

The Influence of Leadership Style, Talent Management and Succession Planning on Employee Retention

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Abstract: This study investigated the influence of leadership style, talent management and succession planning on employee retention in the hospitality industry in Abuja, Nigeria's federal capital territory. The study was carried in the Abuja municipal council area with a population of 2500 workers in the 191 hotels and other facilities rendering hospitality services in the area. A sample of 100 workers were purposively selected as respondents for the study, out of which 94 responded. Four research questions and one hypothesis were used to guide the study. Related literature was reviewed, and gaps identified justifying the study. The data obtained were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical analysis. The multi linear analysis statistic was adopted to test the hypothesis. The responses on the questionnaire answering the research questions revealed that there is a positive relationship between leadership style, talent management, succession planning on the retention of staff in the hospitality industry in Abuja. It also rejected the null hypothesis of the study thereby averring that the three independent variables of Leadership style, talent management and succession planning exerts significant influence on employee retention. The study concluded that managers should ensure that these variables are considered while decisions on employee retention is being made in their various organisations in the hospitality industry. A total of six recommendations were made on how to enhance employee retention by the study.

Key words: Leadership style, Employee retention, Talent management, Succession Planning

I. INTRODUCTION

Employee retention in organizations is one of the critical variables in the employment life cycle. This has become portentous as the need to retain employees in an organization has surpassed the need to employ more staff. Retaining skilled employees in the ever-competitive business environment has become a paramount responsibility since it has assumed a factor in sustained productivity optimization. This concept however, became popular after the late 1970s when there was an increase in staff mobility due to the presence of a variety of jobs and increase in the number of workers and those willing to take up positions in various industries. As work became more competitive and specialized, the fear of increased labour turnover and mobility brought the concept and need for employee retention to the fore.

Effective employee retention strategy has become pivotal in ensuring that employees who have overtime been trained, have well developed knowledge, skills and abilities complemented

by equally needed management competencies are deliberately encouraged to stay. This is to ensure that this motivation to stay saves the organization from issues resulting from loss in "training time and investment, disgruntled employees, lost organizational knowledge and drop in the productivity level". (Sahni & Mishra. 2018) p 466. It is also a save from the expensive recruitment and selection process which may never lead to the engagement of a better candidate or employee.

The concept of employee retention has variously been explained by scholars from different perspectives ranging from prevention of talented employees from leaving the employment of an organization (James and Mathew 2012, Hom and Griffeth 1995), encouraging talents and employees to remain in a firm voluntarily through the application of various strategies such as effective recruitment(Mehta, Kurbetti and Dhankha 2014, Hendricks 2016), Staff training, retraining and career development (Muppuri and Nagabhaskar 2014, Das and Buruah 2014, Salman et.al 2014, Ishad 2009, Jane 2004, Abassi and Hollman 2000, Hewitt et.al 2006,) Compensation and staff salary(Maqsood et.al 2015, Oladapo 2014) and talent management (Hafez, Aboueineel and Elsaid 2017).

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There are a lot of studies on the relationship between various variables and employee retention. However, these studies have highlighted significant gaps hence the justification of this study. Below is a review of related literature.

Leadership styles and employee retention

Leadership and leadership styles have no generally acceptable definitions as no real concessions exists on its definitions and classifications. However, different theories exist as to the nature and features of each types.

Bradley (2020) listed ten different leadership styles according to theories that brought them to light. These styles include the great man theory of the 1840s, Traits theory of the 1930s to 1940s, Skills theory of the 1940s and 1950s, the styles theory of the same era, Situational theories of the 1960s and the Contingency theories of the same era. The Transactional and the transformational styles of leadership theories of the 1970s, leaders – member exchange and servant leader leadership style all of the 1970s and 1980s are also listed as the theories of leadership as espoused by Bradley.

