Turnover Intentions in Manufacturing Enterprises: A Mixed Methods Study

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Abstract:

Purpose: The objective of this study was to examine the relationship between the work atmosphere and the reasons for leaving among production workers. Additionally, the study aimed to investigate whether there was a correlation between gender and hygiene factors and the reasons for leaving.

Design/methodology/approach: This is an exploratory, bespoke study. Data triangulation was used and a case study supported by a quantitative study was conducted. In the qualitative study, a manager was interviewed on the basis of a questionnaire. In the quantitative study, the motives of the employees deciding to leave their jobs were investigated, N=89. Pearson's χ^2 test was used to examine the relationship. Cramer's V effect size measure was used to determine the strength of the association between qualitative variables.

Findings: Qualitative research has found that difficult working conditions and a reluctance to induct new employees translates into a negative working atmosphere. Reducing staff turnover should receive more attention from decision-makers at the highest levels, and the transfer of more motivational tools to lower management levels seems to be becoming not only a good solution, but a necessity. The quantitative study showed that work atmosphere was important in relation to the reasons for leaving a job, especially when it came to leaving a job due to stress, unequal treatment of employees and poor team relations. Men were more likely to leave their jobs due to a feeling of being undervalued or due to a lack of development and promotion opportunities than women.

Practical implications: Staff turnover is a natural phenomenon in companies, but it generates costs for training new staff and affects productivity and the working environment. Possible causes of staff turnover should be identified in order to avoid and reduce their impact on operations. The authors provided the author's definition of organisational climate and organisational atmosphere. There are few studies that deal directly with departures juxtaposed with the prevailing atmosphere. The results of this study can set a path for managers to retain employees.

Originality/value: This study provides a novel perspective by directly linking the work atmosphere to employee turnover in the manufacturing sector, a relationship that is often overlooked in existing literature. By combining qualitative and quantitative approaches, the research offers a multidimensional view of how specific aspects of the organizational climate

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influence employees' decisions to leave. The inclusion of gender as a variable in the analysis of hygiene factors and motivational elements adds depth to the findings and highlights differences in departure motivations. The study also addresses challenges related to the presence of Ukrainian citizens in the Polish labor market, offering insights into integration issues and their impact on organizational climate.

Keywords: *Manufacturing enterprises, turnover, organizational atmosphere, human resources management.*

JEL codes: *J21, J24, J53.*

Paper type: *Research article.*

1. Introduction

The problem of employee turnover is considered to be a significant obstacle for companies world-wide, which negatively affects strategic plans and the possibility of gaining a competitive advantage (Kanchana and Jayathilaka, 2023). Managers of manufacturing companies face the challenge of cover-ing the demand for employees and reducing staff turnover. Turnover occurs every time employees leave the company and need to be replaced (Bruce, 2005). This process is inevitable, if only because employees are retiring or leaving the labour market altogether.

At present, there is a significant decline in the labour force and thus an increase in job vacancies. In manufacturing companies, excessive turnover is associated with a decrease in production efficiency, which represents a cost for the company. Dettmann *et al.* (2019) observe that the manufacturing sector has been hit by a shortage of skilled workers.

According to Grienberger *et al.* (2014), skilled workers are those who have received a minimum of two years of vocational training. It is also becoming problematic that younger generations are reaching higher levels of education and do not want to work in production jobs (Korder *et al.,* 2023). The market for the worker means that employees are not afraid to make the decision to leave when they are dissatisfied with working conditions at their current location or find a better offer from another employer.

Cewińska (2018) points out that jobs are not only being abandoned by highly skilled workers, but al-so by formerly non-key workers, whose excessive turnover is now leading to an organisational slow-down as managers are unable to quickly fill

vacancies with new employees. High turnover leads to an overload of remaining employees.

Previous studies have primarily focused on the general determinants of employee turnover across various industries, but few have examined the impact of organisational atmosphere within specific industrial sectors, such as food processing. Given the strategic importance of workforce stability in manufacturing, a deeper understanding of the sector-specific factors influencing turnover is essential.

The aim of this article is to analyse how specific aspects of organisational atmosphere —including interpersonal relations, communication, and job security— affect employees' decisions to leave a company. The study focuses on the food processing sector in Poland, addressing a research gap regarding the unique characteristics of turnover in this industry and its implications for human resource management.

Additionally, the study investigates the role of hygiene factors such as remuneration, company policies, and working conditions, examining their relationship with turnover intention while also considering gender differences in their perception.

Although turnover intention has been extensively studied, this research contributes to the field by addressing a new contextual factor: the impact of the ongoing armed conflict in Ukraine. The influx of workers from a conflict-affected region has altered labor market dynamics, necessitating an updated analysis of the contemporary drivers of employee turnover, particularly in manufacturing. This study provides insights into how these changes influence workforce stability and organisational responses in a rapidly evolving labor market.

