

*Full Length Research Paper*

# Employee retention relationship to training and development: A compensation perspective

Atif Anis<sup>1</sup>, Ijaz-Ur-Rehman<sup>2</sup>, Abdul Nasir<sup>1</sup> and Nadeem Safwan<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Iqra University Islamabad, Pakistan.

<sup>2</sup>SZABIST Islamabad Campus, Pakistan.

<sup>3</sup>Foundation University, Islamabad Pakistan.

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Employee retention is a critical aspect for every company regarding competitive advantage because human resource is the most critical asset of today's modern world. Other resources can be arranged effortlessly but to get efficient and retain talented human capital is the most difficult task. Therefore, organizations are now more focused towards employee retention. Organizations use different HR techniques for retention. Our main emphasis is on compensation packages after employee training and development practices for retention purposes. We will also see how a relaxed work environment will help in the retention of employees. For this purpose, we conducted this study in Lahore and collected data from corporate groups. The numbers of respondents in our study are 330. For analysis we used the structural equation modeling technique with the use of AMOS 18.0. In this study, we used compensation as the mediating variable between the training and retention of employees. Results reveal that retaining employee's long term, after their training and development has been completed, without increasing their compensations is not as favorable as when compensation is increased to reflect the completion ability to apply their field related skills and capabilities.

**Key words:** Retention, training and development, compensation, work environment.

## INTRODUCTION

The fundamental concept of recent times is a resource based view (RBV). According to this view, there are three types of resources, which act as sources of competitive advantage: physical capital, organizational capital and human capital (Barney and Wright, 1998). To manage these resources, in this era of competitive advantage, is an important task, especially the latter of the three. As we know, that technological sophistication and the transfer of information is speedy, therefore, every firm can get the first two resources. This diminished the competitive advantages that firms could make of us in earlier eras. Therefore, every firm can easily copy the products and get the first two resources; those firms, which give new ideas or show creativity can now survive. This shows that nonhuman resources cannot give much advantage to any firm, because their availability is no longer an issue now for any firm. It

means that human resource is the major difference in the firms which are competing, and it creates a lasting and substantial impact. Therefore, retention of, influencing and keeping potential employees is a crucial matter. Investment will be used for attracting and retaining employees that contribute to competitive advantage.

Organizations are more concerned about turnover of their employees because turnover is upsetting, both for employees and employers.

According to the employers point of view, they lost their human capital, so organization has to bear hiring cost, and other organizational costs (Huang, 2005; Lockwood, 1999). Turnover of employees may be voluntary or involuntary. Involuntary employee loss relates to poor performance, conflict or other problems, while voluntary separations are due to better opportunities in other companies (Deckop et al., 2006). As turnover is upsetting for organizations, consequently, firms try to retain their existing employees. This retention of employees and their valued skills helps the firm to preserve their investment of employee training,

\*Corresponding author. E-mail: [drkashif@iqraisb.edu.pk](mailto:drkashif@iqraisb.edu.pk).

this yields lower turnover, which causes lower loss of human capital (Acton and Golden 2003). As a result, for every organization growth, talent management is the key. Therefore, to retain an employee, the organization has to take some steps, otherwise turnover which is due to stress, unsatisfactory working environment, low-job satisfaction and less benefits becomes a problem.

Previous researches show that employers use different techniques for the retention of employees such as training, work environment, compensation, etc. Labour shortage is a major concern for an organization, and an organization's main aim is to retain the employees, especially talented employees (Moncarz et al., 2008; Deckop et al., 2006; Huang et al., 2003; Glen, 2006), and these researches also proved that these variables greatly affect retention. The afore-mentioned variables are very useful regarding the employee's satisfaction which augments their commitment with the organization; as a result, the productivity increases.

