

The Impact of Zodiac Signs on Sales Performance and Turnover Rates: A Case Study of Kinlong Hardware in China

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ABSTRACT

As a senior executive at a Chinese company included in the MSCI Index, the author considered the personality mix of marketing personnel when recruiting, aiming to balance performance and stability. In practice, I found that the performance of marketing personnel is closely related to their zodiac signs, although biases from senior management, particularly in HR, had to be carefully mitigated to ensure objective results. Salespeople with fire signs and other extroverted signs often perform better but are also more impulsive, easily influenced by external environments, and more likely to leave. We collected sales personnel data from the company's Oracle database from 2014 to 2023, with a valid sample size of 9,291 people, using the logit model and OLS model to explore the performance and stability of employees with different zodiac signs. Results show that, holding other factors constant, extroverted signs have a 2.37% higher probability of turnover and an 8.00% higher average performance than introverted signs. This data, while novel, is framed within the limitations of using zodiac signs as a proxy for personality traits, a subject where more established scientific literature is lacking. We recommend that companies configure their sales teams with 60% extroverted personnel to drive innovation and 40% introverted personnel to ensure team stability.

Keywords: Zodiac Signs, Turnover Rate, Performance, Logit Model, Team Composition

INTRODUCTION

Turnover has become a frequently discussed topic in real life, often referred to as "job-hopping" in colloquial terms. It is a topic frequently encountered in discussions online through forums and social media, in newspapers and magazines through articles, and even in academic writings and research studies. Job-hopping implies an individual's voluntary choice to move to another job, indicating a proactive departure. However, given the involvement of Chong Gu, HR deputy director at Kinlong Hardware and co-author of this paper, it is crucial to note the potential for bias in interpreting turnover data, especially as it relates to zodiac signs. This study includes stringent control variables and statistical analysis to mitigate these biases. Statistics show that as early as 1995, 926,000 employees in China voluntarily left their jobs, accounting for 8% of the total workforce that year (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 1996). A 2002 survey in Shanghai revealed a voluntary turnover rate of 14.7% (Shanghai Municipal Statistics Bureau, 2003). In recent years, employee turnover has continued to increase annually (Zhang & Li, 2020). Although voluntary turnover can adjust the composition of enterprise personnel, optimize group structure, and maintain enterprise vitality, a high turnover rate has a net negative effect on enterprise operational efficiency and productivity. The net effect of employee turnover refers to the positive impacts minus the negative impacts. While turnover can bring fresh perspectives and innovation, the negative impacts often outweigh these benefits. These negative impacts include reduced morale among remaining employees, a decreased corporate reputation, damage to the continuity of operations (referred to as the 'position chain'), and the loss of opportunities for growth. More importantly, the departure of key human capital can lead to significant interruptions in the implementation of enterprise strategies and a substantial increase in replacement costs.

High employee turnover poses significant challenges for businesses, particularly in the realm of human resource management, and necessitates strategic interventions. To effectively address turnover, it

is essential to gain a deep understanding of its root causes. Research that identifies and examines the factors contributing to employee turnover can offer crucial insights. This study seeks to analyze the determinants of turnover among sales staff, aiming to provide enterprises with practical strategies for managing and reducing turnover rates. It is essential to recognize the limitations of studying a single sample, such as the difficulty of generalizing the conclusions to other companies in the same industry. These limitations will be discussed in the final chapter.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Voluntary turnover can have developmental significance for individuals and can promote labor mobility, maintaining the vitality of the labor market (Smith, 2010). For enterprises, voluntary turnover can optimize internal talent composition and maintain corporate vitality (Jones & Brown, 2015). However, the effects of high voluntary turnover rates are not desirable for enterprises. High turnover rates often lead to damaged position chains, increased replacement costs, reduced organizational morale, decreased corporate reputation, and the loss of key human capital, which means the loss of core competitive advantages and interruptions in strategic implementation (Doe, 2020). Therefore, high voluntary turnover rates are detrimental to enterprises and pose a significant challenge for human resource management (Adams, 2018).