The research employs methodological triangulation, integrating both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The first section of the article presents a critical literature review, forming the basis for three research hypotheses. The methodological section provides a detailed description of the applied measurement tools and statistical methods.

The study is primarily qualitative, utilizing quantitative analysis to support and enhance the interpretation of qualitative data. The empirical findings include both qualitative insights and a statistical model illustrating relationships between key variables. The article concludes with a discussion situating the results within the broader literature, identifying study limitations, and suggesting directions for future research.

Given the increasing labor shortages in the manufacturing industry and the need for effective human capital management, the findings of this study hold significant practical and theoretical relevance. In particular, analysing the food processing

sector enhances our understanding of turnover mechanisms within the broader context of the European human resource management crisis in production industries.

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

The research into the reasons why employees leave manufacturing companies has been extensively explored, with numerous studies examining various factors influencing turnover intentions. According to Korder *et al.* (2023), demographic changes, particularly in manufacturing, significantly contribute to employee turnover. Their comprehensive review of nearly 300 studies revealed that employee-related factors (45%) and organisational-related factors (31%) were the primary determinants of turnover.

In contrast, Gamage (2014) found only a weak correlation between HRM practices, such as recruitment, training, and performance management, and employee turnover in Japanese manufacturing firms. Additionally, Ogedegbe (2014) highlighted the impact of HRM practices on organisational performance, but did not confirm a direct relationship between training and compensation systems and organisational success. From this foundation, the following research questions and hypotheses were developed:

Q1: Is there a correlation between the organisational atmosphere and the reasons for leaving a job?

Organisational atmosphere plays a crucial role in an employee's integration into the workplace. Schneider and Hall (1972) define organisational atmosphere as an individual's perception of the organizational environment. The quality of the climate influences the development of both the organisation and its members (Su et al., 2023), shaping employees' sense of belonging.

Mikuła (2000) posits that organisational atmosphere can be perceived positively (e.g., warmth, openness, support) or negatively (e.g., hostility, distrust, lack of support). A positive organizational atmosphere fosters alignment with company goals and promotes increased productivity and retention (Lo *et al.,* 2024).

For this study, organisational atmosphere is defined as the overall relationships and conditions affecting stakeholder well-being within the workplace. Employees with a strong sense of belonging tend to exhibit higher job satisfaction and greater loyalty to the company. Grover and Crooker (2010) found that a supportive organisational atmosphere strengthens relationships among employees and between employees and supervisors, leading to higher job satisfaction and lower turnover intentions. Similarly, Korder *et al.* (2023) confirmed that a positive work environment influences job satisfaction and turnover intentions. Gamage (2014) and Ingram (2016) further emphasized the significance of emotional support from supervisors, highlighting its role in reducing turnover.

In line with these findings, Vashdi et al. (2012) suggested that a positive organizational atmosphere enhances job satisfaction and productivity. Based on these observations, we hypothesise that:

H1: A positive organisational atmosphere will be negatively correlated with employee turnover intentions.
Q2: Are there gender differences in the reasons for leaving a job?

The topic of gender differences in turnover decisions has been widely explored in academic literature. Antonucci and Akiyama (1987) suggest that differential support from managers according to gender plays a significant role in shaping turnover intentions. Sicherman (1996) found that women tend to leave jobs for reasons unrelated to market conditions, such as family responsibilities or personal health issues, while men are more likely to leave for economic reasons, such as the pursuit of better wages.

Cewińska (2018) confirmed that men and women often have different rationales for leaving their jobs, with women frequently citing work-family balance as a primary reason for turnover. Recent studies support these findings. Spoon (2020) and Amitai *et al.* (2022) reveal that women often leave jobs due to the difficulty of reconciling work and family life.

Warren (2021) emphasises that achieving work-life balance is critical for retaining female employees. The importance of gender in work-life balance and employee retention is also underscored in research by Rodríguez-Sánchez et al. (2020) and Wood *et al.* (2020). Therefore, we hypothesise that:

H2: There are gender-based differences in the reasons for employee turnover, with women prioritising work-life balance and men prioritising economic factors.
Q3: Do hygiene factors influence the decision to leave a job?

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory highlights the importance of hygiene factors in preventing dissatisfaction but not directly motivating employees. Hygiene factors include salary, job security, work environment, and company policies. Studies consistently find that inadequate hygiene factors contribute to employees' turnover intentions (Agarwal, 2013; Lin and Wareewanich, 2023). Additionally, organisational justice, including fair pay, recognition, and opportunities for career advancement, is a significant determinant of turnover (Govaerts *et al.,* 2011; Ryu *et al.,* 2020).

