

REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON FACTORS INFLUENCING ATTRITION AND RETENTION

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ABSTRACT

Many researchers have studied the phenomena of attrition & retention, its trends in past. Some researchers have also examined the factors influencing the employees' mobility. This paper is a part of a larger study conducted to study the attrition & retention in shipping industries of Kutch, Gujarat.

Objective of the researchers is to grasp better understanding of organization commitment and turnover intentions with respect to attrition & retention and to identify various domains of organization, human resource practices and other like employee characteristic and environmental factors, which may have a positive or negative impact on employees' intention to stay with an organization.

KEYWORDS

Employee Attrition, Employee Retention, Organizational Commitment, Turnover Intentions, Environmental Factors, Employees Intention etc.

INTRODUCTION

Enormous amount of literature on the causes of voluntary employee attrition and retention can be found from the time dated back to the 1950s. Researchers have developed multivariate models, which associated with a number of factors contributing to attrition & retention, and many empirically testing of these models, have been pursued to predict why individuals stay or leave organizations.

Employee attrition & retention is manifestation of employee movement in an organization, which is deliberated by researcher in HR. They are two sides of same coin. Employee attrition & retention may be result of the negative or positive influence of the various factors (Zhang, 2005). There is a sea change in the needs and wants of the employees. Their expectation can be expressed as their wish to be employed as a place to work to that of being employed at a Great place to work. The organizations that are able to cope up with these typological alterations of employee profile will be able to improve employee commitment, reduce attrition and hence will be able to retain their employees.

An organizations' human capital core is comprised of the talented employees, making it significant to highlight their turnover behaviour influence on an organization's competitive advantage (Lee and Steven, 1997; Shaw, 1999; HoukesInge, 2001). The academicians, researchers and practitioners have been continuously focusing on the facts that the increased attrition not only hampers the productivity of the organization, but also increases the cost of recruiting, training the new entrants. It also creates a negative image with reference to employer branding in the minds of the prospective employees about the kind of organization. Hence, if the issue of attrition and retention not handled effectively, it not only sets the organization for talent crunch but will also reduce the pool of talented prospective employees, which may give its competitors an added advantage.

Research done in the area of employee attrition and retention has discussed domains like education (Sharma and Jyoti, 2008), private public employment, financial institutes, banking (Shikha, 2010), ITES industry (Hoonakke et al. 2004), oil industry, government ministries, labour market (Brown et al. 2007), shipping (Ya-Fu Chang, 2007; Progoulaki and Theotokas, 2009) to name a few but not much inclusive and structured work has been done in the domain of shipping sector of India, particularly Kutch.

Literature review has also shown how various researchers have identified a plethora of reasons behind the escalating problem of attrition and how many of them have even suggested recommendations to combat it (Ramani and Raghunandan, 2008; Misra, 2007; Prakash and Chowdhary, 2004). Many researchers have also worked on various domains like the HRM systems and practices (Budhwar et al. 2006), job satisfaction (Sharma, 2006; E-sat survey 2005), organization factors for turnover (Porter and Steers, 1973) and burnout prevention. However, no systematic and comprehensive work has been found that collaborate all the facets to combat the most smouldering problem of the present times.

On the voyage thorough these literature and in an effort to understand the various factor influencing the theses issues, some important observations have been noted. This paper attempts to present analysis and comprehend the knowledge available on the factors of attrition and retention. The acquisition, development and retention of talent form the basis for developing competitive advantage in many industries and countries (Pfeffer, 1994, 2005).

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CONCEPT OF ORGANIZATION COMMITMENT AND TURNOVER INTENTIONS

In the words of Pfeffer (1994), having good HRM is likely to generate much loyalty, commitment or willingness to expend extra effort for the organization's objectives. Moreover, Stone (1998) comments that HRM is either part of the problem or part of the solution in gaining the productive contribution of people.

March and Simon (1958), in their classic book "Organizations", introduced a general theory of organizational equilibrium, which highlighted the importance of balancing employee and organization contributions and stimuli. According to them two aspects that regulate an employee's stability are perceived attractiveness and perceived ease of leaving the organization; today these concepts are normally categorized as job satisfaction and perceived alternatives.

