

## A STUDY ON FACULTY RETENTION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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### ABSTRACT

*Education is inextricably related to the social, political, and economic influences of its time; and human resources' role in education is no exception. The progress realized in the development of human resources administration is in part, a history of education. The principal component of an organization is its human resource. The progressive organization of the day look for diverse work force who can bring and help in managing diverse talent, interests, ideologies and viewpoints even in a continuously changing academic environment. In educational institutions, faculty members are the major inputs in the process of generating learning as a major output among students. A structured faculty retention process will systematically lessen the gap between the faculties and institution. This will help faculties achieve their best individual potential; and institutions can respond to challenges with right set of available talent.*

**Keywords:** career management, Cluster analysis, Communication, cultural context, knowledge society, Performance Management, Talent Management.

### INTRODUCTION

With a growing focus on the importance of 'knowledge societies' for equipping countries with a suitable workforce, issues around human resources within the education sector have come under greater scrutiny. The human resource element has two important dimensions: education supplies human resources, but equally it is essential that those responsible for education receive high quality training and opportunities in order to fulfill their role.

The workplace today witnesses the coexistence of faculty from various socio-cultural backgrounds that is, race, gender, color, national origin, economic status; ethnicity etc. with his/her own set of needs, drives and experience making the corporate culture a complex and diverse one. The progressive organization of the day look for diverse work force who can bring and help in managing diverse talent, interests, ideologies and viewpoints even in a continuously changing academic environment.

This change in the nature of work force has brought up more, not fewer retention issues. The uncertainty of a changing economy, increasing competition and the diversity in the workforce has compelled the organizations to hold on to their top performers whatever the cost; as although the availability of professionals may look adequate on the surface because of the shift in preference towards greater experience in niche skills, recruiters are not able to hire professional with the right skill set. The dearth of talent in this sense persists. The focus has surely shifted from numbers to quality and from 'Recruitment' to 'Retention'.

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Although there have been many studies with respect to retention of faculty, these have most often been single practice research. One of the key consistent trends within this research has been repeated efforts to classify HR practices into categories. For instance, *MacDuffie* (1995) made a strong case for viewing work systems as requiring that the individuals

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have the necessary skills and abilities, that they are motivated to do a good job, and that the system provides opportunities for them to participate.

*Lawler* (1986) proposed the concepts of information sharing, knowledge/skill, power (decision making), and rewards as ways to manage in a high performance/high commitment environment. *Delery, Gupta & Shaw* (1997) argued that HR practices are aimed at increasing employee skills, motivation, or empowerment. HR practices were classified by *Gardner et al.* (2000) by using skills, motivation, and empowerment categories. *Boudreau and Ramstad* (1999) proposed the concepts of capability, opportunity, and motivation, which will track quite well with categories proposed by *Delery et al.* (1997) and *Gardner et al.* (2000).

*Huselid* (1995) stressed that by adopting best practices in selection, inflow of best quality of skill set will be inducted adding value to skills inventory of the organization. He also stressed on importance of training as complement of selection practices through which the organizational culture and employee behavior can be aligned to produce positive results. *Cooke* (2000) has included efficiency and effectiveness as ingredients of performance apart from competitiveness and productivity. He further argued that training is the tool to develop knowledge and skills as means of increasing individual's performance (efficiency and effectiveness). *Singh* (2004), whose observations are more relevant in our cultural context, argues that compensation is a behavior aligning mechanism of employees with business strategy of the firm. Cluster analysis is used by number of authors to group firms that seem to be exhibiting similar HR strategies. *Ostroff* (2000) conducted a cluster analysis and found five HRM systems. *Comprehensive system* attempted to use the full range of HRM practices, while *Involvement systems* consisted of an emphasis on practices aimed at increasing skill and involve workers. Hierarchical monitoring and control was preferred by traditional system. *Identification systems* had low use of most HRM systems except for practices aimed at organizational identification and commitment. Finally, the *None* system tended to have relatively little use of HRM practices. Similarly, *Becker and Huselid* (1996) submitted their cross industry data to a cluster analysis and identified four HR clusters: *personnel, alignment, compensation, and high performance*. *Arthur's* (1992) study categorized HR systems as being either 'commitment' or 'control' systems. *Lee and Chee* (1996) also submitted their results to a cluster analysis and observed four clusters: *contingent payer, information sharer, weak trainer, and low involver* (weak on all items).