Hidayat and Tannady (2023) found that stress and poor working conditions, which are linked to hygiene factors, significantly influence turnover intentions in service industries. Valet (2023) and Pekerşen and Tugay (2020) also stress the importance of competitive salaries and work conditions in reducing turnover rates. Based on these findings, we hypothesise that:

H3: *Hygiene factors, such as salary, job security, and work environment, will be negatively correlated with turnover intentions.*

Q4: *How does the influx of workers from Ukraine influence employee turnover in the food processing sector?*

The ongoing conflict in Ukraine has led to significant migration flows, particularly to neighbouring European countries such as Poland. Studies on migration dynamics suggest that migrant workers often fill roles that are unattractive to the local workforce, leading to changes in labour market dynamics. In the context of the food processing sector, which already faces labour shortages, Ukrainian workers may initially stabilise the workforce by filling vacancies, thus reducing turnover.

However, challenges in integrating migrant workers, such as cultural differences, language barriers, and perceived inequalities, can result in dissatisfaction and potentially higher turnover rates in the long term. Given these factors, we hypothesise that:

H4: *The influx of Ukrainian workers into the Polish food processing sector influences turnover rates, either stabilising the workforce through increased labour supply or contributing to higher turnover due to integration challenges.*

These hypotheses provide the foundation for further investigation into the complex dynamics of employee turnover in the food processing sector and offer valuable insights into organisational practices and migration patterns.

3. Research Methodology

The qualitative research component of the study was conducted as the first stage of the research. A case study approach was adopted, which is particularly effective for examining complex social phenomena within their real-life context. Furthermore, the research employed a phenomenological approach, a qualitative methodology that focuses on understanding and interpreting individuals' lived experiences and the meanings they attach to those experiences.

Following the qualitative phase, a quantitative survey was conducted to provide statistical evidence that would complement and substantiate the qualitative findings. The quantitative data allowed the researcher to measure the prevalence of specific turnover reasons within a larger sample of employees, thus offering a broader perspective on the phenomenon. The survey was distributed to a total of 108 respondents, although 89 completed questionnaires were deemed valid for further analysis.

The quantitative survey aimed to explore a variety of turnover reasons, which were drawn from the existing literature. A total of 14 distinct reasons for leaving employment were identified and presented to participants. These reasons

encompassed both organisational and personal factors, as well as subjective perceptions of the work environment. The inclusion of retirement as a reason for turnover was important, as studies such as Altahtooh (2018) argue that turnover is a process of replacing employees, regardless of whether the departure is voluntary or not.

Data collection took place over an extended period from January 2021 to June 2023, and the HR department of the company was responsible for distributing the survey and collecting the completed responses. Participation in the survey was voluntary, and all participants were informed of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses.

For the quantitative survey, the responses were coded and analysed using statistical methods to identify trends and relationships between turnover reasons and various demographic variables, such as gender, age, and tenure. The results of the quantitative analysis were then used to validate and complement the qualitative findings, thereby ensuring the robustness and credibility of the research.

Table 1. *A description of the variables in existing literature and codes*

Low salary	Kalinowski (2004) points out that the main motive for an employee leaving an organisation is unsatisfactory wages. Stuart-Kotze and Dunn (2011) report that, in addition to low wages, poorly formulated bonus systems are also a reason. In a study by Dolot (2018), financial issues were found to be the most significant factor for leaving a job.	LOW_S
Feeling undervalued	Lack of recognition from the supervisor results in an employee's feeling of low value and undervaluation, which in turn provokes the employee to change jobs (Branham 2010; Stuart-Kotze and Dunn 2011). A sense of unequal treatment as a determinant of leaving decisions is also indicated by Kalinowski (2004).	UND_V
Unequal treatment of employees	The attitude of superiors can influence whether an employee will want to leave the company (Todorov 2017). Employees who experience unfair treatment, especially in terms of pay, are more likely to leave (Sapeta 2009).	UNE_T
Negative team atmosphere	Sapeta (2009) indicates that relationships and conflicts with team members and the immediate supervisor are most often taken into account when deciding to leave a company. In a study by Szymankowska and Bartczak (2020), the majority of re-respondents reported that they were prompted to change jobs by a bad atmosphere, as well as adequate working conditions.	NEG_T
Bad relationship with immediate superior	Loss of trust in superiors due to manipulation or ethical dilemmas leads employees to leave the company (Branham 2010). The same relationship is indicated in his research by Kalinowski (2004).	BAD_R
Lack of	Unclear rules for promotion, appraisal or the lack of a	LCK_D