Price and Mueller (1981, 1986) developed a comprehensive structural model based on Price's work in 1977, which acknowledged the antecedents of job satisfaction and intent to leave and added organizational commitment as a mediator between these two variables. They advocated that satisfaction indirectly influences turnover in that it influences commitment and hence turnover intentions. Linkages between commitment and labour turnover and absenteeism have been established (Mobley 1982; Mowday et al. 1979; Steers 1977).

Lum et. al (1998) figured that many studies have reported a significant association between organizational commitment and turnover intentions). In his study of paediatric nurses, it was supported that organizational commitment has the strongest and most direct impact on the intention to quit whereas job satisfaction has only an indirect influence. Griffeth et al (2000) analysis showed that organizational commitment was a better predictor of turnover than overall job satisfaction. But Tang et al (2000) comprehended through his study that there is link between commitment and actual turnover. Some researchers have established a relationship between satisfaction, organizational commitment and turnover (Mueller & Price, 1990). In addition, Guimaraes and Igbaria (1992) found that organizational commitment is an intervening variable of intentions of turnover and job satisfaction.

There are different types of organizational commitment. Allen & Meyer (1990) examined the type of the connection between turnover and the three components of attitudinal commitment: employees' emotional association to, identification with and engrossment in the organization are reflected as affective commitment; whereas continuance commitment refers to commitment based on trade-offs that employees contemplates with leaving the organization; and employees' feelings of obligation to remain with the organization is termed as normative commitment. Employee who feels that they ought to stay with an organization have strong normative commitment, those who believe it is essential for them to continue with the organization would have strong continuous commitment, whereas the ones who are having willingness to remain with the organization are believed to have strong affective commitment.

Allen and Meyer's study indicated that all three components of commitment were a negative indicator of turnover. In general, most research has found affective commitment to be the most decisive variable linked to turnover. A three-item scale from Michigan Organizational Assessment Questionnaire was developed by Cummann et al, (1979) to measure turnover intention (TI). Sjoberg et al (2000) proved that turnover intention is a mediating variable between organizational commitment and turnover. Thus, it can be concluded that turnover is, in fact, outcome of the turnover intentions.

The desire for employee commitment is supported by numerous human resource management writers, for example: Bratton and Gold; 1999; Beardwell and Holden (1997); Beer et al. 1985); Guest (1995; 1998); Legge (1995); Sisson (1994); Tyson (1995) and Wood (1995). It has been identified that committed employee behaviour is at the heart of human resource management and is a central feature that distinguishes HRM from traditional personnel management' (Guest, 1995, p. 112).

Howard and Homma (2001) found that job satisfaction alone is not sufficient to predict the turnover intentions. They suggested that organizational commitment should also be included in the turnover model as another independent variable. Also Karsh et al. (2005) proposed that job satisfaction and organizational commitment are predictors of turnover intentions. Wasti (2003) in a research conducted in Turkey also proved that organizational commitment is a predictor of turnover intentions. In past Harrell et al. (1986) established that there is a significant negative correlation between turnover intentions and job satisfaction. Morrison (2004) in his research study, which assessed all three components commitment to the organization and affected by turnover intentions of nurses, found that organizational commitment is negatively correlated with turnover intentions. This was again proved by the result of the research by Korunka et al. (2005).

Employees switch organizations for numerous reasons that academicians and practitioners are trying to find out. Major Domains for the studying the factors influence on attrition and retention can be as bundle of organizational factors, bundle of HR practice factors, employee characteristics and environmental factors.

ORGANIZATIONAL FACTORS

Organizational Policies

The researcher studying the various factors affecting organization commitment and turnover intention have found that the organizational factors play a vital role in an employee's decision to stay or leave. These include a wide array, which may be classified as organizational policies, organizational support and organizational culture.

Mergers and acquisitions represent change & have been considered as essential tools of corporate growth and have become an attractive means by which to grow an enterprise. Researchers have focused on the issues with respect to human capital and the impact on M&A success, but new information is being developed in the area of employee morale and turnover intention and the impact these factors have on employees' commitment to the new organization. Key people who often leave with core technology, crucial customer relationships, proprietary knowledge, vendor and industry relationships, affect the loyalty of other employees who eventually follow them (Feldman et. al. 1999).