Career planning is a tool that aligns strategy with future HR needs and encourages employee to strive for his personal development (*William et al.*, 1996). By increasing employee participation, the firm will benefit from increase in productivity of the employee due to increased commitment of the employee. Financial participation schemes were more beneficial for the organizations than the associated cost (*Summers & Hyman*, 2005). Use of the best HR practices shows a stronger association with firm's productivity in high growth industry (*Datta et al.*, 2003).

The review revealed that while some researchers concentrated on single HR practice as the strategy to increase employee retention, many suggested a combination of many practices in order to keep the employees from leaving the organization. As per *Benjamin Laura* (2007), Retention is not a simple, fast initiative that can be solved by "quick hit" approaches. Instead of invalidating years of negligence as an interim measure, we should go back to fundamentals for retaining employees. A recent Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM, 2007) press release revealed the answer to the question of what people plan to do when the job market rebounds. Most of the HR professionals and managers surveyed, agreed on fact that the employee turnover will rise significantly once the job market booms. HR professionals were asked about their opinion about programs or policies they use currently as a tool to retain employees. The three most common programs employers are using to retain employees were tuition reimbursement, competitive vacation and holiday benefits; and competitive salaries. *Murty* (2007) elucidates a few retention practices that need to be practiced in order to encourage employees to stay loyal to the organization that includes, interalia, compensation, job designing, job sculpting, nursing social ties, job location, recruiting techniques and creating and enabling organic bureaucracy. *Harris Jim* (2007) observed that in the war for managing talent, employee retention will be harder day by day. He described ten trends that impact the turnover of the employees and described the strategies to be followed to counter them that includes Global Competition, Entrepreneurial Boom, Free Agent World, Options-Options-Options, Mass Customization, Worker Backlash, Workplace, The New Community, Work/Life Integration, The Green Grass of E-commerce and Loyalty Paradox. These workplace trends mandate a fresh, strategic approach to the talent retention efforts.

To generalize the efficacy of seven HRM practices by *Pfeffer* (1998), *Ahmad and Schroeders* (2003) found the seven HRM practices such as employment security, selective hiring, use of teams and decentralization, compensation/incentive contingent on performance; extensive training, status difference and sharing information have significant relationship with operational performance. *Kuo* (2004) adopted 11 HRM practices found that employment security, team working and

incentive compensation are regarded as three of the main practices for impacting hospital performance.

*Barber Carol* (2006) through her work with multinational organizations and small start-ups has developed a list of best practices followed by those companies who enjoy great morale and high retention i.e. they know who they are and hire for “fit”; they sweat the details of on-boarding; they set clear expectations and objectives; they provide training and development at all levels; they don’t wait for trouble to find them; they value open communications above all else; they believe in work/life balance; they view workforce diversity as a competitive advantage; they understand the power of teamwork; they never think they have it right. Employee retention activities are considered very important because these amount to a compendium of good management tools. Practically every effort of company’s activities is relevant to staff retention. Employers are highly focused on the strong performers. Their game is to retain employees – but not all of them. In order to address the problem encountered by education industry in India in retaining of their Indian academician, researcher propose effective and efficient solutions for retention purposes in this paper. All the proposed solutions aim to address key HR concepts, including C & B Management, Talent Management, Performance Management and Communication.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

Though the statement of the research problem brings out the basic objective of the study depicting the macro view of the subject at hand yet to make the study more focused, the macro objective have been segregated and divided into micro objectives. In fact the accomplishments of the micro objectives ultimately contribute to the achievement of the macro objective and the same have been detailed as under:

1. To study the various factors that influence the faculty retention in self- financing institutes in north India.
2. To describe personnel retention strategies used by self- financing institutes in north India.
3. To determine potential barriers to the retention of faculties.
4. To recommend management strategies that can be implemented to foster faculty retention at self-financing institutes in north India.