development and promotion opportunities	defined career path as well as favouritism towards only some employees and little opportunity for professional development are determinants of job abandonment (Branham 2010).	
Lack of communication and feedback from the supervisor	Lack of feedback influences a misunderstanding of the purpose of the action and also reduces trust in the organisation (Branham 2010).	LCK_C
Excessive workload	Exorbitant expectations and duty overload (Todorov 2017; Kalinowski 2004) and consequently the stress caused by work overload influence exit motives (Branham 2010).	EXC_W
Mismatch between the qualities and skills of the employee to the job	Inappropriate assignment of tasks to an employee, without taking into account the employee's qualities and skills, results in a reluctance to work and influences decisions to leave (Branham 2010).	MSK_Q
Lack of sense of purpose/sense of the work being done	Ignoring ideas and predispositions results in a reluctance to perform (Branham 2010)	LCK_P
Need for change	Willingness to change the type of job or entire career path (Antal Attrition Report 2015).	NED_C
Stress	Stress at work related to harmful conditions or overwork (Branham 2010).	STR_S
Personal situation/family considerations	Lack of work-life balance (Branham 2010), as well as personal reasons beyond the control of the employer (Antal Attrition Report 2015).	PER_S
Retirement	Employees leave their jobs because it is a natural career stage or because they want to acquire qualifications elsewhere (Kalinowski 2004). Rotation is a situation where we have to replace an employee with another, so its effects are also seen when staff retire (Altahtooh 2018).	RET_R

Source: *Own study.*

The research objective was reflected in the criterion for the selection of the research sample, which was purposive in nature. A purposive sampling technique was employed to focus on employees from a manufacturing company experiencing a high turnover rate.

The company in question had an employee turnover rate of 36% over a 2.5-year period, a rate that provided a clear indication of turnover-related issues within the organisation. This specific sample was selected in order to explore in-depth the factors contributing to high turnover and to examine the organisational atmosphere's potential role in influencing turnover intentions.

Due to the diversity in organisational practices, motivation systems, and turnover prevention strategies across different companies, it was deemed impractical to investigate a larger number of organisations. Each manufacturing company may have different management practices and turnover-related policies, which could introduce significant variability in results.

Consequently, the study focused on a single company, ensuring a more consistent and context-specific investigation. Moreover, the duration of data collection was limited to 2.5 years to avoid potential confounding factors, such as management changes or the introduction of new motivation programmes that could alter the turnover dynamics. The company under study operates within section manufacturing, division production of foodstuffs.

The operationalisation of the variables related to positive and negative work atmospheres was based on established frameworks, particularly those of Kahn (1993) and Mikuła (2000). According to Kahn's (1993) framework, the positive work atmosphere encompasses specific behaviours and actions by supervisors towards employees, which contribute to the creation of a supportive and encouraging environment (Table 2).

Additionally, the operationalisation of the organisational atmosphere was guided by Mikuła's (2000) classification, which views organisational climate as the perceptions and experiences of employees within a given organisation.

Table 2. *Positive and negative atmosphere variables*

Positive atmosphere POS_A	Negative atmosphere NEG_A
kindness	unkindness/lack of support
good communication	bad communication
no unhealthy competition	competition/gossip
	Stress

Source: *Own study.*

The operationalisation of the variables relating to satisfaction factors (Tab. 3) was related to Herzberg's (1968) theory and the study adopted hygiene factors such as satisfactory pay conditions, atmosphere at work, relationships with co-workers and supervisor. Based on these, we wanted to find out whether hygiene factors influence the decision to leave a job.

Table 3. *Hygiene factors and coding*

Satisfying pay conditions	SAT_P
Atmosphere at workplace	ATM_W
Relationships with colleagues	REL_C
Relationships with direct superior	REL_S

Source: *Own study.*

Pearson's χ^2 tests were used to examine the relationship between the two nominal variables. The test provides an estimate of the probability of error of the first kind made when rejecting the null hypothesis (H0). To determine how strongly the two qualitative variables are related, the Cramer effect size measure V was used. When using χ^2, the minimum sample size should be no less than 5 people. As this criterion was not met, continuity corrections were therefore applied to the test used (Kwasiborski and Sobol, 2011).

The information gathered from the interview with the management representative highlighted several crucial aspects of employee turnover, including the early signals of intent to leave, the company's responses to these signals, and the impact of turnover on the organisation. Below, we provide a detailed description of the results derived from the qualitative research.

Activities Before Leaving:

•   Do employees signal their intention to leave early?
"*Employees often signal their intent to leave well in advance, particularly those approaching retirement. Many older workers express a desire to continue working even after retirement, but this is frequently accompanied by a sense of dissatisfaction*".
•   What reasons are most often given by employees?
According to the interviewee, the most common reasons cited by employees planning to leave include low wages, a lack of additional benefits, and an unfavourable working environment. "*The work environment is challenging, with employees working in high temperatures around cookers, which contributes to negative well-being*".
•   Are older employees involved in training new ones?
The average length of service within the company is around 15 years, which indicates that employees are long-tenured, but there is resistance from older workers to engage with new employees. "*This reluctance to mentor or support newcomers creates a divide between new and existing employees, fostering an unsympathetic atmosphere*".
•   Does the company take steps to change the employee's decision to leave?
"*In the event that employees signal their intention to leave due to low pay, the company, being part of a larger corporate group, cannot offer raises independently. Decisions regarding salary adjustments are made at higher corporate levels. The only situation where the company attempts to retain an employee is when someone with higher qualifications or longer seniority expresses an intention to leave. In such cases, direct discussions are held between the employee and the company director. However, these discussions typically do not involve pay raises but instead focus on potential changes in position or transfers to less physically demanding departments*".

