

Part 5

Law and Education

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Examine Important Strategic Roles of Leadership and Management of Teachers' Retention and Impact on Organisational Performance with Reference to an HE Institution in Inner London

Abstract

The paper has focused on important leadership and management strategic roles in employee retention with reference to a London higher education institute. It analyses some of the reasons for high turnover and theories around effective leadership and management roles in retaining hard working employees, with reference to teachers in a higher education institution in inner London cities. When discussing teachers, it includes lecturers that teach in higher education. Retaining hard working teachers has been an issue in HE institutions, particularly, since the Brexit and Covid 19 crisis, therefore, important to explore the issue in the context of the leadership and management strategic roles to reduce high turnover. The mini research uses mixed methods, quantitative and qualitative data collection with thematic analysis of the key findings from literature and comments from teachers on why they will like to stay or leave their jobs for another employer. Having sampled the opinions of small sampled participants and the literature sourced, it is obvious that teacher retention is a big issue in education with some teachers wanting to leave or stay. Those wanting to stay will do so if they are motivated with better pay and compensation and effective leadership and management of education institute and those leaving would live due to poor pay and heavy workload. The most interesting to note is that most of the participants love the job they do as long as their students are achieving their qualifications.

Keywords: retention, achievement, students, strategies, teachers, leaders, management and organizational performance

Introduction

Every organisation has a purpose to do a successful business, be it a public or privately owned organisation, making money, and providing good services as primary

purpose. The same applies to education institutions in London. To be successful in any business, employee is key, which requires effective recruitment and retention strategy as important key to organisational success and for effective recruitment is leadership and management of talent and retention of employees. The focus of this paper will be based on effective leadership and management strategic role in retaining hard working and committed employees in an organisation with reference to teachers in a higher education institution in inner London cities. Employee retention is crucial for a successful business and without employee's commitment in an organisation; there will be challenges of high turnover that can lead to organisational failures. There are various reasons why we must take employee retention seriously. It helps us to prevent losing our talented employees from leaving (James & Mathew, 2012).

Talent management of employees stemmed from the 1990s based on the establishment of many multinational companies which affects education institutions globally, as they sort the best strategies for employee retention. This has become one of the most difficult jobs of education HR in relation to teacher retention, hence a big issue and challenge in the UK institutions, particularly in recruiting permanent staff in non-traditional universities (newly formed universities in partnership with traditional universities).

Employee turnover is crucial and recognised worldwide, hence most organisations thrive to find out the problems behind high turnover and seek for strategies to manage and improve employee retention, particularly in a UK education with reference to teachers.

Literature review

In the early 20s, the key focus of the retention studies was on student attrition where the previous research examined 9 key strategies promoting student retention in FE Colleges in London (Achinewhu-Nworgu, 2007). It is time to extend the studies to teacher retention strategies in higher education. Reading journal articles, books and work done by other researchers and teachers' comments, employee retention began to make sense. The idea is to find out why some of the UK non-traditional universities have retention challenges for potential and permanent teachers, hence, leading to using more of the associate teachers instead of full time permanent to cover classes. From the literature, many factors emerged that focused on examining the strategic role of leadership and management in retaining hard working teachers and impact on organisational performance. The key objectives are to:

- Explore the importance of employee retention;
- Analyse the reasons why employees (teachers) leave an employer;
- Evaluate some models and concepts on strategic leadership and management roles in retaining hard working employees in relation to teachers' retention;
- Present participants' comments on reasons why they will stay or leave an employer;
- Suggest measures to improve retention of hard working employees.

Employee retention is essential in gaining competitive advantage and helps in developing a high performing team in the field of specialisation of tasks and in collaboration amongst team members, speaking from observation of the impact of high turnover as an employee in education, hence leadership and management role to reduce high turnover is vital.

Why some employees (teachers) leave their employer?