### **RESEARCH DESIGN**

The research design is a general plan, blueprint and structure of the investigation which the researcher uses to obtain evidence to answer the research questions (*De Vos et al ., 1998; Booyse et al., 2002*). It guides the manner in which the study is to be conducted and creates a framework for the research (*Brink & Wood ,1983:89*).

The function of the overall framework which guides a research study is to arrange conditions for the collection of data in a manner that intends to combine relevance of the research purpose with economy in methodology. But more so, it is to provide answers that are valid and accurate to the research question (*Dzivhani, 2000*).

The research design for this study was qualitative, exploratory, descriptive as well as quantitative. According to the distinction made by *Booyse* (in *Hoberg, 1999*) as well as *Glaser and Strauss* (1965), the design is more closely aligned with inductive building of theory as opposed to deductive testing or extension of theory. Each aspect of the research design is outlined below:

### **DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

The data was collected from faculty of different institute administered through questionnaire and interview analyzed and interpreted. But, before the data analysis the researcher proceeded to the data processing. Data processing focus on activities and technologies which include various steps : data checking, entry, coding, and editing (*Gromme, 1998*). It was also the view of this research that the explanation of research problem and retention factors which made the results intelligible was essential. According to *Wilkinson and Bhandarkar* (2002), even under the best of circumstances, a certain proportion of the participants do not respond to the questionnaire and this constitutes missing data. This problem was also faced in the present study. A total of 500 questionnaires were distributed to the faculty of north Indian institutes. All the 430 questionnaires which were returned were found usable that represents a questionnaire return rate of 86%.

The paper analyzes the results of the study and presents the different techniques used for by the researcher for data analysis in this study. In the present study, responses from respondents were collected, coded and tabulated in SPSS 11.0. For analyzing the data both simple and advanced statistical tools have been used. Data collected were analyzed through a series of validated tools and procedures like average, percentage, weighted average and mean score were calculated.

## ORGANIZATION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire presented the following biographical details from respondents: age, gender, education attainment and years of work experience. The view of the researcher was that these aspects could be related to, and influence respondents' perceptions on personnel retention strategies that are implemented at institutes.

### Biographical profile of respondents

One of the questions articulated in the questionnaire was to determine the demographic profile of the faculty in the institute; this was presented in a manner that the percentages of males could be compared to the percentages of females. In doing so, the majority gender could easily be identified, as well as generally determining the sum total of the whole population. The findings are presented below from **Tables 1** to **Table 4**.

**Table 1: Distribution of Respondent by Gender**

Sex	Total sampled	Total received	Received (%)
<i>Male</i>	210	158	75.24%
<i>Female</i>	290	272	93.79 %
<b>Total</b>	500	430	86%

**Table 1** reflects that out of the 500 questionnaires which were distributed only 430 were received, representing the return rate of 86%. Table further shows that 272 respondents (93.79%) were females while 158 respondents were males(75.24%). Hence the majority of respondents were females. It shows that majority faculty in the north Indian colleges were female.

### Distribution of Respondents by Age

The researcher collected the details of the ages of the faculty who responded in the study. It was assumed that the age of the respondents might have a bearing on the problem being analyzed. The result about the ages of the respondents are presented in **Table 2** below.

**Table 2: Distribution of Respondent by Age**

Age	Frequency	Percent
<i>25 and below</i>	45	10.46%
<i>26-35</i>	145	33.72%
<i>36-45</i>	130	30.24%
<i>46 and above</i>	110	25.58%
<b>Total</b>	430	100%

**Table 2** indicate that 10.46% of the respondents were aged 25 years and below, 33.72% were aged between 26-35 years and 30.24% were between 36-45 years while the remaining 25.58 were aged above 46 years. This showed that the majority of respondents belonged to the range 26-35 and 36-45 years.

