

Policies, rewards, and opportunities: Antecedents of employee retention

Rabia Asif¹, Sabahat Nisar²

¹Department of Management Sciences, Lahore College for Women University, Lahore, Pakistan, ² PhD Scholar, Lahore School of Accountancy and Finance, University of Lahore, Pakistan

ABSTRACT

Purpose: Human resources are the most dynamic resources of any organization. The importance of human resource signifies to attract and retain talented employees within the organization for long term. As, retention of skilled employees is linked with organizations success, this study aims at revealing the antecedents of employee's retention by carefully analyzing the impact of various HR practices such as career development opportunities, work-life policies, good supervision, and rewards. **Design/Methodology:** To achieve at research outcomes, the data are collected using primary sources through self-administered questionnaire survey. While, multiple regression is employed to test research hypotheses regarding the relation between chosen antecedents and employee's retention. **Findings:** This research is sought to determine those variables having noteworthy influence on employee's retention. The research findings support the positive influence of rewards and work-life balance on employee's retention while supervisor's support and career opportunities do not promote employees retention in private schools in Pakistan. **Limitations:** The researcher is limited in scope as data are obtained from the teaching staff working in private schools from Lahore region. Further, other antecedents within the employee's work-life may have specified impact on retention which must be incorporated in future research. **Originality:** Since, the academic staff at secondary school level plays an important role in influencing the moral character of the students, the job security would provide them with an edge to incorporate healthy practices in shaping students future life. The study contributes to the retention practices of private schools' employees which will ensure a secured working environment leading to better performance.

Key words: Antecedents, good supervision and support, HR practices, opportunities, retention, work-life policies

INTRODUCTION

Employees turnover is a global phenomenon, almost all organizations are gone through the problem of turnover intention (Janjhua et al., 2016). Turnover can either be positive or negative for the success of the organization (Kossivi et al., 2016). In today's world of intense competition,

organizations are facing lots of problems regarding turnover rate (Shokunbi, 2016). Excessive turnover is often considered a symptom of fundamental problems about organization working environment. Sometimes, employees pursuing career objectives may have to move to other organizations (Rothmann et al., 2019) or sometimes they might feel dissatisfaction regarding organizational policies

*Corresponding author:

Rabia Asif, Department of Management Sciences, Lahore College for Women University, Lahore, Pakistan.

E-mail: rabia_pms@hotmail.com

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such as promotions and training opportunities which cause them to look for other alternative (Mobley et al., 1979; Fouche et al., 2017). Employee's dissatisfaction is found to be threatening leading to high turnover rate (Akila, 2012).

Human resource management practices are gaining more importance, with the passage of time these are becoming equally important in the organizations because employees are considered as the most imperative asset of the organization (Anis et al., 2011). Hence, there is a need to foster the demands of the employees which actually boost their motivation level to avoid turnover (Enu-Kwesi et al., 2014). The concept of retention gained importance in the early 1970s with the rise in the origination of SME's as competitive employers, leading to the provision of sustainable employment opportunities (Coff, 1997). This factor accelerates to the ascendancy in employee's mobility from job and voluntary job changes. Consequently, organizations began to face the effect of the rise in voluntary employee's turnover. Further, the power in the authoritarian "status quo" working relationship shifted from employer toward the employee, so there arises a need to develop a matching management tool which was employee retention (Connell and Phillip, 2003). The concept of employee's retention is attached with the existence of the organization (Raikes and Vernier, 2004). Employer should know how to keep hold of their prolific employees for long run within a company (Shoaib et al., 2009)? Hence, the costs of employee turnover are emerging and badly affect organization's bottom line (Sullivan, 2009).

The previous studies reveal the role of different antecedents in carrying out employee retention. The factors that have an undeviating influence on employee retention are career opportunities, work environment, and work-life balance (Cappelli, 2000). Cole (2000) recommends that people will be loyal with institutions where they feel pride and work to their fullest potential. Retaining employees must be the top priority for the institutions because sometimes only the earnings or the position is not necessary for the employees to continue their job (Ashraf et al., 2016).