Mergers and acquisitions churn different emotions among different groups of employees. While employees of an acquiring company may feel excited about the new challenges, employees from an acquired company may feel concerned, unclear, or even alarmed as they go through these changes (Machiraju, 2003). In the process of organizational changes from mergers and acquisitions, employees tend to be anxious with issues such as job security and their future careers with the organization (Daniel & Metcalf, 2001). Thus, organizations need to weigh these variables that highly effect employee morale to a great effect, in order to effectively address turnover.

Organizational Justice

The organizations should be careful about their internal variables like organizational justice, transparency, quality of work life, restructuring and/or downsizing policies. Evidence from massive studies is that turnover rates are negatively related to financial performance (e.g. Glebbeek & Bax, 2004; Kacmar et al., 2006; McElroy et al., 2001; Shaw et al., 2005). The results of the study conducted by Trevor et al (2009) support the general logic of the Unfolding model of turnover (Lee et al., 1996), in which shocks such as downsizing are argued to prompt employees to engage in this comparison.

One of many reasons that cause an individual turnover intention is closely related to organizational justice, which denotes the fairness and evaluation of treatment received by an individual in the organization (Cropanzano & Greenberg, 1997). Considerable amount of studies has been done to study the dimensionality of organizational justice. It has been concluded that employees differentiate between three forms of justice (Niehoff et. al., 1993) (1) distributive justice (how fair are the outcomes that the employee receives); (2) procedural justice (how fair are the procedures used to determine those outcome distribution decisions) and (3) interactional justice (how fair are the communications or interpersonal treatment that supplements an organization's formal procedures). These dimensions of organizational justice have an influence on employees' work attitudes & behaviours and act as predictors of turnover intentions.

Kathri et al. (2001) in his study revealed that high employees' turnover in Singapore, Malaysia, South Korea and Taiwan occurs due to the procedural justice and low organizational commitment. Radzi (2009) concluded that when employees perceived that they are treated fairly in terms of outcome and procedures; they tend to stay in their current organization and do not have the intention to seek a fairer alternative.

Meyer et al. (2002) argued that organizational support was a possible mechanism through which other work experience variables (e.g. organizational justice) influence affective commitment.

Organizational Support

Studies consider either the immediate supervisor (Kidd et. al., 2001; Rafferty et. al., 2004; Eisenberger et. al., 2003) or the co-workers (e.g., Mueller, Finley, Iverson, & Price, 1999; Wallace, 1995) support as an important variable for organization commitment of an employee. In a recent studies conducted by Lobburi (2012) of social support and turnover intention, the results suggested that in a collectivist cultural context, not only does workplace social support (supervisor and co-worker support) influence the satisfaction, commitment, and turnover intention of workers but also non-workplace social support (family and friends support). It has been concluded that the supervisors may contribute more than co-workers to the strengthening of employees' emotional attachment toward their employing organization Rousseau et al (2010).

Research shows that 85 percent of all difficulties in organizations stem from interpersonal relations—not the competencies of individuals (Association for Psychological Type, 2001). Research further indicates that approximately 45 percent of all “executive derailments” occur because the manager has failed to develop and maintain a network of relationships both inside and outside the organization (Denver Post, 2001; Dalton and Thompson, 1987).

Organization Culture

Bergman (2006) argues that organizational cultures, which emphasize strong norms for obligation, are likely to create high normative commitment. Similarly, Bergman argues that organizational cultures, which have strong norms for internalization and identification, are likely to generate high levels of affective commitment. Culture is theorized as having three dimensions as innovative, supportive and bureaucratic. It is emphasized that the supportive culture has been proved to show highest correlations with commitment Crawford (1999), Lokand Crawford (2001).

Senge (1990) defined a learning organization as all individuals in the organization working together to learn, to solve problems, and to create innovative solutions. According to Watkins and Marsick (1993) learning organization is one that learns continuously

and transforms itself" (p. 8), and the learning occurs at all levels, such as individual, team, organization, and community. Hsiu-Yen Hsu (2009) in his study by using the Structural Model Equation contended that the R&D professionals' perceptions of high level of organizational learning culture had a positive effect on job satisfaction and organizational commitment, and whereas job satisfaction had a negative effect on turnover intention and a positive effect on organizational commitment.