### Distribution of Respondents by Academic Qualification

Educational qualification plays an important role in the manner in which individuals play different roles they hold in society. The researcher observed that academic qualification of the respondents were worthy of investigation since such qualities had a bearing on retention of faculty in an institution.

**Table 3: Distribution of Respondent by Academic Qualification**

Academic Qualification	Frequency	Percent
<i>High school graduate</i>	0	0%
<i>College graduate</i>	130	30.23%
<i>Master level</i>	225	52.33%
<i>Doctoral level</i>	75	17.44%
<b>Total</b>	430	100%

**Table 3** shows that 30.23% of the respondents were college graduates while 52.32% hold masters degree. According to the finding, only 17.44% possessed doctoral degrees. It was worth noting that no respondent was a high school graduate ,since college graduate is the minimum qualification for being a faculty.

### Distribution of Respondents by Work Experience

Experience was considered to be a contributory factor in faculty retention. The researcher found that it necessary to establish the faculty work experience at the college. The results of the respondents are in **Table 4** below.

**Table 4: Distribution of Respondent by Work Experience**

Work Experience	Frequency	Percent
<i>5 and lesser</i>	150	34.88%
<i>6 and 15</i>	120	27.91%
<i>16-25</i>	87	20.23%
<i>26-35</i>	63	14.65%
<i>36 and above</i>	10	02.33%
<b>Total</b>	430	100%

In terms of work experience, **Table 4** shows that the majority of the respondents viz. 34.88% had 5 years and lesser of teaching experience, followed by those with 27.91% and 16-25 years 20.23%, respectively. Furthermore, 14.65% had 26-35 years work experience , while 2.33% only had 36 and above years of work experience. This indicated that most teachers in the sample were relatively young in the teaching profession.

### Quantitative Findings

The results of the close-ended survey questions are analyzed below. The close-ended questions related to working conditions, incentives, job satisfaction, mentoring, and staff development.

**Table 5: Items associated with Working Conditions as a Factor Influencing Retention**

Variables	Mean scores	Rank order
1.1 <i>Physical building</i>	4.05	1
1.2 <i>Class size</i>	3.75	3
1.3 <i>Material and resources</i>	3.32	5
1.4 <i>Support from administrator</i>	3.50	4
1.5 <i>College climate</i>	3.90	2

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are the recommendations for educational practitioners and policy makers:

### Recommendations for Educational Practitioners and Policy Makers

The way or manner in which faculty retention strategies were being implemented apparently influence faculty retention negatively. The observation from interviews and literature suggested that the institute management found it difficult to manage the implementation of faculty retention strategies meaningfully due to several hurdles. The educational policy presents institute management with challenges in trying to carry out their managerial and administrative responsibilities. In the light of the results found in this study, policy makers and education practitioners could positively influence faculty retention through appropriate policy changes. Policy makers and practitioners could consider the following recommendations:

#### 1. Improve Working Condition for Faculties

The faculty's general conditions of employment needed to be improved. Faculties should be allowed to learn rather than requiring them to perform non-teaching duties in instructional time. Proper working conditions must be ensured since these could serve as incentives or extensive motivators leading to better performance and retention (*Abdo*, 2000). Policy should focus on improving the working conditions for handling their duties as a teacher. This would help in

improving teachers' working environment. Educational planners should improve facilities and provide adequate supplies and materials in educational institutions.

## **2. Involvement of Teachers in Policy Formulation**

Policies that affected the faculties' professional lives need to be inclusive with active participation of faculty rather than formulated in top-bottom system. Faculty participation should actively invite the formulation of policies and provide freedom to take decision that affected them so that they inculcate a sense of attachment which would ultimately bring about a sense of respect and self-esteem, thus enhance their retention.