A fact that should be considered important in this overall research is the different strategies used to make them stick to their jobs. Various factors play a role in retaining employees. The first and the foremost thing which let the employees to stay in an institution is their job satisfaction. Job contentment is the amount of optimistic feelings that employees have toward their jobs (Feldman, 1985). Job satisfaction is a multifaceted phenomenon which is affected by the variables such as workplace environment, pay, communication, and organizational commitment (Vidal

et al., 2007; Lane et al., 2010). However, if the institutions nurture their employees with factors that satisfy them, no one would leave the institution. Employees demand a good salary package, development opportunities, supervisor's support, good work environment, job security, etc. Gardner et al. (2004) found that salary is considered a motivating factor as well as employee retention strategy. There is a close and positive relation between growth opportunities and job satisfaction which, in turn, helps to retain employees (Pergamit and Veum, 1998). Miller et al. (2001) explored that employees feel secure to work in such an environment that provides sense of belonging. All of these factors mean a lot to keep the employees committed to their workplace. If they are satisfied with their jobs then they would never think of switching the job. In this research, those determinants would be found which make the employees satisfied and committed to their institutions.

This research contributes to the ongoing debate on the issue of employee retention keeping in view the private sector schools form Pakistan. The major idea of the current research is to reveal those antecedents which are considered most important in literature and force the employee to avoid job mobility for longer time. The study explores the relationship between the employee retention by incorporating important explanatory variables such as career opportunities, work-life policies, rewards, and good supervision and support. This study focuses on the education sector (private schools) of Lahore, Pakistan, to know that how much the private schools are capable in retaining their employees using different antecedents and how these antecedents influence employee retention. The focus of study has been restricted to private schools only because of unavailability of formal HR and administration department in public schools. Public schools are monitored by education department, which makes general rules for all the schools. Another specific study will be required to cover the turnover in public sector, to obtain concise results. However, if we include both the sectors, it may widen the scope of study and result in biased outcome. Both the sectors have separate reasons of turnover and cannot be covered under one study. Hence, to achieve the correct and unbiased results, this study will only cover the private sector. Second, to limit the scope of study to private schools is due to high turnover rate in private schools therefore, it is important to explore the retention at secondary school level.

Private schools in Pakistan have emerged as a result of the deregulation of prevailing education system. In Punjab, private schools are currently operating within a highly competitive environment and this signals the management

success to enhance employee retention for the sake of competitive advantage. Still heavy workload and low remuneration are considered as major issues which are creating disappointment among the employees of these private schools. The situation is getting worse due to poor working environment and lack of financial advantage for the employees of the private schools. The adverse effect of these operating issues results in brain drain of skilled employees in many of the private schools, leading to raising concerns about human resource retention. Hence, the problem of employee retention is getting worse in public schools which the school management must be resolved to ensure quality teaching.

This study will help the stakeholders to better understand the importance of employee retention in private schools and to focus on those antecedents that help to retain employees. Hence, it enables many private institutions to identify the major reasons that need to be used in retaining employees through better knowledge of inspirational aspects toward improving our education system (Holtom and Darabi, 2018).

Objectives of the Study

Need of the hour is to extend the knowledge regarding how employees will stick to their jobs and which motivational factors play a key role in retaining them? The major aims of the study are as follows:

- To ascertain the influence of work-life policies, growth opportunities, rewards, and supervisor's support on employee retention
- To highlight the most important determinant that plays a key role in retaining employees
- To find out the importance of retention in private institutions.

THEORETICAL DEVELOPMENT

Work-life policies are a broader term that covers different aspects, but this research covers a few of them such as working environment, job security, and standard working hours. These aspects have a positive effect on employee retention. These factors are the reason behind employees' satisfaction and retention as well because if the employees are satisfied then they will be retained. It is expected that employees stay when the working environment is the same as they desired and they do if the working environment is not comfortable for them. Job flexibility is a key factor in retaining the productive staff. The previous researches showed that greater

the access of work-life policies greater will be the organizational commitment (Grover and Crooker, 1995). However, it may be considered as the competitive factor in an institution to keep the retention rate high. Hence, it is expected that:

H₁: Increased work-life policies have a significant impact on employee retention.

Rewards (monetary and non-monetary) both are one of the essential features of employee retention. Employees need motivation for their efforts and they should be motivated by giving them any kind of reward such as incentive in salary and recognition. Rewards will boost the motivation level which will make employees to work at their best. Organization reward system can influence employee's performance and their wish to remain employed (Bamberger et al., 2014; MacDuffie, 1995). There is a positive relation between rewards and employee turnover. Hence, the expected hypothesis is:

H₂: Increased rewards have a positive significant impact on employee retention.

Employees cannot reach to their fullest potential without their supervisor's support. Employees need motivation from their supervisors. Supervisor's support is the greatest strength to retain employees. Supervisors should develop good relation with employees that will influence employee retention (Fatima, 2011). A good supervisor is considered very effective in reducing employee's turnover. If there is a good relationship between employees and the supervisor, then the employees will never leave their jobs and if the relationship is not satisfactory, then employees will go for some new opportunity for sure. Hence, we expect that:

H₃: Increased supervisor support results into higher employee retention.