Most researchers use these variables like working environment, training and development, and compensation to observe their effect separately, on how working environment affect employee turnover, how employee can be retained through training and development, and what are the impacts of compensation (Deckop et al., 2006; Acton and Golden 2003; Bhattacharyya et al., 2008). Few researchers also relate training and wages, in which they observe the effect of training on wage expectations (Renger, 2002; Hocquet, 1999; Dearden et al., 2005; Meer and Ringdal, 2009; Schùne, 2001; Renaud, 2009). No one focused on how employee can be retained after training, if they are not properly compensated. However, the effect of what will happen, if an employee is not properly compensated after his training, and whether he is satisfied or not and does not want to stay with the company, because after training his skills improved, is seen in this paper. As a consequence, he has more opportunities of switching.

## Literature review

### *Training and development*

In this era of development, where technology changes every now and then, training becomes the prerequisite for every organization to remain in the global market. Organizations cannot rely only on conventional specialisms, but to compete in the future, they must develop their employee skills, because it is a century of productivity and quality. Training is defined "as the planned intervention that is designed to enhance the determinants of individual job performance" (Chiaburu and Tekleab, 2005, p. 29; Sahinidis, 2008). The organization suffers in quality and implementation due to lack of training (Barden, 1997; Stewart and Waddell, 2003). Basically, the concept of training came from changes gained by learning, although

change is necessary for human development. In this promising organizational reality for survival, a company must be equipped with characteristics of adaptability, flexibility and permanence. With these qualities, the survival of a company can be achieved through training and development of their employees (Al-Khayyat and Elgamal, 1997). Training is, basically, a practical education through which knowledge and skills develop, experience and inefficiencies are overcome and closer approximation can be achieved. It is mostly related to the current job and the on going situation. On the other hand, development is the process of developing for future jobs (Gravan, 1997). Training must be need based; as such, the firm should, first, do assessment on whether training is required or not. For this purpose, rigorous training needs performed assessment, that shows why and where the training is required (Al-Khayyat, 1998), and also scrutinize which employee need training and who should be trained for development purpose (Frank and Jaffee, 1995; Murk et al., 2000). Some times, training is not effective, because firm gives specific training to the employees since these skills were not fully transferred to them. As a result, it is neither beneficial for the employee nor for the organization. To check its effectiveness, training and resources must be audited. In this way, the best possible results can be achieved from training (Adamson and Caple, 1996; Huang, 2005; Rowe, 1998).

According to Deckop et al. (2006) and Griffith et al. (2000), development reduces the turnover rate of employees. Advancement opportunities not only reduce absenteeism, but also increase employee commitment and satisfaction which helps in reducing turnover. The mentor role and job challenges, recognition and organizational programs play a vital role in the development of employee management skills (Burke et al., 1998). Development opportunities encourage employees to adjust with difficulties on the job and enhance the chance to remain in their current job (Deckop et al., 2006). Training is an important part of various HRM practices, which are used for retention and development of employees due to these different kinds of training given to employees, like on-the-job training, vocational training, general and specific training, etc. (Hocquet, 1999; Ranger, 2002).

Effective mentor is needed in an organization, because through him, the best transfer of training is possible. Consequently, the best result from training can be achieved. As much as he is supportive and can deliver a thing timely and correctly, he will be respected by his colleagues and the employee get maximum support from him, by growing and succeeding (Cromwell, 2004). Generally, employees expect greater responsibility in the job after their training; in this situation, retention can be increased. According to Shaw et al. (1998), training is positively related to discharge rate, and because of this organizations initiate training program to train lower skilled employees. On-the-job, training affects the wages

of employees positively, and it means that worker training will increase his hourly wage, because these trainings increase individual capabilities and enhance employee's skills, which will in turn create an impact on the growth of the organization and the country (Schone, 2000; Deckop et al., 2006).

Many researchers proved the perceived link between training and performance such as the one highlighted in exchange theory. In the modern era, it is evident by the proved practices that employees' training not only enhances the performances in one aspect of business, but also gives the visible positive changes as focused by Waterman et al. (1994). Training is further categorized into two segments for HRD in respect to general and specific. The general training leads to the internship offer to the employees, while specific training is reserved for the increased productivity at the work station level. Delaney and Huselid (1996) stated that compensation system is based on excellence in outcomes that result to employee performance. In this case, employee performance can be derived from specific training for a particular task.

