

Factors Influencing The Retention of Scarce and Skilled Workers in the State Corporations of Cameroon

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ABSTRACT

The retaining of scarce and skilled workers in any organization is based on the organizational policies and practices. (Jaime Mc dougall, 2018:1). One of the fundamental key that help an organisation to succeed is the act of physically keeping of it scarce and skilled workers in an organisation. The aspect of globalization has made the concept of employee retention complex and difficult to organisations especially in times of high turnover rates. In many cases, even engaged employees are sometimes dissatisfied with the outcomes of organizational performance which may lead them to look elsewhere. The purpose of this paper is to establish the factors that influence the retaining of scarce and skilled workers in the State Corporation of Cameroon. This paper therefore tackles certain factors such as, working environment, leadership style, job security, organizational culture and work-life balance that are crucial in the retaining of profitable worker in the State Corporation of Cameroon. Despite the fact that the above factors can influence the retaining of scarce and skilled workers in State Corporation of Cameroon, the still exist a variety of factors such as financial insecurity, lack of satisfaction and commitment to the organization that can cause an employee to withdraw from the state corporation in Cameroon. However, at the end of the article the author propose several recommendations in order to improve the understanding and important of retaining scarce and skilled workers in the State Corporation of Cameroon.

Keywords: Retention, scarce and skilled worker, State Corporation

INTRODUCTION

The practices used by the State Corporation to keep skill and scarce (profitable workers) are important aspect of study in Cameroon. skilled workers (talented or competent workers) are the pillars of any organisation. The importance of retaining scarce and skilled worker can't be underestimated by any organization. Workers today are not loyal and hardly maintain one job; this is true because of the insatiable desire of man of always looking for something better. This has been corroborated by a Glass Door Survey of 2,000 workers published in May 2017 found out that two out of three will work for an organization at some point in their career, and one in five will resign because of poor practices. (People Management, May 2017). It is against this fact that the purpose of this paper is to analyse factors influencing the retaining of scarce and skilled workers in the State Corporation of Cameroon.

The retaining of skilled employees (the word employees and workers will be used interchangeably in this work) has become an increasingly nightmare for many organisations

as the eyes of the workers has been enlightened due to knowledge they have gained over the years due to globalization (Lumley, Coetzee, Tladinyane & Ferreira, 2011). The retaining of worker that is talented employee is now one of the chief objectives of an organisation. Most organisation turn to fight employee turnover by fostering a positive work atmosphere to promote engagement, showing appreciation to workers, and providing competitive pay and benefits and healthy work life balance (Margaret Rouse 2018: 1). According to (Jaime Mc dougall, 2018:1), the retaining of worker is an organisation's ability to keep its profitable worker in the organisation.

Currently, the workers are now the center of the employment market this is due to their know-how and skills that make them to have the luxury of choice (Harris, 2007). Workers, irrespective of their level of experienced have now known that they have more options in their choice of organisations to engage with (Clarke, 2001). The cost of workers turnover has a negative impact as it affects the output of an organisation (Kacmar, Andrews, Van Rooy,

Steilberg, & Cerrone, 2006; Shaw, Gupta, & Delery, 2005). According to Chad, the rate of unemployment is very low. This is a great opportunity to the worker but detrimental to the employer. To his finding, he said every month, about three million Americans leave their job to look for a better one and 31% leave their job before the half of the year. This type of worker turnover is quite costly to the employer; it can make the employer to double the workers' pay package in order to convince the worker to stay (Chad Halvorson, 2018).

Replacing profitable workers is expensively high, seeking talented worker can be difficult, and investments in training are presently less secure (Lochhead & Stephens, 2004). According to (Chad Halvorson, 2018) the worker and employer has trained and has gained and master critical technique that the organization depends on, if such a profitable worker should quit or having the feeling to leave, it will terrifies the employer. Thus, every turnover of profitable worker come at an expense and this has both direct and indirect expense associated with a worker leaving ranges from a minimum of six year's pay and gains to something more meaningful. Also, when profitable worker quit an organisation, the effects go above the actual costs of recruiting and integrating replacements. As a result, many employers are looking for better techniques to win the battle of turnover in order to keep profitable workers as well as maintaining competition and high output.

