

Relationship between Human Resource Management Practices and Employees' Retention

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to test the relationship between HRM practices and employee's retention. To test this relationship, data was collected from faculty members of Khyber medical college (KMC), using a convenience sampling technique. A Chi-square test was used to evaluate the aforementioned relationship. The effect of three HRM practices (reward, selection, and training) on employees' retention were studied. The results reflect that reward and compensation is not associated with retention factors, while selection and retention are associated with each other. Similarly, training also has a significant association with employee's retention. Results help us to conclude that KMC needs to consider reward and compensation, while selection and training should be further strengthened to enhance employee's retention.

Keywords: Retention, Turnover, HRM practices, Selection, Training, Reward.

Introduction

In today competing world human resource is considered as capital and essential to the continued survival of organizations. In this context, organizations are struggling to attract and retain the best employees (Porter, 2001). Contemporary organizations accept that human resource management practices (HRM practices) are the cornerstone for attraction and retention of talented employees who continue their services in downsizing, organizational restructuring, and re-engineering initiatives (Clark, 2001).

Retention of employees having unique knowledge, skill, and abilities are mainly considered by organizations for potential business growth and creating human resource competencies. Contemporary organizations attempt to have the title of "employer of choice" which creates a good working environment for talented employees and offers them challenging tasks so that their employees enhance their skills for personal growth and development.

Strategic staffing is considered a crucial issue because the ability of an organization to retain talented employees could be important to the survival of the organization (Ettorre, 1997; Whitner, 2001). Employees' turnover is costly because of the resulting replacement cost; the money loss in employee development; an additional cost of attracting and recruiting new employees; and it also cost in the shape of

less output and limited gaps for sales due to turnover; and stressed relationships with customers (Eskildsen & Nussler, 2000). Results reflect that the turnover rate annually at reputable companies is less than six percent, the replacement cost of an employee generally accumulates to a quarter of an employee's annual salary (Davies, 2001; Ettore, 1997).

Top management usually formulates HRM policies that indicate their philosophies and show the relationship between top, middle, and lower-level management and employees. Top management may also formulate HR policies that majorly consider organizational current requirements or focus on current problems. HR policies according to (Jiang *et al.*, 2012) are 14; while (Pfeffer, 1994) initially provided a list of 16, and later on reduced to 13 (Pfeffer *et al.*, 1995). Despite the differences in a number of HR practices, Ability, Motivation, and Opportunity (AMO) theory suggest that HRM is the major source of continuous growth and development (Pfeffer, 1994). The study directed at the department level also reflects that HR practices enhance organizational performance by influencing employee's attitudes and behavior (Arthur, 1994). This suggests that employee's behavior (employee's retention) is the outcome of HRM practices.

In developing countries, like Pakistan, most organizations formulate policies that shows their top management philosophy, their cultures, and structure, the critical questions would be whether or not employees' opinions have been considered, and whether the new policy is suitable to both employees and management, or it is a top management directive?

Employee's turnover is an indicator of significant issues within the organization, which may include, unfairness, ineffective management, lack of job design, and poor organizational culture and structure (Long, Perumal, and Ajagbe, 2012). Contemporary organization in this regard needs to understand the above-mentioned issues and proactively solve it to create a culture where employees are committed and loyal to the organization. For this very purpose, they must redesign the jobs, introduce a system within organizations that inculcate a culture of support and cooperation rather than hinder it. This study identifies the causes of employee's turnover and further evaluates HRM practices that have a positive contribution to employee's retention.

Research Questions

This study will try to pursue following research questions:

1. What HRM practices are presently implemented in KMC, Peshawar?
2. What is the association between HRM practices and employee retention?

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to identify HRM practices implemented in Khyber Medical College (KMC), and to evaluate the association between HRM practices and employee's retention. More specific objectives are as under:

1. To identify HRM practices presently implemented in KMC, Peshawar.
2. To find the association between HRM practices and employee retention.

Review of Literature

The objective of this chapter was to review and evaluate the literature related to HRM practices and employees' retention. The research relating to HRM practices and retention reflects that HRM practices have a positive contribution to employee retention. Many theoretical perspectives, such as the universalistic perspective, contingency theory, Ability, Motivation, and opportunity (AMO theory), fully integrated model and social exchange theory support the abovementioned relationship. The last two decades

witnessed that how human resources have been trained, managed, and developed within organizations are prime sources for achieving improvement in organizational performance (Phillips, 1997).