Govaert Natalie (2001) found that Five factors - Appreciative learning and working climate, trainings on leadership skills, upholding learning attitude and creativity, helping the employees to cope with work pressure, and training them on how to follow procedures contributes highly to the employees intentions to stay. The model of regression concerning the "intention to stay" indicated that an appreciative learning and working climate is a good predictor of intention to stay. Where as it relates negatively to the intention to leave in the regression model concerning the "intention to leave".

HR FACTORS

Numerous studies, including empirical and available which have proved that the HR practices are the most influencing when it comes to individuals decision to stay or leave the organization. The kind of compensation policies, faulty recruitments, absence of of faulty performance management systems, suitable reward & recognition and lack of appropriate training and career development an opportunity lead to dissatisfaction of and employee, his commitment to the organization and influence his decision of leaving or staying with an organization (Kundu Subhash 2007, Janet Chew 2008, Govaert Natalie 2011, Jins Joy 2012). Mahal (2012) proved that there is a positive correlation between HR and organizational practices and a significant positive relation was found in employee retention and organizational and HR practices.

Compensation

Compensation plays a vital role in the commitment among employees. When the employees are given fair wages, it will eventually passage a cordial relationship between the employer and employee (McCallum, 1998; and Parker and Wright, 2001). A number of recent studies have highlighted the rewards-retention link (Watson, 1999; Mercer, 2003; and Tower, 2003). The organization, which believes in giving loftier and extraordinary high package to the employees, gets upright commitment from them as indicated by Bassi and Van (1999), Williams (1999), Stein (2000), Boyd, and Salamin (2001). It helps the employer to enhance the commitment of employees, which results in superior performance of the employees (Siders et al., 2001).

Jins Joy P. et. al. in their paper have reported that high basic pay was the most important factor considered when taking job retention/ alteration decisions. Among the five industries segment, which they studied, Aviation sector offered highest basic pay, next followed by banking, software and financial services. In many occasions, employment decisions are highly affected by the same factors associated with the employment. To a question asked by them as to what factors affect the retention decision of employment, the respondents to the factors having a negative influence on the employment decisions, in case the monetary benefits are unfavorable to them, had assigned same priority. Career growth was a non-monetary factor, which had a big influence in job retention and resignation decisions.

Using the institution level data for United Kingdom Martin (2003) investigated the determinants of the labour turnover. He indicated an inverse relationship between the comparative wages and turnover. This means that the institutions with advanced comparative pay structure had lower turnover.

The study conducted by Griffeth et al (2000) analysed the relationship between pay, an individuals' performance & turnover. They noted the modest effect of pay and pay – related variables on turnover. They also concluded that insufficient reward to high performers result in them leaving the organization. While citing the findings from Milkovich and Newman (1999) they noted introduction of collective reward programs in place of individual incentive schemes may lead to higher turnover among high performers.

Taplin et al (2003) conducted a large-scale turnover study in the British clothing industry. They identified two factors as the most noteworthy explanations for employees leaving the industry. One of these was the low level of wage rates in the clothing industry in comparison to other manufacturing sectors creating an imbalance in market equity. Their study also scrutinized the role of type compensation systems in turnover. The researchers found that most of the firms adhered to the piece rate compensation system as they found it as most cost effective and an appropriate way to control the effort – bargain. They observed that turnover in the organization, which had, only flat – rate compensation system was statistically higher by 4.5% as compared to the overall industry mean. This is, in the authors' view, notwithstanding anecdotal indication that many skilled workers disapprove unpredictability of such system while the new entrants to the workforce lack the skills to exploit the system and gain higher earnings. Hence according to Janet et. al. (2008) commented that fair wage was the underpinning of the contractual and psychological agreement between employees and employers. Employers need to uphold their obligation to the use of rewards as crucial elements of talent management programs.