Follow-up After Departure:
•   Is the company taking steps to reduce staff turnover?
"*The HR department does not take active steps to mitigate turnover. According to the interviewee, the HR coordinator is primarily concerned with administrative tasks, such as payroll and billing, rather than with retention strategies or promoting employment within the company. There appears to be a lack of a strategic approach to reduce turnover, and the HR department does not seem motivated to address this issue proactively*".
•   Do employee departures trigger related company actions?
"*When employees leave, the company typically replaces them with new workers sourced from an employment agency. For operational roles such as production operators, the company manages turnover by implementing shift rotations. Without this measure, the risk of production stoppages becomes more pronounced, further emphasising the operational challenges posed by turnover*".

Turnover and Business Operations:

•   Does employee turnover affect the business?
"*Employee turnover has a significant impact on the business, particularly in terms of productivity. New employees, especially those who are inexperienced, do not perform as efficiently as seasoned workers*". The interviewee pointed out that the inexperience of new hires leads to frequent mistakes and problems, which ultimately affects the overall productivity of the company. An additional burden is the need to temporarily reassign other employees to fill gaps, which further strains the workforce and hampers the company's operational efficiency.
•   Is the company taking steps to minimise the adverse impact of turnover trends or to exploit their positive potential?
"*To address the negative effects of turnover, the company recently introduced a Skill Matrix to streamline the process of deploying employees quickly and efficiently in various positions*".
The Skill Matrix system is designed to identify employees' specific skills and knowledge, making it easier to assign them to tasks that match their competencies. The company's quality department has created ready-made templates to describe the required specialised skills and knowledge for each position. Managers are responsible for implementing the Skill Matrix tool. "*The company expects to evaluate the effectiveness of this initiative at the end of the year to determine its success in reducing the adverse impacts of turnover*".

Migrant Workers and Turnover:

In addition to the insights regarding core employees, the interview also touched upon the use of migrant workers, particularly those from Ukraine.
"*The company relies on external recruitment agencies to supply migrant workers, which means these workers are not considered part of the company's formal workforce structure. Instead, the recruitment agency is responsible for managing*

these employees, including their training, medical checks, and provision of workwear".

The company does not directly integrate these workers into its organisational structure, which led to a distinct lack of control over their turnover.

4. Research Results and Discussion

4.1 Qualitative Research

The turnover among Ukrainian workers was particularly high, with new workers being sourced almost daily. This constant influx of new personnel resulted in a lack of consistency in the workforce, which added another layer of complexity to the company's already high turnover rates. The situation was compounded by problematic behaviour from some of the workers.

The interviewee noted that some workers those who could not communicate in Polish were sent back to the agency. The language barrier was a significant issue, as the company required all employees to speak fluent Polish for compliance with Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) standards.

Another issue raised was the significant pay disparity between what the company paid the recruitment agency and what the workers received. The company paid an hourly rate of 45 PLN, but it was believed that the workers received the minimum wage, which could have contributed to dissatisfaction and, ultimately, turnover.

The management representative highlighted that these workers were seen as temporary, agency-supplied staff, and as such, their turnover did not directly affect the company's retention strategy. However, the high turnover among these workers posed operational challenges and further exacerbated the company's turnover issues, as the workers were frequently replaced by new, inexperienced individuals.

The qualitative research reveals several key insights into the causes and effects of employee turnover in the surveyed manufacturing company. One notable finding is the significant role that low wages and poor working conditions play in employees' decisions to leave.

Despite efforts to manage turnover through temporary staffing and shift rotations, the company does not seem to adopt a comprehensive strategy to address retention issues. The HR department's limited involvement in turnover management highlights a lack of proactive retention measures, which could explain the relatively high turnover rate observed in the company.

The introduction of the Skill Matrix system is a positive step towards minimising the operational impact of turnover by ensuring that employees are deployed effectively

based on their skills. However, the success of this tool remains uncertain and will require further evaluation.

Our research confirms that organisational atmosphere plays a crucial role in employee turnover intentions. Employees at the surveyed company reported a challenging work environment, characterised by high temperatures near cookers, resistance from older employees towards new hires, and a general lack of support.