**H<sub>1</sub>:** There is a positive relationship between training and compensation.

**Compensation:** Different people interpret compensation differently. In this paper compensation, reward, recognition and wages are terms used in different situations (Zobal, 1998). Compensation is defined by an American association as "cash and non-cash remuneration provided by the employer for services rendered" (ACA, p. 9). In the organization's point of view, retention of employees is the major concern, while compensation and benefits is one of the best initiatives which a company can take to retain employees. Compensation is a very valuable tool for retention and turnover. It is also a motivator for an employee to be committed to the organization, which in result enhances attraction and retention (Zobal, 1998; Moncarz et al., 2009; Chiu et al., 2002). It also works as a communicator when it is given to the employee against his services which shows how much an employee is valuable for its organization (Zobal, 1998). As such, the important components of compensation are based on salary, merit pays, discretionary rewards or bonuses, which attract best employees (Chiu et al., 2002). This compensation and reward system also increases employee performance (Deckop et al., 2006; Moncarz et al., 2009; Zsidisin et al., 2003). The financial and non-financial compensation are given to employees for accomplishment of desired goals against their behaviour. Reward can be spontaneous and formal, even though pay for performance is the form of reward which is given based on performance (Zobal, 1998).

Compensation also shapes the culture of an organization. Culture may be individualistic or collectivistic, that is, it depends on the organizational characteristics and

members of the organization (Kuhun, 2009; Zobal, 1998). Compensation is one of the most important tools for attracting and retaining employees. It is used to attract the potential candidates, because applicants want to be aware of it, while applying for vacancy (Kuhun, 2009; Boyd, 2000; Zobal, 1998; Chiu et al., 2002; Moncarz et al., 2009; Lawler, 1994). Those organizations which have a high-wage system will have better recruitment and retention of employees as compared to others. Efficient wage system influences the employees for longer retention, because if an employee gets better reward internally, he would like to stay until his self-interest is fulfilled there. An employee can switch if he gets better opportunity in the external environment (Moncarz et al., 2009; Shaw et al., 1998).

Recognizing an employee is less expensive and is a very effective tool for the retention of employees. If an employee feels he is given recognition by his organization, it will boost his morale and encourage positive behaviour towards work. This will encourage an employee to do his work willingly and efficiently. So, the result of this is that the employee will be more satisfied; therefore, he will stay longer (<http://www.therainmakergroupinc.com>).

**H<sub>2</sub>:** There is a positive relationship between compensation and employee retention.

**Working environment:** Working environment enhances the employee capability and commitment with the organization. It is a vital concept in employee retention. Researchers give monumental importance to the working environment, and without good working environment, keeping human capital becomes a problem for the organization (Edvardsson and Gustavsson, 2003; Bloemer and Schroder, 2006; Ensor et al., 2006; Deckop et al., 2006; Moncarz et al., 2009; Deery, 2008; McGuire, 2008). An organization not just only create an environment that attract human capital, but also try to retain experienced, knowledgeable and creative employees (Acton and Golden, 2003). Work environment can be more effective than compensation in employee retention, because if an employee is more satisfied and committed, and if he has a positive experience of the working environment, he would likely stay longer with his current employer (Moncarz et al., 2009). An employee will be committed if he has a positive perception about his organization; by that means, he must be appreciated for demonstrating persuasive skills. This appreciation will encourage him to do his best and stay longer, because these kinds of HR practices are a good source of employee development (Deckop et al., 2006). Organizational culture, if rigid and bureaucratic in nature and if it has power distance, can create hurdles in the implementation of changes. Power distance between the employer and employee creates communication gap, which is one of the main cause of lessening the employee commitment (Begley et al., 2002; Govindarajulu and Dail, 2004). To