Indeed several factors can cause a worker to quit or stay and scholars have proposed different factors that can keep a worker in this type of job markers.

The principal objective of retaining worker is to avoid profitable staffs from quitting your organisation as this could have serious impact on productivity and profitability (Samuel & Chipunza, 2009).

However, the difficulties of attracting, maintaining and motivating skilled worker have never been greater (Punia & Sharma, 2008). Strategic retaining of workers has become a relevance issue to many organisations, because the strength to keep profitable worker can be crucial to the future survival of any organisation.

Retaining of profitable worker brings all kinds of profits to an organisation especially since globalization has brought the world together with so many options nowadays.

Scholars of retention have defined the retaining of skilled workers as a strategic means to keep workers who are talented and relevance to their organisation, (Davies, 2001; Solomon, 1999).

It is evidence that a number of different factors can influence workers turnover. These factors can be the inner structure of the organisation, selecting policies and techniques, rewards and benefits, and training and development (Fitzenz, 1990). In order to strengthened worker and the employer relations, limit turnover, and better commitment levels, HRM need to consider all of these factors and manage it appropriately (Arthur, 1994; Delaney & Huselid, 1996; Ichniowski, Shaw, & Prensushi, 1997; MacDuffie, 1995).

It is increasingly evidence that when a worker decides to quit an organisation, the motive can hardly be attributed to one factor such as a failure to be recognise or pay increase. Even though one factor can act as a catalyst for the worker to quit, but the, end result will be attributable to many factors during the worker's time at the organisation (Davies, 2001; Oh, 1997; Walker, 2001). This implies that many aspects are involved on the reasons why workers leave an organisation. The desire to keep profitable worker by many organisation around the world is generally high today and even in Cameroon in particular.

These factors are significantly, influencing organisational productivity and output. Employers are facing the difficulties of addressing retention crisis by means of increasing competition in the global market. This explains why this research has been designated to examine the factors that influence skilled workers to stay in an organisation with an emphasis on the public sector of Telecommunication of Cameroon.

Currently, retaining of profitable workers has become the vital aspect in several organizations.(Eskildesn and Nussler ,2000) spotted out one essential factor when firms failed to prioritize the relevance of retaining workers, this factor goes to talent cost.

Organisations has to consider both direct and indirect cost when replacing the loss due to employee turnover which involves acquiring better replacement guarantee with competitive salary, and negative impact on reputation. Therefore, organisations should take note on the relevance strategies of retaining profitable

worker in which will help organisation to be a leader in the global market economy.

To add, Retention is 'a deliberate act taking by an organisation to create a favourable environment which encourages workers to stay for a longer term' (Chaminade, 2006: 1). Another definition was given by (Chiboiwa, Samuel, & Chipunza, 2010: 2104) the define retention as prevention the loss of profitable worker from leaving the organisation. Some authors see workers retention as the outcome of good application of policies and processes that help workers to remain with the company because of the provision of a good working environment that meets their needs (Baer, Fagin, & Gordon, 1996). Employee retention, according to Harvard Business Essentials, is the 'opposite of turnover—turnover being the sum of voluntary and involuntary separations between an employee and his or her company' (2002 cited in Starosta, 2006: 60). However, according to (Waldman and Arora, 2004), discussing workers retention within the framework of worker turnover is inadequate ; rather attention should be on the way in which retaining of profitable worker can preserved the workforce that is able to meet the corporation's needs. For them, it is necessary for workers who are not profitable to the organisation to leaves and good retention should be based on those who are skillful.

Although extensive academics research has explored the factors affects employee retention, but little research has been carry out on the factors that determines employee retention at the public sector of Cameroon.

It is increasingly evidence that the current factors of most relevance to determines employees retention have been found to be the leadership style, organizational culture and the WLB practices for employees, as they can help to foster the employees' quality of life and, as a consequence, workers will be more satisfied, motivated and committed to the firm (Carrasquer and Martin, 2007; Hughes and Bozionelos, 2007).