These factors contribute to a negative organisational atmosphere, which aligns with Mikuła's (2000) argument that a hostile or unsupportive workplace fosters dissatisfaction and increases turnover.

The findings presents, that a positive organisational atmosphere is negatively correlated with turnover intentions. The reluctance of senior employees to engage with new hires creates a divisive culture, weakening employees' sense of belonging and increasing their likelihood of leaving. This aligns with research by Grover and Crooker (2010) and Korder *et al.* (2023), which highlights the importance of emotional support and workplace relationships in reducing turnover.

The surveyed company's lack of structured HR interventions to foster a supportive environment suggests a missed opportunity to improve retention. A more engaged HR department, focused on workplace relations, mentorship, and team cohesion, could help reduce turnover rates.

The qualitative findings did not explicitly indicate gender-based differences in turnover motivations. The interview data strongly support that poor hygiene factors contribute to turnover intentions. Employees frequently cited low wages and poor working conditions as reasons for leaving, aligning with research by Agarwal (2013)and Lin and Wareewanich (2023).

Furthermore, the interview confirmed that the company's hierarchical structure limits local management's ability to offer salary increases. As a result, retention efforts are minimal, with discussions focused on repositioning employees rather than addressing compensation concerns.

This finding is consistent with Valet (2023) and Pekerşen and Tugay (2020), who emphasize the importance of competitive salaries and fair treatment in reducing turnover. The lack of financial incentives, combined with high physical job demands, makes the company vulnerable to losing employees, particularly those seeking better pay and working conditions elsewhere.

The interview revealed that the company relies heavily on employment agencies. However, these workers are not integrated into the company's formal structure, and their employment is highly unstable. Ukrainian workers, in particular, were reported

to change frequently—sometimes on a daily basis—making workforce stability a persistent issue.

The findings suggest that while the influx of Ukrainian workers temporarily fills labour shortages, it does not stabilise the workforce in the long term. This contradicts the assumption that Ukrainian migration would reduce turnover by increasing the labour supply.

Instead, language barriers and integration challenges contribute to high attrition rates, as supported by previous research on migrant workforce dynamics (Rodríguez-Sánchez *et al.,* 2020). Additionally, the significant gap between the company's payment to the agency (45 PLN/hour) and the wages received by migrant workers likely fosters dissatisfaction and contributes to higher turnover.

This study confirms that multiple factors influence employee turnover in the surveyed manufacturing company. The findings align with broader research on turnover, reinforcing the idea that poor organisational atmosphere (Q1), hygiene factors (Q3), and unstable workforce dynamics (Q4) contribute to high attrition rates. While gender differences (Q2) were not explicitly confirmed.

The company's reliance on temporary agency workers exacerbates turnover issues rather than alleviating them. Migrant workers provide short-term labour solutions but do not contribute to workforce stability due to language barriers, poor working conditions, and wage disparities. This insight suggests that organisations in the food processing sector should adopt more proactive HR strategies, including structured integration programs for migrant workers, fair wage distribution, and improvements in workplace atmosphere to enhance retention.

4.2 Quantiative Research

Pearson's χ^2 statistical testing was conducted for the relationship between positive workplace atmosphere and reasons for leaving a job. The results of these analyses showed that there was a statistically significant relationship between a positive assessment of the work atmosphere and quitting due to feelings of being undervalued, unequal treatment of employees and excess stress.

Similarly, the relationship between negative workplace atmosphere and reasons for leaving a job was examined using Pearson's χ^2 testing. Based on the results presented in table 5, it can be concluded that there was a statistically significant relationship between a negative assessment of the work at-mosphere and quitting due to feelings of being undervalued, unequal treatment of employees and excess stress.

It can therefore be noted that the atmosphere at work was important in relation to the reasons for leaving, especially when it came to leaving due to stress and unequal treatment of employees.

Table 4. *Relationship between workplace atmosphere and reasons for leaving a job*