Recruitment

The concept of organizational fit identifies convergent goals and values between the employee and the organization as a significant forecaster of affective commitment (Brown, 1969; Steers 1977; Kidron 1978; and Weiner 1982). Whereas Janet Chew

et al. (2008) proved that organizational commitment and intention to stay were significantly related to P-O fit. Essentially, the findings suggested that people, who were well suited for the job and / or organization, were more likely to feel attached and committed to the organization. The concept of organizational fit identified convergent goals and values between the individual and the organization as an important predictor of affective commitment. This study also revealed that rewards and recognition play a key role in the commitment of core staff.

Performance and Growth

Kund S. et al. (2007) in their study conducted factor analysis and brought about five factors of which, two factors namely training & performance appraisal and hiring & compensation system emerged very strong HR practices followed by career development, which affected the organizational commitment. In their study Job analysis and HR, planning was moderately practiced in shipping companies. Workforce diversity and flexi-work system also showed presence but did not emerge as strong practice. Poor recruitment and selection in part of both the employer and employee is a big contributing factor, which leads to faster quits by the employee and a poorly designed or complete non-existence of induction program increasing negative effect on employee's intention to stay (CIPD, 2004). In addition, if expectations are raised too high during the recruitment process this can result in people accepting jobs for which they may be unsuited. In the process to ensure that, the lead-time to fill their vacancies with efficient and qualified employees, organizations unintentionally raises the excitement of the prospective employees. These unfulfilled expectations lead to withdrawal behaviour and ultimately increases turnover.

Mahal (2012) in his study narrates that of the six dimensions of HR, 'selection' has the highest mean score indicating that employees of various organizations perceived that their organizations followed good selection and recruitment policy which enabled them to perform effectively, whereas 'training and development' has the lowest mean score indicate that employees needed freedom to make any amendments in the training and development policy as per their own requirement.

When an organization has a policy of promoting from within, its good people will set their sights more deliberately on opportunities for professional growth in the context of the organization vs. looking elsewhere (Dibble 1997; Kreisman 2002). Although remuneration provides recognition, other forms of non-monetary recognition are also important for the core employee group. Employees tend to remain with the organization when they feel their capabilities, efforts and performance contributions are recognized and appreciated (Davies 2001). It appears therefore that it is important for companies to use their reward budget effectively to differentiate the rewards the top performers, thus driving an increase in the return on investment (ROI) on human capital investments

Training and Development

Shah and Burke (2003) reviewed some of the literature on the relationship between attrition and training. In a British study examining the impact of training on mobility, Green et al (2000) concluded that, in aggregate, training has on average no impact on mobility. However, training that is wholly sponsored by the individual (or their families) is on balance likely to be a prelude to job search. In contrast, when employers pay for training the downward effect on mobility is more likely. Lynch (1991, 1992) concluded that both on-the-job and off-the-job training have a significant effect on job mobility. While formal on-the-job training reduces the likelihood of mobility, particularly for young women, off-the-job training increases the likelihood of mobility. In a study of six local labour markets in Britain, Elias (1994) found that women who received employer-provided and job-related training had a lower probability of changing employer or making the transition to non-employment, but for men training made no significant difference to this type of turnover.

Employee Engagement

Workforce optimization, the organization's success in optimizing the performance of the employees by establishing essential processes for getting work done, providing good working conditions, establishing accountability and making good hiring choices would retain employees in their organization. The importance of gaining better understanding of the factors related to recruitment, motivation and retention of employees is further underscored by rising personnel costs and high rates of employee turnover (Badawy, 1988; Basta and Johnson, 1989; Garden, 1989; Parden, 1981; Sherman, 1986).

To ensure effective management of human capital, it is vital that management builds an environment that encourages engagement, as this is likely to boost employee commitment and productivity. Driving Performance and Retention through Employee Engagement (Corporate Leadership Council, 2004), it was revealed that those employees who are most committed perform 20% better and are 87% less likely to leave the organization indicating the significance of engagement to organizational performance. Sharma et. al. (2010) in their exploratory study to determine of Employee Engagement in a Private Sector Organization concluded that objectivity & recognition emerged as the critical determinants of organizational commitment, which explained 93.9% of the variance in organizational commitment. Information sharing is one of the key practices by HRM practices. It echoes the reliance amid the employees and management and becomes a base for effective teamwork. It put forwards the channels of communication where the employees can suggest and give ideas about improving the day-to-day affairs of the business. Employees have a strong need to be informed. Lower turnover is a result of the strong communication systems developed by the organization (Labov, 1997). Thus, the researchers have pointed out that a high labour turnover may mean poor personnel policies, poor recruitment policies, poor supervisory practices, and poor grievance procedures, or lack of motivation.