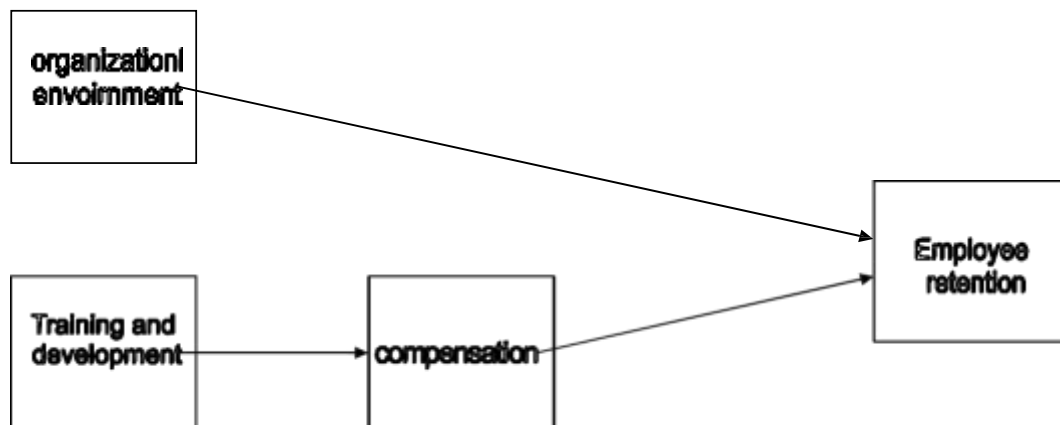


Figure 1. The research model.

compete in the market, an organization must have a flexible culture (which enhances employees' commitment) that will support employees, so that they can be risk takers. Those organizations which keep the working environment relaxed, so that employees can enjoy their work and see it as fun and not stress, will have employees' retention, because as much as they are relaxed, their efficiency will increase.

Organizations must adopt the values and norms that invoke employees to contribute to environmental improvement (Govindarajulu and Daily, 2004; Moncarz et al., 2009), and must care for their employees and develop a culture which depicts that employers give importance to their employees (Moncarz et al., 2009). The research shows that employers properly communicate with their employees and give them a democratic style of the environment, so that they are well aware of the organization's strategies and are less interrupted. In this way, they can give their maximum performance (Govindarajulu and Daily, 2004). Employee involvement and employee empowerment are great tools used for employee satisfaction. Employee involvement (EI) can be described as "a participative process to use the entire capacity of workers, designed to encourage employee commitment to organizational success" (Cotton, 1993, p. 3). As much as an employee is relaxed and has the freedom to take decision, he will be more committed. Empowerment and involvement enhances his capabilities and motivates him to participate in the organizational environment (Moncarz et al., 2009; Govindarajulu and Daily, 2004).

Personal life has a great perspective for every employee, because the family is incredibly important for employees. If the work place is flexible and organizations treat employees as human beings "and not machines", and if organizations provide them proper opportunity to balance their working life and personal life, and do not overload them with work that create stress for them, the employees will be motivated to stay longer (Moncarz et

al., 2009; Richman et al., 2008). Properly facilitating employees can resilient them from mental stress; this scenario will increase commitment and productivity. Work-life policies and supervisor support, greatly affect behavioral and psychological instinct of the employee, and in turn, if this situation exists, it will lower work-life conflict. This lowering of work to family conflict will also decrease the behavioural and job dissatisfaction and increase employee retention (Richman et al., 2008; Gentry, 2007). If an employee has a good relationship with peers, it will create a productive environment, enhance his capabilities and increase his retention of information. Peers share their work with each other, and this enhances their knowledge and skills. On the other hand, a relaxed environment will keep the employee intact with the organization for a longer period (Cromwell, 2004).

**H<sub>3</sub>:** The high quality working environment is positively related to employee retention.

Figure 1 in the foregoing shows the relationship of the variables and the structural equation model help to measure the impact of training and development through the compensation on employee retention. It further reveals the importance of work environment on employee retention.