As earlier mentioned, HRM practices and employees' retention relationship draw significant numbers of researchers' attention to many theoretical perspectives about how the organization should retain employees within the organization? In this regard, many theoretical perspectives have been developed, such as, Herzberg two factor theory, Maslow hierarchy need theory, and theory X and Y. Since then, many theoretical perspectives have been forwarded to resolve turnover issues and employees' retention focusing on HRM practices, which reflects that HRM practices are still very important.

Human Resource Practices Influencing Retention

The decision of employees to resign from a job may be due to many factors; such as, not considered for promotion, a preferable or profitable task in other organizations or it may be for financial reasons. One such factor may be largely responsible; however, the majority of employees resign due to a number of factors; such as good promotion opportunities in other organizations, low/no job satisfaction, and a stressed or negative culture within the organization. Identifying these issues requires well-organized research work. Employees' turnover is a sign of significant issues, which may include no retention strategies; organizations require to know what factors affect employees to retain and motivate them to be effective and committed towards the organization. Managers must create jobs, structures, and teams, etc. that support their employees rather than inhibit them (Chew, 2004).

One of the recent employee retention studies conducted in Pakistan showed that almost all HRM practices have either direct or indirect influence on employee decides to quit or retain in the organization. One factor may influence other factors, or they may jointly affect employees' turnover intention. This means that two or more than two factors jointly influence employees to leave the organization. However, in some cases, an employee may be more concerned with one factor in contrast to another depending on priorities and human nature (Hassan et al 2011).

The concept of person-job fit focuses on individual values, beliefs, and personal goals of employees. Employees will be most likely fit and retain in the organization where their personal values and beliefs are good matching with the organizational values and beliefs. Similarly, person-job fit also emphasizes matching people based on their abilities, knowledge, and skills with the job requirements. Employees will be most likely fit and retain in the organization when they have all the necessary knowledge, skill, and abilities required for a job. Additional qualification, experience, knowledge, skill, and abilities may also be reasons for turnover, as such employee will most likely quit the organization for better opportunities elsewhere in the market. So, organizations need to select those employees whose values and beliefs best matches with the organization, and KSAs of employees should also be perfectly matched with the job requirements. Selection (Person organization fit) of a person whose norms values, and beliefs matches with company values is necessary to retain him for long period (Netemayer et al. 1997). Several research papers show that the right selection for a position is closely linked with a number of positive attitudes and behaviour. People who are well suited to a job are more likely to retain in the organization. Person organization fit also has a great contribution in turnover intention, so it may be argued that this factor is a good measure of employee retention (Chew, 2004).

Frankeiss (2008) in his research concluded that recruitment and selection have a positive impact on employee retention and can play a great role in minimizing the attrition rates. It is discussed in the Oracle white paper (2012) that selecting the right individual in the first place will be the best practices for the retention of workers. Beardwell and Wright (2012) emphasized in a study that organizations' systematic approach to recruitment and selection would help in the reduction of the turnover of employees.

The effectiveness any organization lies in the continuous training and development of employees. In today's competitive world, companies are finding that training has a positive relationship with employee retention i.e., more training employees get; the more likely they are to stay. This is also reflected in recent studies which suggested that organization needs to continue to train and develop high performers for potential new roles, identify their knowledge gaps, and implement initiatives to enhance their competencies and ensure their retention (Cairns, 2009). However, the traditional perspective of training is that if the companies train them (marketable), employees will leave to join other competitors.