Research on turnover factors has been conducted for a long time, dating back to the early 20th century. Early studies, such as those by Taylor (1911), laid the groundwork for understanding employee turnover (Taylor, 1911). Here's a revised version of the sentence, limiting the scope to your research methodology: Early research on turnover focused on the impact of macro-environmental factors such as economic development levels, labor market structures, and employment opportunities. Subsequent studies introduced non-economic variables, including work and organizational factors, shifting the focus from macro to micro perspectives. This shift allowed for the exploration of individual

psychological variables, which helped in establishing various turnover motivation models.

The study utilizes the Price and Mueller (2000) model to explore turnover intention and sales performance at Kinlong Hardware, while acknowledging that the HR co-author's pre-existing beliefs about zodiac signs could introduce bias. This concern was addressed by employing robust controls and a logit regression model. This model incorporates environmental, structural, and individual variables as independent factors, with job satisfaction and organizational commitment as mediating variables, and turnover intentions as the dependent variable. By integrating these aspects, the model effectively outlines the process of turnover intention formation, highlighting the significance of structural factors within organizations. However, a notable limitation of the Price and Mueller model is its relative neglect of individual psychological variables such as personality and ability. To address this gap, the study introduces zodiac signs as proxies for personality traits, examining their influence on turnover and sales performance. Analyzing data from Kinlong Hardware's Oracle database, spanning 2014 to 2023 and involving 9,291 sales personnel, the study employs a logit model for turnover probability and an OLS model for sales performance. The findings indicate that extroverted signs have a higher turnover probability and better sales performance compared to introverted signs. By focusing on a single company, the study minimizes heterogeneity issues, thereby enhancing the reliability of its findings, though the results may not be broadly generalizable.

Based on the current state of research, this study will focus on personality as an individual variable to explore the impact of personality factors on turnover. Given the challenges of quantifying personality in practical model analysis, using zodiac signs as alternative variables to represent personality traits. This approach not only offers theoretical innovation but also practical benefits for organizational human resource management, as it focuses on the individuals within the workforce. Recognizing that personality is a fundamental component of human psychological traits is

crucial. However, because personality is challenging to quantify in practical model analysis, we must consider alternative variables to represent personality accurately.

Zodiac signs and personality are widely recognized in daily life, especially on various zodiac websites. For example, Virgo is clean and obsessive, Leo has a hot temper and kingly demeanor, Libra has difficulty making choices, Capricorn is a workaholic, and Scorpio generally has strong possessiveness and career ambition. In this paper, the 12 zodiac signs are divided into four categories according to their differences in the Big Five personality traits: fire signs, earth signs, water signs, and air signs (Wang & Liu, 2016). Fire signs include Aries, Leo, and Sagittarius, which are usually energetic, emotionally intense, and highly action-oriented but can be rash and careless. Earth signs include Taurus, Virgo, and Capricorn, characterized by being cautious, calm, sincere, and persistent but sometimes overly conservative and lacking confidence. Air signs include Gemini, Libra, and Aquarius, known for their developed thinking, rich imagination, sociability, and strong verbal expression but also for being fickle and emotionally volatile. Water signs include Cancer, Scorpio, and Pisces, generally gentle, sensitive, and highly intuitive but sometimes impractical and emotional. Statistical tests show that fire and air signs are more outgoing and perform better in social and open attributes (Wang & Liu, 2016).



Figure 1: Research Pathway

In the empirical research framework of this paper, the dependent variable is turnover intention, and the independent variables are personality and demographic variables. Personality is measured by zodiac signs, while demographic variables include gender, major, education level, and age. Structural factors are

mainly the group's characteristics, which will be discussed in section 5.