The style of leadership in the organization is of utmost importance as it influences the employee's ability to stay in the organisation (Doh, Stumpf, & Tymon, 2011, Mc Neese and Smith, 1995) Kaye and Jordan-Evans (2002) Budhiraja and Malhotra (2013). The managers attitude to his employees and the kind of relationship that exist between the managers and their subordinates were also seen as major contributors to the level of retention that pervades in the industry. (Alkhawaja and Arwa, 2017. Netswera, Rankhumise, & Mavundila, 2005) the level of the leader's competence according to Gwavuya, (2011) also has a significant influence on the employee's level of stress, poor performance, poor commitment and low job satisfaction and is also a great incentive to high staff turnover. He also averred that leadership style is also seen as the highest cause of staff turnover in South Africa. It has been generally observed that most employees plan to stay longer in their employment (Chew 2004) but the challenges of management's leadership style is always responsible for the sudden unplanned employer attrition in most organizations. (Muindi 2010)

Talent management and staff retention

Despite all definitions advanced for talent management, there has not been a clear and wholly acceptable definition for the concept. (Lewis and Heckman 2006, Hughes & Rog, 2008) Other researchers believe that with the right kind of staff at the right place and given the right positions, you would achieve effective talent management while others believe that attracting, deploying and retaining good staff over time is talent management. CIPD defines talent management as the organized attraction, deployment, development and retention of high potential employees who are considered as a certain value for the organization (CIPD, 2009). Staff retention is hinged on the effective management of talents available in any given organization.

The concept of talent management originates from the fact that many organizations do not have any conscious plan on how to manage its staff that are effective in the organization giving rise to frequent exit of talents resulting in the attrition of very capable and strategic staff holding in the organization. To guide against this trend, management devised a strategy that will assist in managing this crop of employees to avoid unnecessary exit from the organization. Chitsaz-Isfahani and Boustani (2014) in their study on the relationship between talent management, retention and organizational trust, used some lecturers at the university of Istafan, in Iran, as respondents. A sample of 280 staff participated in the study using the descriptive design. The study concluded that there was a significant relationship between talent management, employee retention and organizational trust.

Organizations achievement of objectives are being supported by its talent management strategies (Berger and Berger 2003, Burbach and Royce 2010). The business environment is also regarded as impacting on talent management (Schultz 1961) and that management of talented employees help organizations in achieving their objectives (Hussein 2009). Mitchell et.al (2001) believe that the differences in individual preferences

when effectively managed is a boost for management of the organizational goals. For young employees, talent management seem to be a major factor in their retention in many organizations. This is also the context where older employees would prefer to maintain status quo in organizations that have been retaining them over time. (Ngethe, Iravo, and Namusonge, 2012).

Succession planning and staff retention

Succession planning as a concept concerns the process of identifying potential talents in an organization and developing them with the objective of using them to replace staff who may want to exit the organization or for cases of business expansion where new employees may be required but may not have the necessary experience or exposure to operate. (Abbasi & Hollman, 2000) It may also be useful for organizations that see the continuity of their corporate culture as paramount in terms of moving to new locations (Armstrong 2003, Armstrong 2012, Cascio 2006).

This concept has over the years been a veritable tool to ensure organizational longevity through careful planning of staff advancement and placement of staff which hitherto influences employee career planning and advancement. It further ensures the employees understand what their future will be in the organization. (Nzuve 2008, Milkovich & Boundreau 1988) In course of managing an organisation, the need to plan for the replacement of employees as they exit the company is very apt, but, the need of the employees to understand they have a future or would constitute the possible replacement of those who are exiting as a result of resignation, retirement, dismissal or possibly death constitute a major reason for them not to succumb to unplanned attrition from the company. (McCabe & Savery, 2007) The retention of the various categories of staff ranging from new entrants to management is effectively enhanced by the planning of succession in the organisation which in turn results to job commitment by employees. The planning of staff placement, advancement, career progression and possible exit with probable replacement coming from the inside is key to employee retention. (Carbery *et al.*, 2003)

Leadership style, talent management, succession planning and staff retention

The importance of investigating the combined effect of the three variables on employee retention can be described as pertinent as there exist a lot of literature on the various variables, and the general causes of employee retention, but there is hardly any study that has been carried out on the exact combination of the four variables.