Career growth opportunities are always helpful in retaining employees. If employees are provided with those opportunities that will help them in their career growth, then they will definitely stay in the institution. Prince (2005) argued that employees want growth opportunities to move up in their career ladder. One of the key aspects in employee retention is investment on employee's training and career development (Messmer, 2000). Institutions must invest on training and development opportunities for those employees who can give an excellent outcome in return. If the institution is providing more growth opportunities, then the employee retention will be enhanced to a great deal (Shoaib et al., 2009). Providing opportunities to employees can enhance their skills (Otis and Pelletier, 2005).

If an institution wants to keep hold of their prolific employees, then they should invest in the training and development of their employees (Woodruffe, 1999). Career development provides the important outcomes for both the parties', that is, organizations and employees (Kyriakidou and Ozbilgin, 2004). Hence, it is expected that:

H₄: Increased growth opportunities results into higher employee retention.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Participants

The main focus of the entire research is to find out how much the private schools are capable in retaining in their employees using different determinants and how these determinants influence employee retention? All the teachers working in private schools are the participants of this research. The sample of the study was drawn from the private sector schools of Pakistan. Six private schools were selected for data collection. Convenience sampling was used for data collection and data were collected from the specific private schools of the city Lahore. The schools included are Bloomfield Hall School, Resource Academia, City School, Lahore Grammar School, Beacon House School, and Linderhof Lahore School System. The study has been restricted to private schools because of high turnover rates as the employees decide to move from one organization to another if their promises and expectations are not fulfilled or for their career objective too.

Procedures

Primary source of data was used in this study as the data were observed, administered, and collected directly by the researcher. Almost 400 questionnaires were distributed in six institutions. Out of 400 questionnaires, 350 were received back. Out of 350, 25 were rejected due to incompleteness. Hence, the response rate ($325/400 = 81.25\%$) is sufficient to continue with the collected data.

Measures

The research instrument that is used in this study is a structured questionnaire. The instrument on employee retention is constructed on the basis of previous literature on retention of employees. Shoaib et al. (2009) examined the influence of supervisor's support, rewards, career opportunities, work-life policies, and work environment

on retention of employees in telecom sector of Pakistan. The purpose of collecting data through questionnaires is that to gather direct feedback from the respondents with convenience and within short time period. The structured questionnaire which is used in this research includes some demographic information along with 32 questions. The questions in the questionnaire were based on each variable's dimensions, that is,

- Employee retention (ER): Job promotion, job satisfaction, timely feedback, optimistic thinking, and professional experience.
- Career opportunities (CO): Providing opportunities to improve interpersonal skills, providing training for delivering lectures, and training workshops.
- Work-life polices (WL): Comfortable work environment, standard working hours, job security, and good job description.
- Rewards (RW): Recognition of work, attractive salary packages, bonuses, increased motivation levels, and appreciation for employees' performance.
- Good supervision and support (GS): Freedom to share ideas, listening suggestions, motivating employees, timely and smooth communication, positive attitude of supervisors, trust, and good relationship, considering employees suggestions.

Based on the selected variables, the regression equation of the study is framed as follows:

$$ER = \alpha + \beta_1 CO + \beta_2 WL + \beta_3 RW + \beta_4 GS + \epsilon$$

RESULTS

This study has been done to find out those variables that strongly influence employee retention and the determinants that play a key role in retaining employees. The researcher wanted to explore that how the private institutions retain their staff. Are they providing them with those opportunities, rewards, policies, and support which they need to stay at that particular institution? The data collection revealed the factors that play a key role in retaining employees and those variables which they consider the most important to be committed to their institutions for longer period of time.

Reliability Analysis

The respondents of 30 questionnaires are selected for the pilot study. The questionnaires are randomly filled by the teachers working in private schools. On the basis of those responses, reliability of questionnaire is verified. Before the actual survey takes place, it is important to ensure the

reliability and quality of questionnaire. Reliability is an assessment tool which produces consistent results. To find the reliability of questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha technique was used as it is the coefficient of consistency and it is usually used to determine the reliability.

The instrument is said to be reliable if the coefficient alpha proves to be more than 60% (Cronbach, 1951). Typically, alphas of 0.6 or greater are retained for analysis (Table 1). Through SPSS reliability of whole instrument is checked which is 0.889 which means that the questionnaire is strongly reliable and further studies can be done with the same instrument.

Descriptive Analysis

The tables given below show the distribution of demographic information.