Training is claimed to be a practical education that may be used to enhance the skills, experience, and efficiencies of the organization (Gravan, 1997). Need-based training assessment is needed for the organization (AlKhayyat, 1998). Various types of Training (on-the-job training, vocational training, general or specific training, etc.) are significant for the retention and development of workers (Hocquet, 1999; Ranger, 2002). It is known from a study conducted in New Zealand (workers below the age of 30) that one main reason workers left their jobs is healthier training opportunities elsewhere. Therefore, more attention and investment are required in providing training to workers (Boxall et al., 2003). Training is the best instrument for retaining workers and its impact on compensation may be vital for retention (Anis et al., 2011). The study led on the lavish inn Serena, Faisalabad, showed a positive relationship between training and development and retention (Khan et al., 2011). Another study of five-star hotels in Australia provides the same outcome that training enhances trustfulness and ownership of workers for their organization (Davidson et al., 2010). Based on the studies conducted at various public and private sectors in South Africa, training is a strong motivational variable for retaining workers (Samuel and Chipunza, 2009). The research conducted by Samganakkan (2010) admitted in his study that the HRP (Human Resource Practices such as appraisal system, compensation and training, and development are important determining factors of employee's retention. Furthermore, researcher scholars have found that Training and development have a significant relationship with employee retention (Hong, Hao, Ramendran and Kadiresan, 2012; Asil, Akhlagh and Maafi 2013; Johri, Yahya and Ahmed 2012). Other Studies conducted by Tangthong, trimetsontorn and Rojnruntikul (2014) analyzed human resource management practices (compensation, training and development, and reward, etc.) and their impact on retention, all the studies showed positive relationship with HR practices.

It is commonly observed that people are usually attracted and motivated towards high remuneration, rewards, and recognition. Below the market pay will more likely lead employees towards turnover; however, high pay may not certainly retain them (Highhouse et al., 1999). The different organizations offer different pay packages to their employees to motivate and retain their employees. Mercer (2003) found that employees will stay if they are rewarded. Employees tend to remain with the organization when they feel their capabilities, efforts, and performance contribution are recognized and appreciated (Davies, 2001).

There have been different researches regarding the connection between the two entities i.e., remuneration and retention. Retention is determined by the performance related to pay (Tremblay et al., 2006). In this regard, Milkovich & Newman (2004) analyzed that employee's retention is highly influenced by monetary pay. Moreover, Hytter (2007) states that there is a direct relation between monetary reward and retention. Retention, according to Hausknecht et al, (2009), is greatly influenced by remuneration and benefits. A research study conducted in Nigeria by Gbervbie (2010), that to retain and maintain high performance of talented employees, it is necessary to provide them with attractive remuneration and incentive. Furthermore, Pitts et al., (2011), have concluded that employees' retention is highly influenced by remuneration. There is a connection between monetary rewards, both direct and indirect, and the retention ratio of the employees Onyango (2014). Kumar (2012), in his research study, analyzed five different factors that directly influence employees' retention in an organization. According to this study, the most important and attractive factor is remuneration when it comes to employees' retention. Similarly, Francis (2014) research concludes that remuneration and benefits are quite effective factors that can determine the retention of employees.

The literature review revealed that the major emphasis of researchers is on the effective utilization of HRM practices that have an impact on employee's retention. Three major HRM practices have been discussed to describe their relationships with employee's retention. A review of the literature also helps us to conclude that effective organizations share the investment in human resources. Moreover, management is a key source in achieving a sustainable competitive edge.

Hypotheses

This study focused on the identification of important HRM practices and their association with the retention of employees. To achieve this objective, the following hypothesis was formulated:

- H₁: Selection is strongly associated with employee's retention.
 H₂: Remuneration and recognition is associated with employee's retention.
 H₃: Training and development is associated with employee's retention.

Research Methodology

This section describes the research design used to collect the primary data, which were used to test the hypotheses of this study. It also gives an insight into population, sample size, instrument used for data collection and further explains the data analysis techniques required in this study.

Data collection

This study aimed to analyze the association between HRM practices and the retention of employees. To achieve this objective, the study uses a questionnaire adopted from (Chew, 2004), distributed to the faculty of KMC, Peshawar.

Sample Population

Faculty members working in Khyber Medical College (KMC), Peshawar will be the population for this research study. Moreover, a convenience sampling technique was used to collect the data. A letter in this regard was prepared to ask for permission to distribute our questionnaire among their employees.

Employee Survey

Questionnaires were distributed among KMC faculty members to collect data regarding HRM practices and their association with employee's retention in KMC, Peshawar. The convenience sampling technique was used in KMC, Peshawar. 90 questionnaires were distributed; however, only 62 respondents give feedback.