## **3. Provide Adequate Incentives to Teacher**

Policy analysts and education practitioners should focus on effective implementations of incentives strategies as a primary step. Such incentive strategy could have a significant positive impact on teacher's morale and job satisfaction, retention as well as institute performance. Promotion of faculties should be done on clearly defined basis and management should allow faculty to participate in setting up these criteria. The salary for teachers should be competitive and attractive. Teachers should be rewarded for their achievement like recognition, praise and provided with merit pay or bonuses, based on their performance. There was also a need for educational policy makers to implement programs that honored excellence in teaching in the country (*Bigler, 2000*). This could only be done by way of enhancing their motivation, and accordingly improve their performance and ability to remain in the same institute. Educational policy makers should design and implement such a pay structure that provides increasing pay on the basis of teacher experience and knowledge, as well as offering incentives for improved performance (*Odden 2000*), and implementing institute performance based award programs which provided all teachers with pay bonuses when an institute as a whole meets or exceeds its present targets (*Raham, 2000; Chamberlin, Hynes and Wragg, 2002; Tomlison, 2000; Odden, 1997*). Institute faculty who were furthering excellence in their field could be selected by an independent committee, on the basis of defined criteria, for national awards. This would provide faculties with the praise and recognition they deserved thus enhancing their retention.

## **4. Facilitate Development Programs**

Policy makers in academics should strive to make professional development a legal requirement for all faculties including institute heads. These professional development programs could help faculties to actualize their professional as well as personal needs. Professional development include ways to broaden the repertoire of teaching strategies that promoted learning as an active rather than a passive enterprise must be improved (*Nyagura and Reece, 1990*). Continuous in-service training programs should be designed and implemented for the purpose of upgrading and updating of faculties skills for their professional development. Faculty's development programs must be designed to help them and polish their skills and knowledge related to effective student learning (*Magestro and Stanford-Blair, 2000*). Education policy should ensure that all faculties along with college heads are adequately trained thus improving community perceptions of faculties, enhancing their performance and efficiency which may in turn result in personal reward, motivation, job satisfaction and finally retention (*Abdo, 2000*).

## **Recommendations to College Management**

College management plays a significant role in improving faculty retention since they could provide faculties with the good working environment, achievement advancement that they needed for high productivity (*Gullatt and Bennett, 1995*). The result of present study suggested that action must be taken in college to address the problem of motivation, job satisfaction and faculty retention. *Evans (2001)* argues that morale, job satisfaction and motivation are best able to be enhanced and improved at the institutional level. From a management perspective, the following recommendations represent some practical and realistic steps for administration to address the faculty concerns:

### **1. Create co-operative Work Environment**

Institute heads should provide the friendly and co-operative work environment in order to satisfy their basic needs that not only improve morale but faculty retention also (*Smith, 1992*). Work place conditions that encouraged individuals and emphasized their worth contributed to retention such as: Enhance equitable professional development opportunities, enforce student discipline policies strictly and strive for teaching assignment aligned with certification and background. They should provide cooperative college climate and working conditions that should include faculty decision making practices which affect them. The college management should pay extra salary for difficult and time consuming duties, facilitate the sharing of knowledge and skills among new, mid-career and more experienced faculties should be encouraged (*Council of Exceptional Children, 2000*). The college management should meet expectation of faculties by providing

them with less college administrative duties like heavy load of paper work, reduced number of students in class and other forms of extrusive motivators which may in turn lead to increased retention (*Abdo, 2000*).

## **2. Provide Adequate Resources Material for Teaching**

The management should focus on creating a supportive environment that includes tangible incentives such as better institute facilities and adequate resource materials. Although such management solution requires funding, it may be less expensive to raise motivation, job satisfaction and retention of all faculties than suffer the consequences of de-motivated and unhappy faculties in the classroom (*Rodges-Jenkinson and Chapman, 1990*). College management should play an active role as resource providers and should be able to design sustainable fund raising projects with the assistance of faculties and other stakeholders of the school (*Budhal, 2000*). Make sure resources are adequate for the job at hand (*Smith, 1992*).