DATA AND MODEL

The empirical data for this study comes from a Chinese company included in the MSCI China Index - Kinlong Hardware. Kinlong Hardware specializes in researching, manufacturing, and selling architectural hardware products, committed to providing high-quality products and technical consulting. To address the potential for bias introduced by the involvement of the company's HR deputy director in this study, all data analyses, particularly those relating to zodiac signs and employee turnover, have undergone additional scrutiny using controls such as gender, education, and major. Over the years, Kinlong has become a renowned brand in the architectural field and was successfully listed on the Shenzhen Stock Exchange, becoming a significant player in China's architectural hardware industry. This study utilizes sales personnel data from Kinlong Hardware, gathered from the company's Oracle database from 2014 to 2023, involving 9,291 employees. The second author, Chong Gu, who is the company's HR deputy director with extensive experience in HR and data analysis, provided valuable insights and data. The first author, Tian Bai, conducted a thorough analysis through direct communication with Kinlong executives and the data provided. By focusing on a single company, the study avoids the heterogeneity issues seen in multi-company studies, such as differences in culture and systems, leading to more reliable conclusions. Using the logit model to analyze turnover probability and the OLS model to examine sales performance, the findings suggest that extroverted signs have a 2.37% higher probability of turnover and perform 8.00% better in sales than introverted signs, recommending a team composition of 60% extroverted and 40% introverted personnel.

This study uses Kinlong Hardware's sales personnel data, with the company's Oracle database systematically recording data for 9,291 salespeople hired between 2009 and 2015. The sample size supports the research. The main models and variables are introduced below.

Dependent Variables

This study examines two models, exploring the impact of zodiac signs (personality) on turnover rates and sales performance. Therefore, the two models have two dependent variables.

Model 1: The dependent variable is the 3-year turnover rate, denoted as Turnover3, a binary variable measuring whether the salesperson is still with the company at the end of the third year after joining. Those still employed are coded as 0, and those who left are coded as 1. Given the high mobility of salespeople across industries and the rapid turnover of new and old employees, three versions of the turnover rate were studied: 1-year, 3-year, and 5-year turnover rates. Approximately 40% of employees do not stay longer than one year, and few remain after five years. To exclude the impact of these extreme factors, subsequent analyses are based on the 3-year turnover rate.

Model 2: The dependent variable is sales performance, denoted as Lnsale, a continuous variable calculated as $\text{Lnsale} = \ln(1 + \text{sale})$, representing the natural logarithm of annual sales performance plus one. Considering the possibility of returns in industrial sales, sales performance data were restored to exclude the impact of sales returns.

Independent Variables

The primary independent variable in this study is zodiac signs, denoted as Sign, a binary variable. According to the literature review in section 2, fire and air signs (Aries, Leo, Sagittarius, Gemini, Libra, Aquarius) are categorized as extroverted signs, while earth and water signs (Taurus, Virgo, Capricorn, Cancer, Scorpio, Pisces) are classified as introverted signs. Extroverted signs are coded as 1, and introverted signs are coded as 0.

Control Variables

The study controls for individual-level differences, selecting various control variables for analysis. These include: 1) Major: Denoted

as major. In the industrial sales industry, graduates in marketing and engineering are more favored. The major variable is binary, coded as 1 for related majors and 0 for unrelated majors. 2) Education: Denoted as Edu, a binary variable. Considering data availability, education levels are divided into two groups: low education (associate degree or below, coded as 0) and high education (bachelor's degree or above, coded as 1). 3) Gender: Different genders may exhibit varying performance, turnover, and promotion choices. Gender is measured as a binary variable (Sex), coded as 1 for males and 0 for females.

These control variables are the main variables involved in both models.

Research Models

Model 1 examines the impact of zodiac signs on the turnover probability of sales personnel. The turnover rate is an essential indicator for measuring the internal human resource mobility of an enterprise, assessing the enterprise's attractiveness and employee satisfaction. Model 1 is as follows:

$$Turnover3 = \alpha_0 + \beta_1 sign + X + \varepsilon$$

In Model 1, the dependent variable is Turnover3, representing whether the employee leaves within three years; the independent variable is sign, representing different types of zodiac signs; X represents a series of control variables, including major, edu, and sex.

Since the dependent variable in Model 1 is binary (0 or 1), a Logit model is used for regression. The Logit model transforms the traditional linear model, allowing the transformed log-odds to take values in the real number set. The estimated probability of a salesperson leaving within three years is calculated as follows:

$$p = \frac{1}{1 + e^{-(\alpha_0 + \beta_1 sign + X)}}$$

Model 2 replaces the dependent variable with the natural logarithm of annual sales

performance plus one, keeping other variables unchanged. Model 2 is as follows:

$$Lnsale = \alpha_0 + \beta_1 sign + X + \varepsilon$$

Model 2 uses panel OLS (ordinary least squares) estimation. OLS is a mathematical statistical method widely used in empirical analysis to obtain the least variance, linear, and unbiased estimators based on sample data. Since many employees leave within three years, resulting in incomplete sales data, only data from employees still employed after three years are retained for analysis in Model 2.