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed using SPSS 17 version. Chi-test was used to test the associations between HRM practices and employees retention. Chi-square test was used by applying the Pearson formula (Chaudry and Kamal, 2004).

$$\chi^2 = \sum_{i=1}^r \sum_{j=1}^c \frac{(O_{ij} - e_{ij})^2}{e_{ij}} \dots\dots (1)$$

Which under the null hypothesis (H₀) follows a χ^2 -distribution with (r-1)(c-1) degrees of freedom.

In equation number one, O_{ij} and e_{ij} are the observed and expected frequencies y of cell in i^{th} row and j^{th} column, respectively.

Results and Discussions

Table 1 reflects the analysis of the employees in terms of their age, gender, experience, and designation.

Table-1: Demographics of Employees

Variables	Sample Size	Percentage
Gender		
Male	40	64.5
Female	20	32.2
No response	2	3.2
Total	62	100
Age		
21-25	10	16
26-30	15	24
31-35	13	21
36-40	16	26
41 & above	8	13
Total	62	100
Experience		
1-4 years	20	32.2
5-10 years	19	30.64
10 & above	18	29
No response	5	08
Total	62	100
Designation		
Professor	05	8
Associate Professor	13	21
Assistant Professor	20	32
Lecturer	24	39
Total	62	100

Results of table 1 indicates that male's faculty members are majorly represented in the sample; a significant numbers of faculty members are in the age bracket of 30-40, and they have greater than 10 years of experience.

Selection vs. Employees Retention

This study focused on the association between HRM practices and the retention of employees. Selection in this context is considered a significant variable for employee's retention within the organization. Selection and employee retention were cross-tabulated in table 2. The results regarding selection show that 32 percent disagreed, almost 10 percent were neutral, while 58 percent agreed with our question. The empirical results reflected in table 2 regarding employee's retention reflect that 32 percent of respondents disagree with our statement, 23 percent were neutral, and the remaining 45 percent agreed with our given statement.

Table-2: Selection * Employees Retention

		Retention					Total
		SD	D	NA/ND	A	SA	
SELECTION	SD		2(3.2)		2(3.2)	4(7)	8(13)
	D	2(3)	4(6)		10(16)		16(26)
	NA/ND		2(3)	4(6)	4(6)		10(16)
	A		10(16)	2(3)	8(13)		20(32)
	SA				6(10)	2(3)	8(13)
TOTAL		2(3)	18(29)	6(10)	30(48)	6(10)	62(100)

The values in brackets are the percentages; Chi-square = 30.5; p-value = 0.012

SD=Strongly Disagree, D= Disagree, N=Neutral, A= Agree, SA= Strongly Agree.

Table 2 also reflects that P-value (P=0.012) is less than the desired level, that is, 0.05 which suggests that the two variables, that is, selection and employee retention are associated. This association is also supported by a chi-square value of 30.5. The cross-tabulation further reflects that selection and retention are positively associated; therefore, any change in the selection process will bring a considerable change in employee's retention. Huselid (1995) also reported similar results. He found that HRM practices may be divided into two groups: one that increases employee skills, and second, that increase employee's motivation. He further mentioned that selection (skill-enhancing HRM practices) is associated with employee retention. The results of this study suggest that the level of prevalence of selection variable is strong enough and cable to retain faculty within KMC.

Reward vs Retention

In developing countries, a significant number of organizations consider reward as the prime factor for employee retention. Due to this reason, a large number of organizations adopt it for the attraction and retention of key employees. In Table 3, reward and employee's retention were cross-tabulated. The result regarding reward reflects that 30 percent of respondents disagreed, 25 percent were neutral, and the remaining 45 percent agreed with our questions pertaining to reward. While the estimates concerning the retention of employees indicate that 46 percent of respondents disagreed, 25 percent were neutral, and the remaining 29 percent agreed with our retention-related question.