Presently, there are quite a large number of studies that have been done looking into the issue of the employee retention. Some of these studies examines factors that lead to the retention of workers while others studied the factors affecting worker to quit an organization as seen above .Most importantly, all these studies focused on factors that could improve the employee retention, and all of them agreed

that there are many factors that could influence it, and further research needs to be conducted to discover other factors that could contribute to it. Hence, it is the objective of this study to fill this gap, and determine factors that influence employee retention in the state Corporation of Cameroon.

Specifically, the current study focuses on the factors that determine employee retention in the State Corporation of Cameroon. The findings of this research would contribute to existing literature on employee retention because it helps in determining the understanding the role played by factors that influence employee retention in Cameroon.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory (1943)

Abraham Maslow proposed a Hierarchy of Needs Theory in 1943. According to Maslow, motivation is a product of a five fundamental needs which are physiological, safety, love, esteem and self-actualisation. According to him if low needs are not satisfied, the higher one can be met. So the basic needs are the springboard of higher satisfaction which must be taken in to consideration. (Steers & Porter, 1991). Once a worker's basic need for food, clothing and shelter are satisfied he/she becomes increasing concerned with ego, esteem and self-actualization. Thus the most fundamental needs of workers are labelled as physiological needs and include items like food, water, sex, sleep, and other bodily needs (Cherrington, 1989). This is accompanied by the safety needs which include security and protection from physical and emotional harm. The third level of needs is social needs such as affection, love, and belongingness; this is followed by the esteem needs and it includes self-respect, status, prestige, and recognition (Cherrington, 1989). The highest level of need is self-actualization which is the drive to become what one is capable of becoming and achieving one's potential (Robbins & Judge, 2007).

The challenge for organisations is that, when framing reward policies, the varied needs of workers must be taken into consideration. According to Ramlall (2004) Maslow's theory provide importance strategies to follow by managers and other organisational leaders. Firstly, it directs managers to find ways of motivating workers by coming up with programs aimed at satisfying emerging or unmet

needs. Secondly, it implies that management has the task to create a work climate that permits workers to develop their fullest potentials. Failure to do so can lead to more frustration and could result in poorer performance, lower job satisfaction and turnover (Steers & Porter, 1991). Thus if employee needs at the various levels of the hierarchy are not met in time, they are likely to leave and look for organisations which can satisfy their needs.

Based on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory, (Blunt and Jones, 1992) carry out further research on this theory and came out with some measures for organisations to adopt at each level of the hierarchy in order to satisfy employee needs as well as motivate and retain them.

Herzberg Two Factor Theory (1959)

In 1959, Frederick Herzberg introduced the two-factor theory which is also known as the motivation-hygiene theory. Herzberg's theory states that there are certain factors that are related to the content of the job and provides satisfying experiences for employees. These factors are called motivators or satisfiers and include achievement, recognition, the work itself, responsibility, advancement, and growth. The theory states that, there are non-job-related factors that can cause dissatisfying experiences for employees. These factors are known as hygiene factors or dissatisfiers and include company policies, salary, co-worker relations, and style of supervision (Steers & Porter, 1991). It must be noted that removing the causes of dissatisfaction (through hygiene factors) would not result in a state of satisfaction; instead, it would result in a neutral state (Herzberg, 1959). In spite of some criticism of Herzberg's two factor theory, it is one of the popular theories for managers worldwide. Also the present emphasis on self-development, career management and managed learning can be said to have evolved from Herzberg's theory (Mullins, 2010).

The application of this theory for management is that by removing dissatisfying hygiene factors, peace in the workplace may be realised, but it will not serve as a motivator for the employee. Thus, motivation would only come about as a result of the use of intrinsic factors.

Some empirical studies have revealed that, extrinsic factors such as competitive salary, good interpersonal relationships, friendly working environment and job security are keys for the retention of employees (Maertz & Griffeth, 2004). In order to motivate employees,

they should be offered opportunities for promotion, recognition, responsibility, personal growth and achievement (Robbins & Judge, 2007). This implies that, management must not rely only on intrinsic variables to influence employee retention; but rather combine both intrinsic and extrinsic variables when considering an effective strategy to retain employees.