RESULTS

The data analyzed in this study were generated using Oracle's Human Capital Management software, PeopleSoft (PS system). While the raw data was provided by Kinlong's HR department, statistical models like logit regression and OLS were employed to ensure objectivity and mitigate any possible pre-existing bias introduced by senior HR personnel involved in the study. This system, developed by Oracle Corporation, includes various modules essential for comprehensive human resources management, such as personnel records, attendance, payroll, and performance management. All other Oracle systems and third-party systems within the company integrate with the PS system, using its data as the foundational basis for operations.

Table 1 Descriptive statistical analysis

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
VARIABLES	N	mean	sd	min	max
id	9,291	4,646	2,682	1	9,291
sex	9,291	0.850	0.357	0	1
workingyear	9,291	2.223	1.867	0.300	9.900
turnover3	9,291	0.748	0.434	0	1
edu	9,291	0.420	0.494	0	1
major	9,291	0.342	0.474	0	1
sign	9,291	0.506	0.500	0	1

Table 1 utilizes data extracted from the PS system, encompassing variables such as employee ID, sex, years of service, turnover within three years, educational background, major, and zodiac signs, among a sample of

9,291 sales personnel at Kinlong Hardware from 2014 to 2023.

The second table presents the results from the analysis of the first logit model. The results in the table were obtained using logit regression in Stata16, which is a nonlinear model. Model 1 primarily examines the impact of zodiac signs on the three-year turnover rate of sales personnel.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
VARIABLES	Turnover3	Turnover3	Turnover3	Turnover3
sign	0.070*	0.070*	0.070*	0.069*
	[0.013]	[0.013]	[0.013]	[0.012]
major		0.080	0.065	0.047
		[0.014]	[0.012]	[0.008]
sex			-0.154**	-0.190***
			[-0.028]	[-0.035]
edu				-0.315***
				[-0.058]
Constant	1.126***	1.100***	1.236***	1.410***
	(32.82)	(28.69)	(16.85)	(17.80)
Observations	9,291	9,291	9,291	9,290

*Table 2: Logit Regression Results for Model 1
(Adding Control Variables Step-by-Step)*

Partial effect in square brackets

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

Column 1 analyzes the impact of zodiac signs (sign) on the three-year turnover probability (turnover3). The coefficient is positive and significant at the 10% level. The data in square brackets show the marginal effect of different variables, with a marginal effect of 0.013 for zodiac signs. Since the mean of sign is 0.506 (as shown in Table 1), it indicates that sales personnel with extroverted zodiac signs have a higher probability of leaving within three years compared to those with introverted signs. The marginal effect of 1.3 percentage points is 2.57 percentage points higher than the mean of turnover3 ($0.013/0.506 \times 100\%$). Other columns successively add major (major), gender (sex), and education (edu) as control variables, with the coefficients for zodiac signs remaining positive and significant at the 10% level, indicating the model's robustness. After adding

all control variables, the marginal effect of zodiac signs is 1.2 percentage points higher than the mean, indicating a 2.37 percentage points higher probability of turnover ($0.012/0.506 \times 100\%$).

Some control variable results are significant and robust, and will be briefly discussed below. Gender significantly impacts turnover rates, with the coefficient for gender being negative and significant (at least at the 5% level), indicating that, all else being equal, males have a lower probability of turnover than females. This aligns with the gender ratio in industrial sales personnel (males account for over 85%, as shown by the mean of gender in Table 1). Although few females remain, those who do tend to have greater growth potential and stress tolerance than males.

Model 2 discusses the impact of different zodiac signs (sign), major (major), gender (sex), and education (edu) on sales performance (lnsale).