Table 3: Reward * Employees Retention

		Retention					Total
		SD	D	NA/ND	A	SA	
REWARD	SD	2(3)	4(7)				6(10)
	D		6(10)	6(10)	8(13)	2(3)	22(35)
	NA/ND		4(7)	4(7)	6(10)	2(3)	16(26)
	A		2(3)	2(3)	6(10)	2(3)	12(19)
	SA			4(7)	2(3)		6(10)
TOTAL		2(3)	16(26)	16(26)	22(36)	6(10)	62(100)

The values in brackets are the percentage; Chi-square =28.00; p-value =0.09

SD=Strongly Disagree, D= Disagree, N=Neutral, A= Agree, SA= Strongly Agree.

The P-value of the above-mentioned association is greater than the desired level, that is, 0.05; which suggests that reward and retention are not associated. A fair reward system not only retain existing employees but also attract key employees from competing organizations. The results of table 3 reflect that reward is not associated with employee's retention (Chi-square=28). P-value=0.09 also reflects the weak association between reward and employee's retention. Our results are in compliance with Herzberg two factor theory, which reported that pay and reward are not important factors for employee's motivation and

retention. The insignificant association of this variable is mainly due to low level of faculty satisfaction and therefore KMC management should consider it.

Training vs Retention

Many researchers have reported that training & development are significant factors for employee retention. Employee's intention to turnover may be reduced if the organization considerably invests in training and development activities. The empirical results of training and retention are reported in table 4. Results pertaining to T&D reflect that 29 percent of respondents disagreed with our question, 26 percent were neutral, and the remaining 45 percent agreed with our question. As for retention is concerned, 36 percent disagreed with our question, 29 percent were neutral, and the remaining 35 percent agreed with our question.

Table-4: Training * Retention

		Retention					Total	
TRAINING		SD	D	NA/ND	A	SA		
		SD	2(3)	2(3)				4(7)
		D		6(10)		8(13)	4(7)	18(29)
		NA/ND		6(10)	6(10)	4(7)	2(3)	18(29)
		A			6(10)	8(13)		14(23)
		SA		2(3)	4(7)	2(3)		8(13)
TOTAL		2(3)	16(26)	16(26)	22(36)	6(10)	62(100)	

The values in brackets are the percentage; Chi-square =24; p-value =0.03

SD=Strongly Disagree, D= Disagree, N=Neutral, A= Agree, SA= Strongly Agree.

The results reported in table 4 revealed that P-value is less than 0.05, which reflects that T&D and retention are associated. This suggests that any change in T&D would greatly affect employee's decision to either stay or leave the organization, as T&D has a strong association with retention (p-value =0.03). These results are also supported by Chi-square value=24. Our results are in compliance with (Borstoff & Marker, 2007); they reported that organizations are now recognizing that the greater the opportunities of T&D, employees would be more likely to stay within the organization. These results suggest that organizations, which are interested to retain their employees are require to provide training and development opportunities.

Test of Hypotheses

The results of this study found modest support to our first and third hypotheses; while, the results did not support our second hypothesis. More specifically, the first hypothesis, which states that selection is strongly associated with employee's retention. Results provide support (P=0.012), to our first hypothesis based on which we accept our hypothesis H₁. The second hypothesis, which states that reward is associated with employee's retention. Results did not support our hypothesis, as the reward was found not associated with employee's retention, so we reject our hypothesis H₂ (P=0.09). As for as, the third hypothesis was concerned, which states that T&D is associated with employee's retention. We accept our hypothesis H₃ (P=0.03), for T&D, as it was found associated with employee's retention.

Conclusions

The results reflect that reward is not associated with turnover factors, which suggest that top management of KMC need to re-consider this practice at policy formulation level to improve it up to the level capable of retaining employees within the organization. However, most of the factors are significantly associated with

employee retention, suggesting that these factors have the desired potential to retain employees within the organization.

Results pertaining to the selection show that employee's selection and retention are associated with each other; hence, selection might play an important role in employee's retention as employees seem to be strongly satisfied with this factor. KMC management need to work on this factor to retain their faculty within their organizations.

While reward was found not associated with employee's retention. This suggests that this factor needs to be considered in both policy formulation as well as in implementation phase, increasing it to the level which could not only attract but also retain employees within the organization. From the results, it is concluded that the reward system within KMC should be revised, as it was found weakly associated.

T&D was found a significant factor, as it was found associated with employee's retention. Results help us to conclude that T&D should be further strengthened to enhance employee's retention within KMC, Peshawar.

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