## METHODOLOGY

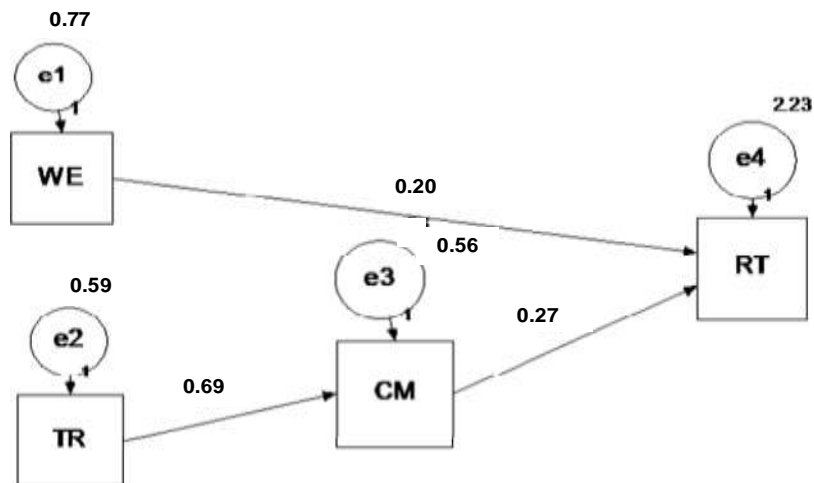
### Sample

For the purpose of data collection, this study focused on the primary data collection method. For data collection, questionnaires are circulated among the employees of the banking and manufacturing sector. The people are reluctant to provide information; therefore, the response rate is low. The expectation rate is higher for this study, but only 330 employees responded. Another reason for the low number of respondents is the current economic crises which discouraged employees to give data because of insecurity

**Table 1.** Hypotheses test based on regression weights.

	Paths		Estimate	S.E	C.R	P	Decision
CM	<-----	TR	0.695	0.046	14.982	0.000	Supported
RT	<-----	WE	0.204	0.081	2.501	0.012	Supported
RT	<-----	CM	0.273	0.078	6.516	0.000	Supported

CM = Compensation, TR = Training, WE = Work environment, RT= Employee retention.

**Figure 2.** Estimated path diagram of the research model.

and less opportunity for jobs. As such, data were collected through personal visitation to the offices of the companies.

### Measures

Questionnaires were taken from different research articles; because of this, their validity and reliability cannot be argued. The variables used in this study are measured through the five point likert scale ranging from 1 = very low, to 5 = high. The questions on work environment were taken from the study of Moncarz et al. (2009) (for example, your establishment offers a work-life balance environment for employees) and were amended according to the environment, so that data collection would not become a problem and people can understand the items. Five items were adapted for measuring this variable. For the purpose of training and development measurement, six items were adapted from the study of Moncarz et al. (2009). Employee recognition, reward and compensation was also measured by using the items employed in the study of Moncarz et al. (2009), (for example, employees were rewarded/recognized for achieving individual goals/objectives), and six items were used in this process. Retention of employee was assessed through three questions which were measured using seven point likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree, to 7 = strongly agree, and taken from Michigan Organizational Assessment Questionnaire (Lee et al., 2008).

### RESULTS

The results of the hypothesis test, as regards the

relationship between constructs including training and development, compensation, work environment and retention, are shown in Table 1. Table 1 shows that the Beta value is 0.695 between TR and CM, and the relationship is evident from the analysis that if there is one degree change in TR, there would be 69.5% change in CM. The value of Beta between WE and RT is 0.204 which shows that if there is one degree change in WE, it brings 20.4% change in RT, and in the same pattern, the value of Beta is 0.273 which depicts that if there is one degree change in CM, it causes 27.3% change in RT. The analysis highlights the relationships between TR and CM, whereas WE, CM and RT are statistically significant ( $P < 0.05$ ).

Figure 2 shows the relationship among the variables and the model helps to measure the impact of training and development through the compensation on employee retention. It further reveals the regression coefficient of work environment on employee retention is 0.20, whereas regression coefficient of training and development on compensation is 0.69, it shows the strong relationship to each other and the regression coefficient of compensation on retention is 0.27.