## **3. Empower Faculty with Responsibilities**

The meaning of empowerment is controlled transfer of power from management to faculty. Faculty empowerment occurs when they take responsibility for and are involved in the decision making process, affording them the ability to use the full range of skills and knowledge which they possess (*Husband and Short, 1994*). It is related to putting authority, responsibility, rights resources at the most appropriate level for each and every task, encouraging and allowing individuals to take professional responsibility for improving the way they do their jobs and contribute to the achievements in organization's goals and creating the circumstances where faculties can use their skills and abilities at maximum level in pursuit of common goals (*Clutterbuck, 1994*). Colleges' heads should empower faculties by involving them in team planning and team work in as many broad aspects of the institute as possible (*Smith, 1992*) and allowing them to have professional autonomy and sincere, collegial involvement in decisions (*Gullatt and Bennett, 1995*).

## **4. Encourage Cordial Interpersonal Relations**

Faculties need environment that is secure and friendly. The college management should encourage good interpersonal relations in the institute and create opportunities, invitations and strategies for their involvement in the decision of the college. Management policy should allocate real time resources to the development of cordial interpersonal relations in the college. It enhances feelings of efficiency and immediate feedback and the reassurance that their efforts were appreciated and rewarded. The college management should be seen in and around the college and be able to acknowledge the faculties efforts and offer constructive feedback, advice, direct assistance and access to information.

## **5. Facilitate Opportunity for Personal and Professional Educational Growth**

Institute management should facilitate faculties to acquire new skills, support them during the inevitable frustrations and drawbacks and recognize their efforts (*Dufour and Berkey, 1995*). Teachers should be offered opportunities for professional and personal educational growth. Effective college principals should advocate for staff professional development in their colleges. They should device collegial workshops or in-service training (INSET) programs for teachers in which peers teach specific skills (*Gullatt and Bennett, 1995*). Teachers needed professional support which could be achieved through training opportunities, instructional materials, a quality instructional program and the focus on teacher activities in the classroom (*Gullatt and Bennett, 1995*) and through fair handling of job changes and promotions; giving everyone the feeling they are needed (*Smith, 1992*). School heads should provide one-on-one staff development programs that are purposeful and research based to promote the individual teachers' professional growth (*Dufour and Berkey, 1995*).

## **6. Involvement of Faculty in Decision Making**

Institute dean should have democratic management styles and should eliminate or drastically reduce unnecessary bureaucracy, elicit input from staff and involve teachers in decision making and policy formulation. An effective managerial style should adapt to changing needs of students and teachers in an effort to find success for all concerned (*Reiger and Stang, 2000*). A democratic management and leadership style fosters and maintains a school climate in which the majority of the staff was committed to their work. Institute dean should heed advice that head teachers must learn to become effective and reflective thinkers rather than just traditional professional bureaucrats.

## **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

In the present study, several findings of previous research were confirmed and contradicted by this research. However, a reasonable degree of relationship was also found between this study and other previous studies on faculty's retention strategies in educational institutions.

As mentioned in the beginning of this study, faculty retention remains important challenge in front of some educational institutions. Yet, faculty retention was a fundamental resource in improving student performance and learning. If the problem of faculty turnover in developing countries like India was to be addressed, faculty turnover should be an important concern for educational managers and leaders. Those involved in the management and implementation of policies should consider that faculty retention results from implementing strategies that would keep personnel remain in the same institutions. As *Ortigas (1997)* observes, successful retention is best achieved by a proactive human resource department that actively seeks out what employees want most, also by discovering the reasons behind the departure of former staff the organization had failed to keep, and wishes they had. Educational practitioners and researchers should draw their attention to factors and strategy influencing faculty retention identified in this study in an effort to seek practical solutions to the problem of faculty turnover.

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