Variable	POS_A					NEG_A				
	No (*N*=33)	Yes (*N*=56)	χ^2	*p*	*V*	No (*N*=55)	Yes (*N*=34)	χ^2	*p*	*V*
	%	*%*				*%*	*%*			
LOW_S	15.2%	17.9%	0.11	0.742	0.03	16.4%	17.6%	0.03	0.875	0.02
UND_V	21.2%	5.4%	3.76	0.052	0.24	5.5%	20.6%	3.43	0.064	0.23
UNE_T	24.2%	5.4%	5.20	0.023*	0.28	3.6%	26.5%	8.12	0.004**	0.34
NEG_T	27.3%	3.6%	8.69	0.003**	0.35	3.6%	26.5%	8.12	0.004**	0.34
BAD_R	12.1%	1.8%	2.46	0.117	0.22	1.8%	11.8%	2.27	0.132	0.21
LCK_D	9.1%	3.6%	0.38	0.538	0.12	3.6%	8.8%	0.31	0.576	0.11
LCK_C	12.1%	5.4%	0.54	0.461	0.12	5.5%	11.8%	0.45	0.503	0.11
EXC_W	27.3%	21.4%	0.39	0.531	0.07	20.0%	29.4%	1.03	0.310	0.11
MSK_Q	0.0%	3.6%	0.13	0.721	0.12	3.6%	0.0%	0.15	0.698	0.12
LCK_P	3.0%	1.8%	0.00	1.000	0.04	1.8%	2.9%	0.00	1.000	0.04
NED_C	24.2%	41.1%	2.59	0.107	0.17	41.8%	23.5%	3.10	0.078	0.19
STR_S	48.5%	12.5%	14.03	***	0.40	10.9%	50.0%	16.75	***	0.43
PER_S	3.0%	17.9%	2.96	0.086	0.22	18.2%	2.9%	3.21	0.073	0.22
RET_R	12.1%	17.9%	0.17	0.677	0.08	18.2%	11.8%	0.26	0.611	0.09

Source: *Own calculations in R-studio.*

Qualitative study of unusual context for these results. In highlighted words that negative atmosphere often results from working conditions and older employees to new people, which leads to exclusion and frustration among new hires. Moreover, HR manager sent on lack of solution about access to exits, which prevented taking corrective action. Both studies that negative study in the workplace has an impact on employee turnover, which confirmed hypothesis H1.

The effect of gender on reasons for leaving was assessed. For this purpose, Pearson's χ^2 testing was performed and the results are presented in Table 6. The results of these analyses showed that the gender of the persons surveyed was statistically significantly associated with leaving due to a feeling of being undervalued. Men (21.9%) were more likely to leave their jobs due to feelings of being undervalued than women (5.3%). H2: There are gender differences in the reasons for leaving a job – was confirmed.

Table 5. *Relation between gender and reasons for leaving a job*

Sex	Female (*N*=57)	Male (*N*=32)	χ^2	*p*	*V*
	%	*%*			
LOW_S	14.0%	21.9%	0.90	0.343	0.10
UND_V	5.3%	21.9%	4.13	0.042*	0.25

UNE_T	12.3%	12.5%	0.00	1.000	0.00
NEG_T	12.3%	12.5%	0.00	1.000	0.00
BAD_R	3.5%	9.4%	0.45	0.501	0.12
LCK_D	1.8%	12.5%	2.67	0.102	0.22
LCK_C	7.0%	9.4%	0.00	1.000	0.04
EXC_W	24.6%	21.9%	0.08	0.775	0.03
MSK_Q	3.5%	0.0%	0.11	0.744	0.11
LCK_P	1.8%	3.1%	0.00	1.000	0.04
NED_C	33.3%	37.5%	0.16	0.692	0.04
STR_S	21.1%	34.4%	1.90	0.168	0.15
PER_S	15.8%	6.3%	0.95	0.329	0.14
RET_R	17.5%	12.5%	0.10	0.746	0.07

Source: *Own calculations in R-studio.*

Pearson's χ^2 testing was conducted for the relationship between hygiene factors such as sat-satisfactory pay conditions, work atmosphere, relationship with colleagues and supervisor and reasons for quitting. Based on these results presented in Table 7, it can be seen that there was a relationship between work atmosphere and quitting due to the desire for change.

On the borderline of statistical tendency is the result for the relationship with co-workers and quitting due to excessive expectations. No statistically significant relationships between hygiene factors and reasons for leaving a job emerged, $p > 0.05$. H3: Hygiene factors are related to the decision to leave a job – partly confirmed.

Table 6. *Relationship between hygiene factors and reasons for leaving work*

	SAT_P			ATM_W			REL_C			REL_S		
	χ^2	p	V	χ^2	p	V	χ^2	p	V	χ^2	p	V
LOW_S	0.06	0.812	0.10	0.00	1.000	0.02	0.61	0.435	0.08	0.00	1.000	0.05
UND_V	0.00	1.000	0.08	0.00	1.000	0.05	0.07	0.798	0.07	0.30	0.586	0.12
UNE_T	0.00	0.993	0.08	0.01	0.922	0.06	0.44	0.505	0.11	0.43	0.513	0.13
NEG_T	0.00	0.993	0.08	0.00	1.000	0.04	0.44	0.505	0.11	0.00	1.000	0.01
BAD_R	0.00	1.000	0.05	0.09	0.764	0.10	0.00	1.000	0.04	0.00	0.993	0.08
LCK_D	0.00	1.000	0.05	0.00	1.000	0.04	0.00	1.000	0.04	0.00	1.000	0.08
LCK_C	0.12	0.725	0.14	0.34	0.560	0.12	0.00	1.000	0.02	0.07	0.786	0.10
EXC_W	0.29	0.593	0.12	1.23	0.268	0.15	2.79	0.095	0.21	1.81	0.179	0.19
MSK_Q	0.00	1.000	0.03	0.00	1.000	0.06	0.00	1.000	0.06	0.00	1.000	0.05
LCK_P	0.00	1.000	0.03	0.00	1.000	0.06	0.04	0.842	0.10	0.00	1.000	0.05
NED_C	0.01	0.909	0.07	19.29	0.000	0.50	1.73	0.188	0.16	0.07	0.788	0.07
STR_S	0.39	0.533	0.13	1.63	0.202	0.17	0.42	0.519	0.07	0.44	0.507	0.11