Herzberg's two factor theory helps us to answer the question raised. There are several reasons to why employees may leave their employment to another employer or even decide not to work anymore. Some employees would leave a job because of job dissatisfaction as in the theory of Herzberg motivation, known as hygiene factors that can affect employees at work, such as company policy, supervision, interpersonal relationship with managers and colleagues, working conditions and salary that can motivate if positive in a job and can demotivate if in absence (Herzberg, Mausner & Snyderman, 1959), also, not happy in a job due to toxic environment (James & Mathew, 2012) can lead to demotivation. Other reasons could be leaving for better opportunities elsewhere or better pay, study, family or moving to leave in another country or dismissed by employer due to poor performance leading to two categories of turnover, turnover initiated by employees and turnover decided by employers. Turnover caused by employees is termed voluntary where employees have valid reasons to leave and turnover decided by employers occurs when restructuring due to challenges of work or changes taking place to reduce costs of labour (Allen, Bryant & Vardaman, 2010). In addition, bad attitudes and work pressure (Singh, 2019) cannot be controlled by organisation management. Maslow (1970) highlights the importance of meeting the basic needs of life and when employees are working and not able to earn good money to meet the basic needs of life, they would look for alternatives. Whatever is the reason behind high turnover of teachers in most of the non-traditional education institutions in the UK, imposes big challenges to the institutions and those staying as they have to take extra roles to cover for leavers on temporary basis in addition to their main jobs, for the institutions, is a brain drain, some employees face uncertainty as they are not able to meet up with the demands of the employers and also could lead to competition from other rivals (Terera & Ngirande, 2014).

Strategic role of leaders and managers in retaining hard working employees

Retaining hard working teachers is crucial in leadership and management strategic roles. As identified in the research, there are three important aspects of leadership role, maintaining corporate culture and values, fair and inclusive HR practices and full managerial support for employee development (Doh, Stumpf & Tymon, 2011). Added to this, is a good relationship with employees that is established by a leader or manager that can help improve retention. According to Kaye and Jordan-Evans (2002), a good boss can have the influence to persuade employees to stay in a job, however, when a manager lacks good relationship with employees or team, it will lead to demotivation and low morale, hence forcing employees to leave. On the hand, a leader's style can determine the success or failure of employee retention (Budhiraja & Malhora, 2013). This will depend on autocratic leadership style that tend to scare employees as the leader may impose his/her authority and manage with intimidation without employees contribution in decision making. A democratic leadership style is more favourable as the leader involves employees in some aspects of decision making, however, effective leadership style will depend on the situation and a leader that adapts to a style appropriate to the organisational environment will be more suitable in retaining employees, although this will also depend on type of employees and the environment of the business.

Education management is drifting from democratic to authoritarian management style that is geared to achieving results, increased student numbers and make profit and how much considered for quality and concerns for students are questionable. Hardworking teachers are much more concerned with quality education, student retention and achievement, therefore, derive their motivation from quality of teaching and learning, student retention and achievement, hence will like to remain in their jobs longer with their employers regard less of low pay and hectic working condition as long as the students are achieving their qualifications. The role of leadership and management in motivating hard working employees or teams cannot be ignored in retention.

Armstrong (2012) defines leadership and management as the practice of encouraging others to give their best in order to accomplish a set goal. This includes creating and sharing vision, inspiring people and engagement. Others have identified attitudes (Neese & Smith, 1995) and impact on employee commitments in an organisation, coupled with the styles adopted in managing and leading people that can contribute to success or failure, hence leading to retention issues (Budhiraja & Malhotra, 2013). When an organisation has high turnover as in the case of a London based education institution, it signifies a failure or poor management of employees, leading to lack of commitment, demotivation to perform and prolonged job dissatisfaction, all can also lead to employee leaving for better opportunities outside their institution. Some teachers are employed full time elsewhere, they take up part-time jobs to make up their pay, they are hardly committed fully to their part-time jobs, some will disappear after teaching to avoid marking in some cases, this creates extra work for permanent staff, hence leading to demotivation and in some cases decision to leave their jobs due to excessive workload.

An effective leadership and management role in recruitment and selection is also important in retaining employees as well as good policies put in place for talent management. Again, this is an important strategy that a leader needs to recognise the importance of embedding positive policies and practical implementation of good recruitment and selection that will be attractive to employees to remain in their jobs. Example of effective policy could be recruiting the right people and putting measures in place to retain them, however, the present challenges faced by non-traditional universities in recruiting teachers has meant getting some people from the industries to teach and manage education, which results to some not able to stay longer as they struggle to manage education activities that is different from managing a company. It is important for leaders and managers of education to ensure effective organisational systematic approach to recruitment and selection of teachers to improve employee turnover. However, there are some financial implications involved in attracting the right people in a job such as cost of advertisement, good pay and motivation of employees will make employee remain with an employer, although this will depend in employee preferences.