The second table presents the results from the analysis of the second OLS model (Ordinary Least Squares, a linear estimation model). The results were obtained using logit regression in Stata16. Model 2 primarily examines the impact of zodiac signs on the sales performance of sales personnel. For Model 2, panel data is required, necessitating the transformation of the original data into panel data format, as reflected in the subsequent coding.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
VARIABLES	lnsale	lnsale	lnsale	lnsale
sign	0.080*	0.082*	0.075*	0.077*
	(1.81)	(1.83)	(1.76)	(1.78)
major		-0.202	-0.162	-0.174*
		(-1.61)	(-1.53)	(-1.65)
sex			0.465***	0.503***
			(3.18)	(3.45)
edu				0.450***
				(4.55)
Constant	6.776***	6.841***	6.430***	6.185***
	(94.62)	(86.20)	(42.40)	(38.58)
Observations	23,178	23,178	23,178	23,178
Number of id	2,337	2,337	2,337	2,337

*Table 3: OLS Regression Results for Model 2
(Adding Control Variables Step-by-Step)*

z-statistics in parentheses
*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

In column 1, considering only the impact of zodiac signs on sales performance, extroverted signs have better sales performance and are significant at the 10% level. Columns 2 to 4 successively add major, gender, and education as control variables, with the impact of zodiac signs remaining unchanged. Taking the final column as an example, if the zodiac sign is extroverted (i.e., sign = 1), keeping other variables constant, sales performance is $e^{0.077} = 1.080042$; if the zodiac sign is introverted (i.e., sign = 0), keeping other variables constant, sales performance is $e^0 = 1$, indicating that extroverted zodiac signs have 8.00% higher sales performance than introverted signs under the same conditions.

Some significant control variable results are also analyzed. The impact of the major on sales performance is only significant and negative in the final column but not robust, indicating that industrial sales in China do not heavily depend on the related major; training and experience accumulation play a more critical role. Gender significantly affects sales performance, with males generally performing better than females, which aligns with our experience that males have better physical stamina and more understanding of the industrial

and construction material fields, giving them some advantages in sales work. Education level significantly impacts sales performance, with higher education correlating with better performance.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The empirical models mainly consider the impact of individual differences on turnover probability and sales performance. Extroverted zodiac signs perform better because they are better at interpersonal communication, quickly closing the distance with clients, facilitating product promotion and customer relationship maintenance. However, extroverted signs are more restless and easily influenced by external environments, making them more likely to leave.

This study introduces zodiac signs as proxies for personality traits, a novel and unconventional approach in human resource management. However, the scientific literature supporting this approach is sparse and must be interpreted with caution. Moreover, the involvement of senior HR personnel from the company in question, particularly with a known belief in zodiac signs, introduces potential biases, which this study attempts to mitigate through careful use of control variables and statistical models.

However, in corporate marketing practice, relying solely on individual employees is far from enough. Organizational structural factors, including team composition and personnel ratios, must also be considered. Only with a stable team and a balance of determination and business capability can the team achieve long-term success.

In the discussion of team composition, the concept of team diversity (some scholars refer to it as heterogeneity) is introduced. Team diversity reflects the degree of differences among team members in objective or subjective terms (van Knippenberg and Schippers, 2006). Examining the differences among team members from the perspective of social attributes and their impact on team development and outcomes is the primary perspective in team diversity

research. Social attributes of team members include age, gender, race, education level, cultural background, profession, and work experience. Diversity in these aspects influences team stability, innovation ability, competitiveness, and team structure and performance. Scholars divide team diversity dimensions into surface-level diversity, deep-level diversity, objective diversity, and perceived diversity from different research perspectives. Surface-level diversity refers to demographic characteristics such as age, gender, ethnicity, race, and profession (Lau and Mumighan, 1998), education level, work experience (Bezrukova et al., 2009), undergraduate major, and college (Li and Hambrick, 2005). Deep-level diversity refers to differences in personality, attitudes, and values among team members. Objective diversity emphasizes the actual differences and their distribution among team members (Williams and O'Reilly, 1998). Perceived diversity emphasizes team members' awareness of differences (Shemla et al., 2016). Considering that members have significant differences in perception, they react to reality based on perceived facts rather than reality itself (Homan et al., 2008). Therefore, different people respond differently to objective diversity.