Various studies abound of the influence of many variables on employee retention. The issues of staff retention has been studied in relative terms with staff attrition in the hotel industry (Maertz & Campion, 1998). Some of the factors studied include culture (Sheridan, 1992), job satisfaction (Holdsworth & Cartwright, 2003), employee commitment (Tutuncu & Kozak, 2007; Carbery *et al.*, 2003); management attitude and leadership style (Graen, Dansereau, & Minami, 1972) financial

and non-financial rewards (Hansen, Smith, & Hansen, 2002) nature of the job and risk components of the business (Hartman, & Yrle, 1996; Ladkin, & Juwaheer, 2000; McCabe & Savery, 2007; Willie, Jayawardena, & Laver, 2008).

The ability of management to take charge of these variables and avoiding labour relations issues” (Birder, 2002; Brien 2004; Chalkiti, & Sigala, 2009) to ensure high retention in the industry. (Davidson *et al.*, 2010). These studies have various conclusions on the relationship between these factors and employee retention in the hospitality industry globally.

However, work has been extensively carried out on the various variables as earlier shown above in the reviews, but I have examined some that examined the various variables in twos and come out with some of the results of such studies as a basis for further discussion.

Summary of Literature Review

The concepts of retention, leadership styles, talent management and succession planning are the variables being studied in this work. Employee retention involves all strategies an organization deploys to keep its talents from leaving the organization. (James and Mathew, 2012). Several studies have been carried out on the various variables of this study; however, it has not been popular to study the cumulative influence of these variables on employee retention. This aspect of the study where all the variables are tested against their joint influence on the organizations’ ability to retain their staff over time and

the area in which the study is being conducted is the gap that justifies the study.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Design and setting:

The design for this study is the quantitative, causal-comparative type which is also known as the ipso facto design.

Population, sample, and sampling technique: The population of this study includes all staff of the 191 hotels in Abuja Municipal council area (AMAC). They include 123 hotels, 14 suites, 9 lodges, 42 guest houses and 3 resorts with a total staff strength of about 2500 from a total of 191 organizations in the hospitality industry. (FCT Tourism Bureau, 2021).

The study adopted purposive sampling (Isangedighi, Joshua, Asim and Ekuri, 2004).in choosing 10 hotels in the Abuja municipal council (AMAC) and a total of 100 staff in the selected hotel with 10 staff chosen from each hotel in a multi-level sampling technique.

Instrument: The study utilised a structured Likert four scale type of questionnaire designed by the researcher for the purpose of this study.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

Demography

The demographic data obtained from the study is analysed as follows

Characteristics	Data	Frequency	%	Characteristics	Data	Frequency	%
GENDER	Male	37	39.37	Marital status	Single	36	38.30
	Female	57	60.63		Married	38	40.43
	Total	94	100		Separated	7	7.45
					Widowed	4	4.26
			Divorced		9	9.57	
			Total		94	100	
Age	18 -30	45	47.87	Experience	1-10	59	62.77
	31- 50	43	45.74		11-20	26	27.66
	Above 51	6	6.38		21+	9	9.57
	Total	94	100		Total	94	100
Academic qualification	WASC	6	6.38				
	OND/NCE	26	27.66				
	HND/BSC	36	38.30				
	MSC/MBA	22	23.40				
	PHD	4	4.26				
	Total	94	100				

Research questions

The following research questions were answered from the responses from the respondents of the study. They were analysed using simple statistics as explained below.

Research question 1 – To what extent does leadership style influence employee retention.

The result from the survey shows that 88 % of the respondents agree that leadership style influences the ability of the staff to stay in an organization over time, while 12% do not agree that

leadership style has any influence on the level of employee retention in the organization.