Adams Equity Theory (1965)

The equity theory by Adams (1965) recognises that individuals are concerned not only with the rewards they receive for their efforts, but also compare their rewards with what others receive. The theory is founded on people's perception of fairness or equity which is usually subjective. The Equity theory posits that employees seek to maintain equity between the input that they bring into a job such as education, time, experience, commitment and effort and the outcome they receive such as promotion, recognition and increased pay against the perceived inputs and outcomes of other employees (Spector, 2008). Equity theory proposes that individuals who perceive themselves as either under-rewarded or over-rewarded will experience distress, and that this leads to efforts to restore equity within the organisation. Failing to find equity according to, (Hellriegel, et al ,2004) may make them behave in ways that will harm the organisation.

The retaliatory measures by employees who think they are unfairly rewarded may include, withholding effort and reducing work inputs, displaying feelings of hostility to co-workers and the organisation itself, and seeking salary increases, challenging superiors about tasks assigned, as well as quitting the job and seeking an alternative elsewhere. All these options have implications for an organisation. It can impair the overall performance as well as lower productivity. If high performers leave an organisation, the organisation is likely to lose its productive talent and competitive advantage.

One weakness in this theory is its subjective nature. This can lead to prejudice and other human errors in the process of comparison thus each individual may use their own judgment in deciding what is equitable or otherwise. It is therefore necessary that the decisions that individuals may take is objective and show a clear case of inequity. In terms of retention, the theory implies that, organisations will have to develop reward systems that are perceived to be

fair and equitable in the eyes of employees if they are to retain them.

Price and Mueller's (1981) Turnover Models

In 1977 James Price, a sociologist established a model identifying five determinants of turnover namely pay, integration (relationship with supervisor of co-workers), instrumental communication (clearly defined work roles), formal communication (organisation communicates practices and policies) and centralization (distribution of power in the organisation). He elaborated this concept further by introducing a concept he called "opportunity" as a moderator of job satisfaction and turnover, and defined it as the availability of alternative employment in the environment.

As with many models, following the testing of the Price (1977) model, there were some shortcomings therefore in 1981 Price and Mueller revised and expanded their earlier model.

According to the (Price and Mueller, 1981) model, repetitive work reduces satisfaction but workers who are participating in job related decisions, receiving work related information, forming close friendships with others at work, earning good and fair compensation, and enjoying opportunities for promotion are more likely to be satisfied with their work (Hom & Griffeth, 1995). Price and Mueller's model proposed that the availability of alternative job opportunities moderated the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover (Griffeth, Hom & Gaertner, 2000). They also suggested that professionalism generalised training, and minimal kinship responsibilities weakened an individual's intention to remain with the organisation (Hom & Griffeth, 1995).

The criticism of the study was that though some correlations R^2 s were statistically significant, they were small. However Price and Mueller addressed the problem of low explained variance and suggested that future studies may focus on additional variables and measurement consideration (Hom & Griffeth, 1995). These criticisms led to the revision of the model in 1986.

Price and Mueller's (1986) Revised Model of Turnover

In 1986, the 1981 model was revised. The researchers introduced role overload as antecedents to satisfaction (Hom & Griffeth, 1995). They also added workgroups and size of

the organisation as precursors of organisational commitment and intention to leave. Thus (Price and Mueller's, 1986) model presented an updated model that included many of the earlier retention factors as well as several new ones. One important addition to the model was distributive justice. Drawing from the developing literature on equity theory at that time the authors suggested that employees would be satisfied and thus more likely to stay if they felt that the outcomes they received reflected the effort and other inputs that have invested. By using a rigorous methodology, which still stands as an important model for research standards, Price and Mueller contributed to voluntary employee turnover by developing a comprehensive set of determinants of turnover and introducing salient variables that have now become accepted as part of the withdrawal process (Griffeth, Hom & Gaertner, 2000). The factors mentioned in Price and Mueller's theory can generally be grouped into motivators and dissatisfiers which are also explained by Herzberg's two factor theory. In terms of retention, Price and Mueller's models emphasise the importance of pay (compensation) and training and promotional opportunities (career management) which are very relevant to this study. According to them, these are critical factors that can influence employee retention.

Factors The Determine Employee Retention

Job Security

The fact of having a stable and a stable source of income is one of the factor and even the major one that will make a worker to stay in an organisation .this the vital factors that makes people to stay to scramble for public services in Cameroon, even though the pay package is relative low most workers will preferred to be where there are sure of than to be where they are not certain.