Other Factors

The research in past have also has thrown lights on the other factors, which are play, a vital role in an employee's decision to stay / leave an organization. A short idea about the influences also to understand the whole phenomena of attrition and retention strategies may accordingly designed important have.

Many variables like age, tenure, gender, organization size, employer banding and environmental factors like availability of suitable opportunities and individual preference for a particular kind of job, location, one's personality etc. have been studied and they have been found as playing an important role in the increasing or decreasing attrition trend. Mathieu and Zajac (1990) found that age was significantly more related to affective commitment than to continuance (calculative) commitment. Tenure was excluded from this study because studies by Meyer and Allen (1997) supported that employees' age might be the link between tenure and affective commitment. Werbel and Gould (1984) revealed an inverse relationship between organizational commitment and turnover for nurses employed more than one year, but Cohen (1991) indicated that this relationship was stronger for employees in their early career stages (i.e. up to thirty years old) than those in later career stages. In a study conducted by Marcie Pitt et. at (2009) found that the following factors related to employees' characteristics explain higher levels of employee commitment: gender (being female), household income (having lower household income, however this effect was found to be very weak 29), elder care status (having no elder care responsibilities), physical health (being in better physical health), mental health (being in better mental health), core self-evaluation (having a more positive sense of self), and age (being older).

Taplin (2003) found that the other significant reason referred to industry image with staff leaving because of fears relating to the long-term future of clothing manufacture in the UK. In this study, turnover rates were highest among the most skilled workers. Lobburi (2012) found that unlike past studies of social support and turnover intention, the results of his study suggested that in a collectivist cultural context, not only does workplace social support (supervisor and co-worker support) influence the satisfaction, commitment, and turnover intention of workers but also non-workplace social support (family and friends support). These finding were consistent with collectivist culture that describes societies in which people are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups and families as explained by Hofstede Model.

Gupta (2011) in his study on BPO industry concluded that one of the prime reasons for employees leaving the industry was due to the cause that the industry was viewed as a gap filler occupation. There seems to be a flaw in the way the industry was structured. The industry has been mainly dependent on youth who take out time to work, make money in the process while thinking of career alternatives. Hence, for this group BPO was never a long-term career but only as a part time job.

Empowering leadership influences employee empowerment, which in turn influences employee engagement, which in turn influences affective commitment and turnover intentions. Empowering leadership directly influencing psychological Empowerment. Empowering leader behaviours include encouraging participative decision-making, leading by example, sharing information, coaching, and demonstrating concern for employees. Simon et. al. (2001) declared that when employees perceive that their leaders and managers have an empowering style of leadership they will feel empowered. Such feelings of empowerment will lead employees to feel motivated and engaged and lead to feelings of connection and belongingness to their organization.

CONCLUSION

Since the beginning of 1980s, a huge literature has been developed calling for a strategic role for human resources (Guest, 1987; Lado and Wilson, 1994; Entekin and Court, 2001). The increasing interest in HR is due to the assumption that employees and the way they are managed is critical to the accomplishment of organizational goals and can be a source of that provide an sustainable competitive edge to the organization (Itami, 1991; Lado and Wilson, 1994; Wright et al., 1994; Kamoche, 1996; Mueller, 1996; Barney and Wright, 1998). Although HRM is currently considered to be crucial, researchers and professionals agree that its significance will grow further in the future (Sparrow et al., 1994; Becker and Gerhart, 1996; Ulrich, 1997). One of the significant strategic roles of HR will be control the attrition and reduce the negative effects of attrition by identifying the relevant factors and drawing upon effective retention strategies to uphold high performing talent pool of its organization.

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