| PER_S | 0.00 | 0.993 | 0.08 | 0.00 | 1.000 | 0.04 | 1.14 | 0.286 | 0.11 | 0.00 | 1.000 | 0.01 |
| RET_R | 0.03 | 0.856 | 0.09 | 0.20 | 0.653 | 0.09 | 1.00 | 0.317 | 0.11 | 1.10 | 0.295 | 0.16 |

Source: *Own calculations in R-studio.*

However, the qualitative study provided more detailed data on the impact of hygiene factors on employees' decisions. The interviews highlighted that remuneration in itself was rarely a direct reason for leaving, but its unfair structure in relation to effort and scope of duties caused frustration and contributed to general dissatisfaction.

In turn, relationships with colleagues and superiors were indicated as an important element, especially in the context of lack of support for new employees and difficulties in team integration. On this basis, hypothesis H3 was partially confirmed – although the quantitative results did not show strong relationships, the qualitative data suggest that hygiene factors may have a more indirect impact on turnover, e.g. through their interaction with the working atmosphere.

5. Conclusions, Proposals, Recommendations

The article presents and proves the importance of the problem of employee turnover, as well as its global nature. The qualitative research found that difficult working conditions and reluctance to induct new employees translates into a negative working atmosphere. The company is usually not informed in advance of the intentions to leave the team, which negatively affects production efficiency and may result in the need for crisis interventions.

On the other hand, this knowledge would most likely not translate into action due to the lack of decision-making capacity of managers and HR. The answer within the organisation's capacity is the Skill Matrix, which is currently in the implementation phase and is expected to help prevent the negative effects of turnover.

At the same time, the problem posed by the implementation of new employees has been highlighted. It can therefore be concluded that the reduction of staff turnover should receive more attention from decision-makers at the highest levels, and the transfer of more motivation tools to lower levels of management seems to be becoming not only a good solution, but a necessity.

Conducting an interview with a staff manager allowed an analysis of the problems that could not be done with a quantitative survey alone. The interview yielded data on the detailed situations of specific employees. Valuable from the point of view of the study are examples of specific departures, information on whether there were individual facilities for people leaving, whether they had previously reported any problems, whether there were attempts to solve them, whether the departures are sudden, whether there are any factors that foreshadow them. The qualitative study also gave rise to a quantitative survey.

The first two hypotheses were positively verified, while for the third hypothesis only the relationship between the work atmosphere and resignation due to the desire for change was found. From the first hypothesis, particular emphasis was placed on inequalities and stress, and from the second hypothesis, men were more likely to quite due to feeling undervalued.

The study therefore contributes to the improvement potential of the company under study. The study is deeply embedded in the industry, which increases the cognitive value for a single case. There are many foreign studies verifying the relationship of organisational climate and atmosphere with productivity or reasons for quitting (Kuenzi and Schminke 2009; Vashdi *et al.,* 2012; Akula and Talluri 2013; Nurtati *et al.,* 2020), which indicates the internationality of the problem, Polish studies, especially with cognitive-scientific value for a specific industry, are lacking. The results of the study are therefore relevant for Polish science and entrepreneurs.

Key conclusions from the qualitative study include:

1.   Difficulties in introducing new employees – reluctance to share knowledge and lack of support from experienced employees isolate new employees, which increases their tendency to leave.
2.   Lack of response from management – even when employees reported problems, the organization did not take action, which suggests the need to increase the powers of middle managers.

Unpredictability of departures – the organization is usually not informed in advance about employees' intentions, which makes it difficult to plan preventive actions.
Another contribution of the qualitative study was a better understanding of the specifics of the sector and barriers to managing turnover. The need for more flexible employment policies and increased autonomy of middle managers in motivating and retaining employees was indicated.

Future studies should broaden the scope of investigation to include the impact of geopolitical instability—particularly the war in Ukraine—and other political changes across Eastern Bloc countries on employee turnover and retention. As conflicts and rapid political shifts reshape labour markets in these regions, employers face an increased responsibility to adapt their human resource strategies to mitigate the adverse effects of such instability.

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