In Table 2, out of 325 employees, the percentage of females in sample data is 89.2% while males are only 10.8%. This could be one of the reasons of high turnover as females have to sometimes leave the job after getting married or due to family pressure. Similarly, the concentration of single employees is 42% while married are 58%, respectively. About 39.1% belongs to 20–30 age category, highest 40.3% belongs to 30–40 category. About 12% of employees are those who have 1 year or less than 1-year experience with the school. The 36.9% are those respondents having 2–5 years of experience. About 56% possess masters' degree, 23.7% having the bachelor's degree while only 16.3% are MS/M.Phil.

Correlation Analysis

The Pearson correlation results are explained in Table 3. From the table, it is clear that the highest correlation exists between work-life policies and employee retention, that is, 0.344 and it is significant at 0.01 level. However, correlation among rewards, supervisor's support, growth opportunities, and employee retention are 0.175, 0.184, and 0.111, respectively. The private schools will flourish if employee retention would be increased by practicing independent variables more appropriately.

Regression Analysis

Regression analysis is one to find out the effect of independent variables on the dependent variable and to study their relationships regression analysis is done (Table 4).

The first table in the regression analysis is labeled as "model summary." It gives us the measures of how well our model fits and how well our predictor, employee retention is able to predict the independent variables. The value of adjusted R-square is 0.13. It means that 13% of the variance in employee retention can be explained by work-life policies and rewards.

Table 5 shows the regression estimates. Using stepwise regression, the first model considers only one predictor variable that is, work-life policies with R square value

Table 1: Reliability statistics

Cronbach's alpha	N of items
0.889	30

Table 2: Demographic analysis

	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	35	10.8
Female	290	89.2
Total	325	100.0
Marital Status		
Single	136	41.8
Married	189	58.2
Total	325	100.0
Age		
20–30	127	39.1
30–40	131	40.3
40–50	47	14.5
50 and above	20	6.2
Total	325	100.0
Years of Experience		
1 year or less	42	12.9
2–5	120	36.9
5–10	88	27.1
10–20	66	20.3
20–30	9	2.8
Total	325	100.0
Education Level		
Bachelors	77	23.7
Masters	2	56
MS/M.Phil	53	16.3
Other	13	4
Total	325	100.0

11.8%. However, the second model includes two predictor variables, that is, work-life policies and rewards with R square value 13%. Remaining variable shows insignificant values therefore omitted from the model.

Hypothesis 01

Hypothesis 01 states that increase in work-life policies will have a positive significant effect on retention of employees. It means that the more the work-life policies in the institute, the more the employees will be retained. This statement is supported as shown by the results, that is, $r = 0.344$ means that correlation is significant up to 0.01 level.

The B value for work-life policies is 0.551, which means that WLP has a 55.1% influence on employee retention. The table also showed the t value, that is, 6.065, it means that it is significant up to 0.01 level. It revealed that the

Table 3: Pearson's correlation

	ER	CO	WL	RW	GS
ER	1				
CO	0.111*	1			
WL	0.344**	0.185**	1		
RW	0.175**	0.477**	0.199**	1	
GS	0.184**	0.625**	0.387**	0.678**	1

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two tailed).

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (two tailed)

Table 4: Model summary

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R square	Std. error of the estimate
1	0.344 ^a	0.118	0.115	3.26
2	0.360 ^b	0.130	0.124	3.24

more the work-life policies, the more will be the retained employees.

Hence, our results proved the predicted hypothesis. Hence, we accept the alternative hypothesis (H1).

Hypothesis 02

Hypothesis 02 states that increased rewards will have a positive significant effect on employee retention. It means that the more rewards provided to employees, the more will be the employee are retained. The statement is supported as the correlation is significant up to 0.01 level, that is, 0.175.

The B value of rewards is 0.135, which showed that rewards have 13.5% influence on staff retention. The table also shows the t value, that is, 2.083 and is significant up to the level of 0.05. It revealed that increase in rewards will have a positive considerable impact on employee retention.

Hence, the results proved the prediction. Hence, we accept the alternative hypothesis (H2).

Hypothesis 03

The third hypothesis states that increase in supervisor's support will have a positive significant effect on employee retention. It means that the more the supervisor's support, the more will be the retained employee as supported by the results, that is, $r = 0.184$ means that relationship is significant up to 0.01 level.

From the results, it is revealed that the p value is greater than the significance level which means that increased supervisor's support does not result into higher employee retention. The null hypothesis (H₀) is accepted.

