 59	"... Money could be a thing for some [swim instructors], but not for me. I am pretty happy at the moment ..."

Respondents indicated dissatisfaction with management and supervisors. Employees often communicate that they work for individuals, not an organisation and consequently leave managers, not the organisation (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020; McCrae, 2020). The competence of management communication (e.g. effective and open communication) has positively affected loyalty and job satisfaction (Sharma et al., 2015). An effective communication system is essential for facilities to retain and reduce the turnover intention of younger swim teachers. Open communication may give swim instructors a sense of empowerment (Osborne & Hammoud, 2017).

Current younger swim instructors are disgruntled and have mentioned poor management as a contributor to turnover intention. Poor management practice and leadership can

be a demotivator and a driver of turnover intention. High-performing managers typically display certain behaviours (e.g. empowering employees, assisting with career development, expressing interest in employee well-being, and having a clear vision [Shaw, 2019]). However, different leadership styles are appropriate in certain circumstances and affect an organisation's culture differently (Price-Dowd, 2020). Therefore, management should consider their leadership style, how and why they do certain things and the possible effect on job satisfaction and turnover intention.

Good management requires the investment and development of employees (Nabi et al., 2017). Younger employees (i.e. Generation Z) are unique in growing up with a "culture of safety" (Schroth, 2019, p. 10) where overprotective parenting inadvertently took away

their opportunity to learn life skills. This interfered with their social, emotional, and intellectual development, making it difficult for them to become autonomous adults, or able to navigate the challenges of the workplace. These employees often cite a fear of failing and a lack of confidence as challenges in the workplace (Gabriellova & Buchko, 2021; Schroth, 2019). Consequently, managers must consider how to encourage autonomy in the workplace. This could include demonstrating trust and support to make decisions, permitting eventual ownership of projects and tasks, and allowing greater control of their time management and how they complete responsibilities (Schroth, 2019).

The world of employment is shifting. These shifts particularly affect young employees. Younger employees are likely to report adversities such as low job control, higher psychological demands, harassment and job insecurity. These job stressors have been shown to be associated with poorer mental health (e.g. anxiety and depression) (Milner et al., 2019; Schroth, 2019). Younger employees are more likely to report poor mental health than other generations. Further, around 40% of younger employees look to their employers as the main source of mental health support (ATLASIAN, 2021). Considering these issues, the health and well-being of younger employees need to be considered by management. Organisations may consider putting additional resources into their health and well-being programmes (e.g. support groups and interventions, encouraging mental health literacy among young workers and their colleagues and ensuring that young people have access to suitable training and development) (Milner et al., 2019; Schroth, 2019).

High turnover intention and poor career perspectives

Management should invest in their staff by providing training on and off the job. Education is

positively related to job satisfaction and lower turnover intention (Deery, 2008; Yeager & Wisniewski, 2017). Further, providing clear career paths and support for personal development will assist facilities in reducing turnover intention (Högemark, 2018; Kyndt et al., 2009). Another valuable HR strategy for reducing turnover intention is coaching and mentoring. Purposefully planned mentoring sessions can develop loyalty among younger swim instructors. It is essential in these sessions that younger swim instructors are introduced to career development programmes that offer training and coaching (Akunda et al., 2018).

According to the literature, employee motivation and morale are other drivers of job satisfaction (Alshallah, 2004; Armstrong & Taylor, 2020; Jewczyn, 2010). Broadly, management could consider employee motivation and morale in the context of swim instructors. Management should consider delegation of work tasks when appropriate. If delegation is used effectively, it can benefit managers and younger employees. Delegation improves job satisfaction and motivates and increases employees' morale (Kumari, 2011). With delegation, managers can communicate trust to younger swim instructors. Management can create staff loyalty and reduce turnover intention when employees are given additional tasks and responsibilities (Akunda et al., 2018).

Reverse mentoring in an organisation promotes inclusivity and diversity and assists in reducing employee turnover (Jayathilake et al., 2021). Reverse mentoring is an unconventional mentorship technique that fosters the frequent exchange of ideas between employees of different generations, supports the development of connections within organisations, and nurtures workforce talent (Cismaru & Iunius, 2020). The reverse mentoring process provides younger employees with leadership skills, supports employee visibility and voice, and provides opportunities for additional professional development (Murphy, 2012). The main functions of traditional mentoring, such as career

development, psychological support and role-modelling, remain in reverse mentoring (Cismaru & Iunius, 2020). The “bottom-up” approach to mentoring enables knowledge sharing through the transfer of technological competence, subject matter advancements and different generational outlooks. Well-executed reverse mentoring programmes may offer multiple benefits, including increased productivity, skill development and reduced turnover (Garg et al., 2022). Management should consider the suitability of reverse mentoring in retaining swim instructors.