Research question 2 - What is the relationship between talent management and employee retention?

The results from the survey shows that 91 % of the respondents agree that talent management influences the ability of the staff to stay in an organization over time, while 9% do not agree that talent management has any relationship with the level of employee retention in the organization. With this result it has been established by the respondents that there a positive

relationship between talent management and employee retention

Research question 3 - To what extent does succession planning influence staff retention in organizations?

The results from the survey shows that 92.48 % of the respondents agree that succession planning influences the ability of the staff to stay in an organization over time, while 7.52% do not agree that talent management has any relationship with the level of succession planning in the organization. With this result it has been established by the respondents that there a positive relationship between succession planning and employee retention

Research question 4 - What strategies will be utilized by management to improve employee retention for their firms using the three variables.

The results from the survey shows that 81.15 % of the respondents agree that the following strategies should be adopted to improve employee retention in the industry

1. Provide opportunity for staff advancement
2. Enable staff self-fulfillment
3. Empower responsible talents/employees
4. Listen to employee feedback and exit interviews
5. Support success through process and workflows
6. Invest in employee growth opportunities

while 18.85% do not agree that the recommended strategies should be adopted to improve employee retention. With this result it has been established by the respondents that the recommendations is good enough to improve employee retention.

Hypothesis testing

The null hypothesis of this study is being tested using simple multiple linear regression analysis test statistic.

Ho:1 Leadership style, talent management and succession planning do not have any significant influence on staff retention

Leadership style, talent management and succession planning do not have any significant influence on staff retention. Simple multiple linear regression Analysis test statistic was employed in testing data for this hypothesis. The results of the analysis were presented in tables below

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
1	Regression	1578.002	3	526.001	2228.523	.000 ^b
	Residual	21.243	90	.236		
	Total	1599.245	93			
a. Dependent Variable: retention						
b. Predictors: (Constant), succession, leadership, talent						

Results of analysis in table 1 show the predictive composite effect -: leadership styles, talent management and succession

planning and staff retention. The results indicate that the calculated f-value of 2228.523 is greater than the critical f-value of 2.71 at 0.05 level of significance with 3 and 90 degrees of freedom. This means that, leadership styles, talent management and succession planning has a significant influence on staff retention. By these results the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate upheld.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.993 ^a	.987	.986	.486	.636
a. Predictors: (Constant), succession, leadership, talent					
b. Dependent Variable: retention					

The R² of the simple linear regression in table 2 measures the degree of determination coefficient of predictors (leadership styles, talent management and succession planning) on staff retention. It predicts that 98.7% of the variation in staff retention is explained by the variation of predictors (leadership styles, talent management and succession planning), While 1.3% of the variations in the staff retention is explained by other variables which are extraneous to the study.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.206	.268		.770	.443
	leadership	-.051	.039	-.049	-1.308	.194
	talent	.614	.045	.717	13.593	.000
	succession	.294	.048	.329	6.071	.000
a. Dependent Variable: retention						

The coefficient in table 3 of leadership styles (-.051), talent management (.614) and Succession planning (.294) shows that, a percentage increase in leadership styles, talent management and succession planning while other variables are held constant would lead to 5.1% decrease, 61.4% increase and 29.4% increase respectively on staff retention. The t-statistics in the table show that, the calculated t-value for talent management (13.593) and succession planning shows a significant relationship with staff retention while leadership styles of (-1.308) shows no significant relationship with staff retention.

V. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussion of findings

Findings from research question 1: 88% of the respondents agree that leadership style has a significant positive influence on staff retention. The findings of this study as it relates to the first research question confirms that a manager’s leadership style influences the willingness of subordinates to stay back in an organization even when there are opportunities to leave. This goes to confirm the findings of Limsila and Ogunlana (2008)

and Heravi et.al, (2010), Hamstra et.al (2011) which all concluded that leadership style is a big factor in the consideration of employees to stay in an organization. According to Kleinman (2013) practical leadership skills has a lot of influence on employee retention in an organization.