Employee training offered is an aspect of retention. Training helps employees to acquire skills and enhances their performance, ability to solve problems, builds their confidence and competence in the job. As identified in research (Bassi & Van Buren, 1999), employee competence and professional advancement is primary key to improve retention, acquired through training. Development on the other hand is also identified as an opportunity for employee's personal growth achieved through promotion (Horwitz, Heng & Quazi, 2003) that enables high commitment and in return, leads to

retention. This is an important role of a leader and manager in education working hand in hand with HR department, given teachers the opportunity for training and development to make them more compete that can lead to improved commitment and motivation to remain with an institution, particularly at the present time of hybridisation, delivering partly online and face to face expected from teachers, requires continuous training and development to keep abreast with technology heavily required in present day teaching and learning.

Job related training can improve the ability of employees in problem-solving, making the employees committed through the skills gained on the job which is likely to make them remain with the employer (Hong et al., 2012). For some institutions in the UK, including the HE institution used for the study, the option of investing on recruiting trainee teachers is helping to solve some of the retention problems, but can create more jobs for permanent teachers that mentor and support the trainees during their training period. Some do not complete the training due to workload and stress related issues that can lead to job dissatisfaction for the money they get while on training, compared to the workload and administrative duties involved in teaching. A transformational leadership style is highly effective in development of employees through training, investing on trainee teaches is a good option to improve problem of labour shortages, but retaining them can be also challenging, as some leave before or after their training for better opportunities elsewhere, hence still lives the institution with shortage of teachers and in most cases, high cost of training and yet may not retain the trainee.

Most employees, including teachers expect good pay and compensation in the job they do and when they are well paid, moral and performance increases. Whatever is the case, pay and compensation is an important aspect for employee decision to stay or leave their organisations. The challenges here is that leaders and managers in education are more cost conscious and keeping an eye on the budget, and when a teacher demands pay higher than budgeted, retention issue arises as pay is restricted by employer when it exceeds the proposed salary level (Menefee & Murphy, 2004). Performance related pay is another aspect of pay that improves high turnover. Monetary aspect of pay and compensation are important strategy for keeping employees in a job, although this will depend on individual teacher's motivating factor and expectations. Performance appraisal is a useful method that is used in different forms to retain teachers if the outcome is positive, also, it is used to identify training needs or increased pay. However, this will depend on management perception and outcome of the appraisal process. Most performance appraisal is for formality these days and paper documentations than its aimed purpose, although as affirmed by Hytter (2007), there is a correlation between reward and retention which is why education leaders and managers need to consider improving attrition and organisational effectiveness through increased pay and compensation for the hard working teachers.

Data collection

Having discussed the relevant literature, the research explored the views of staff on retention using mixed methods, quantitative and qualitative data collection. The interview targeted 15 teachers which is reasonable for the mini research and has enabled gathering good data which is reasonable to compare with the literature sources. Care was taken to ensure that participant's comments were protected using coding for

confidentiality as reassured them. Some staff declined the interview because of their time to complete the interview questions.

Conclusion

As discussed above, teacher's retention is important worldwide and mainly in higher education institutions in London. The research and comments from the teachers identified strategies to improve retention and teachers' morale in their jobs. What emerged clearly were the important leadership and management strategic roles in retaining hard working teachers through better pay and compensation. Those wanting to stay will do so if they are motivated with better pay and compensation, recruitment and selection of more permanent teachers to offset heavy workload, effective leadership and management and more training and development opportunities to embrace current changes in work practices. The teachers wishing to leave or left would do so due to demotivation based on low pay, poor working conditions, poor relationship with leaders and management of education.

Suggestions made by all the 15 participants interviewed to improve retention and teacher's morale were, more pay for teachers, effective leadership and management of academic environment that they believe should be different from managing a company or private sector business.

What was more interesting from the results was that most teachers love the job they do and achievement of their students will make them stay in their role. The future research will aim to present the full comments from individual participants, target bigger population and other institutions to compare with the current research findings.

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