Turnover intention increases when younger swim instructors consider higher wages. Organisations might counter this by providing an opportunity for movement (e.g. upward promotion or lateral promotion across departments) to limit movement outside of the organisation and retain younger employees (Jin & Waldman, 2019; Ng et al., 2018). Promotions or lateral movements might allow swim instructors to negotiate better compensation, learn new skill sets, and increase job security. Additionally, management might consider offering additional shifts and wage increases where appropriate. Along with possible wage increases, management should also consider various employee benefits to attract and retain younger swim instructors (de la Torre-Ruiz et al., 2019).

Older swim instructors and respect in the workplace

Employees of all ages, particularly older adults, consider recognition and respect as one of the most critical HR practices in influencing decisions to remain in the workplace (Cavanagh et al., 2020; Raab, 2020). To retain them, employers must show that older swim instructors are valued and respected. Similar to feeling valued, older employees require a level of recognition (Raab, 2020). Fortunately for managers, recognising older swim teachers can take multiple forms (e.g. recognition of their swim teaching and

achievements, acceptance from those around them, and the feelings of providing an important life skill for others). In terms of HR practices, recognition and respect represent a minimal cost to any organisation to provide (Vasconcelos, 2018). In addition, older swim instructors’ high levels of job satisfaction, and commitment to their employers, suggest that they might add value to the aquatics industry and assist in overcoming swim instructor shortages (Smyer & Pitt-Cat-souphe, 2007). Respect for older swim instructors can be reinforced in the workplace through traditional mentoring. This is when a more experienced individual (e.g. older swim instructor), either informally or as part of a formal mentoring programme, supports the career aspirations and interpersonal development of a less experienced individual (e.g. younger swim instructor). Other benefits to older swim instructors could include personal fulfilment and satisfaction, increased organisational commitment and job performance, and increased confidence (Nyanjom, 2019).

Benefits of older swim instructors in the aquatics industry

With an ongoing shortage of swim instructors and a low turnover intention of older swim instructors, there is value in having a workforce containing older adults. Older adults consider the role incredibly rewarding and explain a passion for teaching and the industry. Management must understand older swim instructors enjoy the role, spend considerable time doing it, and consider the role important (Spehar et al., 2016). Arguably, older swim instructors are embedded in the role (Ngo-Henha, 2017). The Job Embeddedness Theory (JET) argues that when personal values and career goals (e.g. contributing to society) are being met, there is a better “fit” for the organisation (Mitchell et al., 2001, p. 1104). From the perspective of JET, employees (i.e. older swim instructors) will stay in their current roles if they feel a sense of embeddedness (Ngo-Henha, 2017).

HCT suggests that individuals accumulate human capital, becoming more productive as they learn from previous work experience. Experience enables older employees to become more proficient, learn new skills, adjust working routines, and become more productive with age (Bryson et al., 2020). A low turnover intention suggests swim instructors stay with their current employers and are more satisfied with their jobs. The current study suggests that older swim instructors are considered “contributors” rather than employees that must work for money. Further, older swim instructors use the position to give back to society, use their experience and transfer their knowledge and skills to younger individuals (e.g. swim lesson students [Kollmann et al., 2020]).

Recommendation for future research

With an ongoing swim instructor shortage, further research is needed to explore the reasons for swim instructor turnover from previous swim instructors. A similar study exploring turnover intention among swim instructors should be replicated across Australia and abroad to determine the likelihood of turnover in other areas. With concerns relating to management and leadership style, research should further explore current management style and the impact on employees. In line with the limited HR literature and ongoing issues in the aquatics industry, it is recommended that research is completed to explain current turnover intention among different departments (e.g. pool lifeguards, recreation leaders and management).

Limitations

This study has extended HR knowledge across the aquatics industry, where minimal research currently exists. However, one limitation should be acknowledged. The purposeful and snowball sampling method makes generalising the results outside Victoria, Australia, challenging. Nevertheless, the results are important considerations for management when

implementing HRM retention strategies and during the swim instructor recruitment process.

Conclusion

Employee turnover continues to be a major concern for organisations and managers. An ongoing national shortage of swim instructors has affected many facilities’ capacity to run learn-to-swim programmes. A shortage of swim instructors can be traced back to 2012. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has further heightened the shortage of swim instructors. The purpose of this study was to examine the current turnover intention of swim instructors. Semi-structured interviews and a deductive analysis revealed a clear distinction in turnover intention according to swim instructor age. Younger swim instructors demonstrated a high turnover intention. However, older swim instructors demonstrated a low turnover intention. Moreover, an inductive analysis revealed several areas of job satisfaction influencing turnover intention. Managers today must understand how to best manage younger employees and the unique characteristics of the generation shaped by their experiences (Gabriellova & Buchko, 2021). Managers should consider implementing HR retention strategies to retain younger swim instructors and consider the potential benefits of having a workforce containing older swim instructors. Managing turnover intention might support in improving swim teaching and enable more individuals to participate in swimming lessons.

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