Therefore it has been proven that job security is one of the main factors that cause workers to stay in an organisation and it enhance workers' performance (Chang & Chen, 2002). Job security refers to the extent to which an organisation gives stable work for their employees (Herzberg, 1968). Furthermore, it is the extent to which individual workforce expect to remain in the job for longer period of time. It is one of the mainfactors that define engagement and retain workers. Workers who know the will stay in their organisation and will not lose their job are more loyal to the organisation. Hence,

job security is one of the determinant factors that define the worker intention to leave or stay. (Conklin & Desselle, 2007).

Furthermore, irrespective of the sector is it the public or private sector, job security has an effect in the retaining of profitable workers (Samuel & Chipunza, 2009). Similarly, Parnell and Crandall (2003) also argued that job security significantly influences the worker ability to stay. In line with the previous findings, (Conklin et al.,2007) found in their study of faculty survey that job security has been recognized as one of the core factors for faculty members to decide whether they will stay or leave.

From the above discussion it is projected that job security might be a strong factor to determine employee retention in the State Corporation of Cameroon.

Working Environment

A good working environment has the ability to attract and maintain workers in an organisation. Every organisation has to create a favourable working environment it is evidence that the work environment plays a great role in determining the level of satisfaction achieved by a worker with regard to the level of comfort felt in working within that environment, the state corporation are deemed vital in determining the potential of employees' retention by creating either a friendly environment or otherwise.

While it is clear that a favourable work environment is desirable, other benefits of a healthy work environment looking at the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (Takala & Urrutia, 2009) are:

- i. The employees perform better if they are healthy
- ii. The lack of accidents at work leads to less absenteeism,
- iii. If equipment needed for work is more efficient, risk free and well maintained, reduced injuries and illness will result in lower damages and liabilities.

According to (Abbasi and Hollman ,2000),(Sherman, Alper, and Wolfson ,2006), and (Hewitts Associates,2006) they argued that knowledge sharing is an important element in fostering innovation; however, the physical structure of the working environment may hinder communication, which in turn hinders an employee's potential to gain significant benefits;

this is an important factor in an employee's decision to leave an organisation. An open office facilitates free observation of how employees within the organisation carry out duties, while secluded offices hinder such observations and may instigate doubts of the effectiveness of particular employees, who, if they perceive this doubt as a form of discrimination, may consider leaving the organisation. In the present research, to establish the relationship between work environment and employee retention in the public sector of the telecommunication, questions related to work place safety as well as to the friendliness of the physical environment were asked. Although there were different opinions between the four groups, a central agreement was held by all. The design of the work place was considered an important factor influencing turnover by the participants, who differentiated the work environment into two categories, the spatial work environment, which includes the building, the office space, and the provision of basic needs to accomplish the work; and the career work environment, which includes the tasks performed, including job descriptions.

Office space was one of the two motivating factors most insisted by responded (the other, culture, will be discussed below). They preferred an environment and culture which helped them grow, so if they were given a job with higher responsibilities that helped them better their skills, they felt they would be more motivated to stay with the organisation.

Work-Life Balance on Employee Retention

Work-life balance is one of the factors that can influence the retaining of profitable workers under State Corporation in Cameroon .this so because it permit the worker to use the reward of his labour for the at which cause him to work, it should be noted that if a worker spend most of his time to work and little or no time for leisure, it will lead to dissatisfaction irrespective of the pay package.so life is not only consist on what you gain but also on how you used the gained is very important as well.

Work-Life Balance (WLB) is fast becoming an important work related issue and over the past decade, an increasing number of scholarly articles have been promoting its importance. The demands of work and family are not always compatible, leading to conflict between the two domains which may generate the potential for negative effects, including turnover (Mesmer-Magnus & Viswesvaran, 2005). According to

(Deery ,2008) it appears that the conflict between these important dimensions of human activity can cause both job dissatisfaction and family conflicts and hence intention to leave an organisation. Thus individuals who have to work and at the same time play major roles in their homes are likely to experience conflict or face challenges with both roles.