Table 2 indicates model fitness indices, as significant regression paths do not necessarily mean that the model is fit. The table reveals six (6) model fitness criteria. The model chi-Square (Chi) and associated significant value

**Table 2.** Fit indices of the model.

Chi-square	Df	P-value	Chi-square/Df	GFI	AGFI	CFI	RMSEA
134.653	5	0.000	26.9306	0.963	0.941	0.917	0.0645

indicates that this criteria does not fulfill the minimum requirement of the model fitness as the significant value is less than the level of significance ( $P < 0.05$ ), indicating discrepancies factors in the model; whereas, the corresponding chi-square value is also greater than 2 as suggested by Tabachnick and Fidell (2007), to as low as 2.0 (Wheaton et al., 1977) and as high as 5.0. Chi-square lack of it might be one of the possible reasons that are indicated by Bentler and Bonnet (1980) and Joreskog and Sorbom (1993) that Chi-square is sensitive to the sample size and that it almost rejected the model when the sample size is large.

Another fitness measure is goodness of fit index (GFI), and by convention, the value of GFI equal to or greater than 0.90 is acceptable (Schumacker and Lomax, 2004). This criteria fulfill the minimum acceptance level of the fit model ( $GFI > 0.90$ ) and AGFI is a variant of the goodness of fit which adjusted the goodness of fit index for the degree of freedom. Further criteria include CFI (comparative fit index), which is a revised form of NFI (norm fit index). The suggested value for CFI is equal or greater than 0.90 (Hooper et al., 2008). RMSEA (root mean square error of approximation) show optimally, the chosen parameters that would fit the population covariance matrix (Byrne, 1998). According to MacCallum et al. (1996), RMSEA value below 0.08 show good fit of the model. Based on the aforementioned four criteria, the model fit indices fulfill the criteria of research model fitness.

The idea, discussed in this study, can be quite useful for the organizations because findings also show that if employees are properly compensated by the firms after their training, then it would be helpful in retaining employees. Due to the fact that these trainings make the employees more efficient and knowledgeable, regarding the organizational practices, therefore, they become more productive and crucial assets for the organization. Other previous researches also show that organizations used compensation techniques for reducing the turnover intentions (Chiu et al., 2002; Huang et al., 2006). If the organizations use compensation and working environment, they can retain not only the employees, but will also help them to get the competitive advantage.

## Conclusion

This empirical study discusses the unique idea for the retention of employees. Here, it is seen that for the retention of employee, the work environment and compensation are useful tools. Training can be an important

tool for retaining employees, but it can be seen that the impact of training on compensation of an employee can be very crucial for retention. In this study, we see that these variables are positively related to each other, and it means that when training is provided to the employees, it has positive effect on employee compensation packages. In the end, the employee is more satisfied with his current employment and this will be very supportive in retaining employees for a longer period of time. The longer retention of employee is a critical part for competitive advantage, because when an employee is retained for a longer period, it will amplify the performance of the firm and also help in enhancing the firm's productivity. On the other hand, it will reduce the cost and wastage of time which is required for hiring and training of new employees. Findings of this study show that without increasing the compensation of employee after their training and development, to retain the employees for a longer time period does not give fruitful result because of the increase in his abilities and perfection in field.

Some limitations of the study are that the sample size is not too large and the response rate is also very low. On the other hand, this study is conducted in the Pakistani culture, in Lahore, which might not present the same result in other regions of the world. These limitations might impact the generalizability of the research findings. For future recommendations, this study must be conducted on a larger scale and the sample size and number of corporate groups must be vast. Also, data should be collected from different cities to make it more generalizable. For further research, the current study encourages the researcher to incorporate other constructs like impact of retention on employee productivity and performance of the employees.

## Practical implication

Practical implication of this study, according to the Pakistani culture, has a great place and it will be very helpful and encouraging for the organizations to retain their competent and creative employees which are the asset for any kind of organization. Particularly, at this time of crisis, money and other fringe benefits have great value for employees, so to retain them, compensation is one of the major tools. However, if organizations fail to provide the best practices and environment for employees to enjoy their work and feel at home, due to so many distraction and problems, then their turn over rate will decrease. Conclusively, all these factors highly influence employees' retention.

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