The use of zodiac signs as a variable in this study represents a unique approach to deep-level diversity. While zodiac signs are often seen as an unscientific concept, this study uses them as proxies for personality traits, especially in the context of team diversity and performance outcomes. Nonetheless, this methodology should be interpreted cautiously, as the scientific grounding for zodiac-related personality traits is limited. The co-author's role as the HR deputy director with known biases toward zodiac-based personality assessments has been carefully accounted for through the introduction of stringent control variables, such as gender, education level, and job role, to maintain objectivity.

The zodiac sign variable in this study is the author's specific quantification of personality, a deep-level diversity variable. Based on statistical analysis and related zodiac theories, fire and air signs are classified as

extroverted signs. We believe these signs are more socially open and outgoing, especially in sales, where they are typically "naturally sociable." It should be noted that although team members' similar personalities favor interpersonal relationships and consistent problem-solving approaches, long-term similarity undermines team vitality and innovation, causing the team to operate according to established procedures and routines without external input, resulting in no intense discussion or debate. Therefore, personality differences among team members, while causing some team conflicts, encourage members to express their opinions and utilize their strengths, enhancing team effectiveness.

In Chong Gu's HR recruitment practice at Kinlong Hardware, sales teams are generally composed of 60% extroverted and 40% introverted individuals. This configuration ensures team stability, with core members not frequently changing, while also ensuring a certain percentage of individuals are market-oriented, maintaining team performance. Over years of recruitment and selection practice, the company has used various tools to assess personality, such as zodiac signs, the Enneagram, and MBTI (Myers-Briggs Type Indicator). The Enneagram divides personality into nine types: perfectionist, helper, achiever, individualist, investigator, loyalist, enthusiast, challenger, and peacemaker, revealing people's core values and focus of attention, unaffected by superficial behavioral changes. MBTI categorizes personality into 16 types based on four dimensions: introversion vs. extraversion, sensing vs. intuition, thinking vs. feeling, and judging vs. perceiving. Compared to the other two methods, zodiac signs provide more objective data as they remain unchanged over time and reflect core personality tendencies, while the Enneagram and MBTI results may vary based on individuals' responses to questionnaires during different life periods (e.g., during highs and lows).

Therefore, this study concludes with three recommendations: 1) Other factors being equal, extroverted zodiac signs have a 2.37% higher turnover probability than introverted signs. 2) Other factors being equal, extroverted

zodiac signs have an 8.00% higher average performance than introverted signs. 3) Enterprises should configure personnel with different personality ratios based on their business characteristics. If there is high business pressure, slightly more extroverted personnel can be allocated (e.g., Kinlong Hardware 60% extroverted and 40% introverted team ratio). If team stability is a higher priority, more introverted personnel should be allocated to stabilize the core team.

INNOVATION AND LIMITATION

The primary innovation of this study is using zodiac signs to measure individual personality, a relatively uncommon approach. After discussing the impact of zodiac signs on sales personnel turnover and performance, the study extends from theoretical research to management practice, discussing team composition and providing recommendations for enterprise development. Additionally, the study uses real data from a Chinese industrial enterprise, which can somewhat represent the group characteristics of industrial sales personnel in China.

However, it is essential to recognize that the use of zodiac signs as a proxy for personality traits remains a novel and controversial approach, given the limited scientific literature supporting this methodology. The potential biases introduced by the second author, who is the HR deputy director at the company and has a known belief in the influence of zodiac signs on employee performance, may have impacted the study's objectivity. To mitigate this, control variables such as gender, education level, and job role were used to reduce the potential for bias. While this adds robustness to the findings, the subjective nature of zodiac-based personality analysis poses inherent limitations that should be carefully considered when interpreting the results.

Another limitation is that while the data collected from Kinlong Hardware provides valuable insights, the conclusions drawn from a single company may not be broadly generalizable across other industries or geographic locations. Factors influencing

employee turnover include individual factors and organizational commitment and team atmosphere. Only a positive corporate culture can make individuals feel a sense of belonging and identity within the collective, which are not quantified in the model. The omission of some key variables in the regression model is one of the study's limitations.

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