The concept of WLB recognises that employees have important family and extra professional obligations that compete with their professional commitments. Benefits that may be grouped under this concept therefore allow people to strike a more meaningful and potentially less stressful balance between commitments at the workplace and obligations at home. (Withers ,2001), assert that WLB programmes cover a variety of interventions, and include such practices as dependent care leave, childcare subsidies, eldercare programmes, counselling, referral and flexible working hours. While there is no one accepted definition of what constitutes a WLB practice, the term usually refers to one of the following: flexible work options, organisational support for dependent care and family or personal leave (Estes & Michael, 2005). Some organisations also implement specific programmes to help employees balance their lives both at work and at home and these include flexible employment, family-friendly work policies, telecommuting, well-being programmes, employment conditions and social and community practice (Beauregard & Henry, 2009; Zatzick & Iverson, 2006).

Leadership on employee retention

Leadership is influence .it is therefore the capacity to influence, inspire,rally,direct encourage, induce, move, mobilise and activate others to follow a common purpose.

Leadership is also the ability to obtain followership. According to Fred Smith, “leadership is getting people to work for you when there are not obligated”.

The success of any organisation depends on it leadership style .leadership style refers to the way the workers are being managed in an organisation (Schleh, 1977). According to (Armstrong, 2012), a leadership style is the method applied by various managers to influence or control their workers.

The leadership style used by the various organisation can either influence the workers positively or negatively and an inaccessible

leadership style can cost an organisation directly or indirectly.

The role of leaders is very crucial in the retaining of profitable workers as it define the extend at which the worker will stay with the organisation the effect of leaders’ influence on workers’ work-related experience cannot be underestimated. In many cases, the calibre of the relationship between the worker and his or her immediate director is the most powerful indicator of job satisfaction. Management performance, leadership, and satisfied workers is easiest seen in new workers, who generally equate their feelings about their work with the quality of their leaders.

Strategies of Retaining Profitable Worker

Retaining of profitable worker is and should be one of the main focused of the State Corporation in Cameroon area. (HR Dictionary <https://www.mbaskoo.com/.../2695>.) In case employee decides to leaves, proper channel and process should be in place to make sure company can communicate options and listen to the reasons so that employee can take a more inform decision

- Inclusion in company decision will give the employee the confidence of been an importance part of the company.
- Better perks like insurance, car house which makes sure that the employee feel comfortable and secure.
- The above strategies are just few steps which the company can take.
- Employee retention is very subjective and may vary for different companies and different employee.

Advantages of Employee Retention

- A lot of investment is needed to train an employee and to make him productive. The employee retention makes sure the employee stays and applies the learning for the growth of the organization
- Employee retained in organization feels part of the overall vision and become better contributors in the long run.

Factors That Cause Employee To Quit

A variety of factors can cause an employee to withdraw and begins looking for other opportunities.

- Financial insecurity

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- When employees are unable to meet their financial obligations, it's natural for them to question their job.
- Lack of satisfaction and commitment to the organization
- Centralize system of leadership
- In Cameroon, the work, which involves HR, is taken care of by the Director of the organisation: 'any decision by the director of the department should refer to the Director-General for his approval.
- Lack of motivation or incentive
- Unfriendly working environment

RECOMMENDATION

- The study recommended that government should enact policies that ensure that the working environment in the state corporations promotes employee retention. The working environment should be strategically redesigned. That is, the building, the office space must be attractive and comfortable for a person to love working there.
- The policy makers should enact laws or policies that promote the implement of aspects contributing to the retention of employee in the state corporations.
- The effective implementation of decentralization in the State Corporation of Cameroon.
- A more democratic leadership style should implemented .this will help to bridge the gap between the superior and his subordinates.
- An organisation should consider implementing one or more work life benefits such as telecommuting or flexible work hour options for employees, if and when possible.

Suggestion for Further Studies

This study concentrated on establishing the factors that influence the retaining of profitable workers in the state corporations of Cameroon. This paper therefore recommends that another study be done on employee retention in private

organisation in Cameroon.

CONCLUSIONS

The study concluded that the retaining of profitable workers in the state corporation in Cameroon was influenced by job security, work life balance, leadership style and working environment.

The factor that most affect employee retention is job security. This is the key factor which attract employee to working with the State corporations in long term.

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