Table 5: Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. error			
1					
Constant	29.1	1.966		14.851	0.000
WLP	0.589	0.089	0.344	6.578	0.000
2					
Constant	27.17	2.183		12.448	0.000
WLP	0.551	0.091	0.322	6.065	0.000**
R	0.135	0.065	0.111	2.083	0.038*

**Significant at the 0.01 level. *Significant at the 0.05 level

Hypothesis 04

Hypothesis 4 states that increased growth opportunities have a positive significant effect on employee retention. It means that the more the opportunities to grow, the more will be the employee are retained as supported by the outcome, that is, $r = 0.175$ means that relationship is significant up to 0.05 level.

This variable is excluded as the results are not significant which means that the increased growth opportunities do not result in higher employee retention. Hence, the null hypothesis H_0 is accepted.

The variables of hypotheses 3 and 4 are rejected as they are not statistically significant. These two variables, that is, growth opportunities and supervisor's support do not show any impact on employee retention in the private school's setting. Table 6 summarizes the overall conclusion regarding the acceptance of stated hypotheses.

DISCUSSION

The study has contributed both theoretically and methodologically to the literature. The wide purpose of the study as stated earlier was to identify the determinants of employee retention. Similarly, the study sought to determine those variables that have a noteworthy positive influence on employee retention in the private schools. The findings of the study help the school's management in formulating effectual retention approach using the suitable variables. In addition, the study helps to bridge the gap in literature and advance the boundary of knowledge.

Four hypotheses were generated from the literature review. Out of four, two alternative hypotheses are accepted and

Table 6: Summary of results

Hypothesis	Results	Supported
H_1 : Increase in work-life policies will have a strong influence on employee retention	$r=0.344$ $P=0.000$	Yes
H_2 : Increased rewards have a positive significant impact on employee retention.	$r=0.175$ $P=0.038$	Yes
H_3 : Increased growth opportunities results into higher employee retention	$r=0.111$ $P=0.764$	No
H_4 : Increase in supervisor's support results into higher employee retention	$r=0.184$ $P=0.474$	No

two null hypotheses are accepted. The study found work-life policies and rewards as motivational variables that have a positive significant influence on employee retention in private sector institutions. The results were supported by the previous studies, for example, supportive work-life policies can be the reason in retaining employees for longer time period (Richman et al., 2008). Monetary rewards significantly increase employee retention (Pillay, 2009).

The foremost rationale behind this study was to explore the impact of rewards, work-life policies, supervisors' support, and career opportunities on employee retention. The results of this study show that work-life policies have a positive significant effect on retaining private schools' staff. It means that work-life policies are the foremost determinant of employee retention in private schools. Institutions need to monitor the level of work-life policies to strengthen the relationship between employees and the institution.

The results of this study found that rewards have a positive significant influence on employee retention among the employees of private schools. An enhanced reward in institution also enhances job commitment (Boyd and Sutherland, 2006). It means that increased rewards result into higher employee retention in private sector schools. It means that most of the employees will feel valued whenever they receive rewards from the institution. Kreitner and Kinicki (2006) stated that rewards are one of the factors that create job commitment.

The consequences of the study show that supervisor's support does not help in retaining employees of private schools. The results showed that there is no substantial relationship between employee retention and supervisor's support. From the third hypothesis, it is revealed that supervisor's support does not result into higher employee retention in private schools setting. Thus, it is not proved to be the influential variable in retaining employees. However, descriptive analysis showed that supervisor's support plays a key role in retaining employees as it has the highest mean value amongst the independent variables. The outcome of this study showed that career opportunities do not influence employee retention among private schools' employees. The results showed that there is no association between career opportunities and employee retention. From hypothesis 4, it is revealed that career opportunities do not result into higher employee retention in private schools setting.

Limitation and Directions of Future Research

The researcher is limited in scope of research work as the current study is limited only to obtain data from the teaching

staff working in private schools from Lahore region. Further, there are other antecedents within the employee work-life that may have specified impact on employee retention, these antecedents must be incorporated in future research.

CONCLUSION

Employee retention is a phenomenon which is perceived to negatively impact the success of the organization. Previous attempts in this regard have shown divergent antecedents of employee retention with respect to the nature of the environment. This study contributes to the ongoing debate and sought to determine those variables having noteworthy influence on employee's retention in private schools of Pakistan. To find how an organization can retain their employees, this study examines different antecedents which can be helpful to the organizations in retaining their employees. The antecedents which are used in this study are rewards, work-life policies, good supervision and support, and career opportunities. The research findings support the positive influence of rewards and work-life balance on employee's retention while supervisor's support and career opportunities do not promote employees retention in private schools in Pakistan.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

The authors state that the submitted work is an original work. All the articles or journals referred to have been duly cited in text and in references attached. The authors state that they have no issue in regard to publication of the article under the Indian Journal of Commerce and Management. The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

There are no conflicts of interest.

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