Findings from research question 2: 91% of the respondents agree that there is a significant relationship between talent management and employee retention. This finding confirms that effective management of employee talent motivates them to stay in the organization. This goes to confirm the position of Anupam and Upasna (2012) that talent management is a central force in determining the retention of employees in organizations. (Berger and Berger 2003, Burbach and Royle 2010) There is also extensive empirical work to support this result from other parts of the world based on the importance of talent management on the ability of the firm to retain employees (Stovel and Bontis (2002), Abassi and Hollman (2000) The works confirm that talent management is key in the efforts of an organisation to retain staff.

Findings from Research question 3: 92.48% of the respondents agree that succession planning has a lot of positive influence on staff retention in organizations in the hospitality industry. Succession planning is the ability of a firm to plan its work force career prospects through proper engagement and placement so in course of changes, the organization should have a staff that can step into new shoes without destabilizing the company's structure. Many studies have examined the concept of talent management (Ochieng, 2016; Ndung'u & Omondi, 2015; Omondi, 2013; Wambui, 2012) and also the application of talent management in various sectors like banking (Karuri, 2015; Ndung'u & Omondi, 2015; Kibui, Gachunga & Namusonge, 2014; Silvia, 2013), commercial state corporations (Mwajuma, 2015; Njeri, 2014; Kagwiria, 2013; Wambui, 2012), training institutions (Katitia, 2014), in supply chain (Ochieng, 2016) and healthcare industry (Mukweyi, 2016; Karemu, Kachori, Josee & Okibo, 2014). They have gone ahead to confirm that there exist a positive relationship between succession planning and retention in organizations. According to Amahwa, and Egessa, (2021) there is a significant relationship between succession planning and employee retention in the telecommunications industry in Kenya.

Findings from research question 4: The study found that more than 81.15% of the respondents agree that the following strategies could be utilized by management to improve employee retention for companies in the hospitality industry using the three variables as follows:

1. Provide opportunity for staff advancement
2. Enable staff self-fulfillment
3. Empower responsible talents/employees
4. Listen to employee feedback and exit interviews
5. Support success through process and workflows
6. Invest in employee growth opportunities

These findings are in consonance with the various prescriptions of numerous scholars, but now domesticated in the hospitality

industry of Abuja. The respondents agreed that these strategies can be applied to improve staff retention in the industry. This is in agreement with the model advanced by Amahwa and Egessa (2021) which sees the following as strategies for improving retention. Financial benefits, affiliation, work content, indirect financial, work/life balance and career.

Findings from the hypotheses testing:

The results indicate that the calculated f-value of 2228.523 is greater than the critical f-value of 2.71 at 0.05 level of significance with 3 and 90 degrees of freedom. This means that leadership styles, talent management and succession planning have a significant influence on staff retention. By these results the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate upheld. The t-statistics in the table show that, the calculated t-value for talent management (13.593) and succession planning shows a significant relationship with staff retention while leadership styles of (-1.308) shows no significant relationship with staff retention.

The above results from the analysis of variance shows that the independent variables of leadership styles, talent management and succession planning have a significant influence on staff retention. The implication of this result is that a combination of these variables positively influences staff retention in the hospitality industry. However, using the t – test, it was determined that leadership styles do not singly affect the level of staff retention on its own alone using the test statistics.

Conclusion

The study has x-rayed the nexus between leadership styles, talent management, succession planning and employee management and established the positive influence of the independent variables on employee retention. It is very important to emphasize the importance of ensuring that organizations recognize this relation to ensure that employees stay longer in organizations and save them the challenges of staff attrition.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study the following recommendations are being put forward as the strategies for improving employee retention in the hospitality industry in Abuja.

1. Provide opportunity for career advancement of employees
2. Enable staff self-fulfillment
3. Empower responsible talents/employees
4. Listen to employee feedback and exit interviews
5. Support success through improved processes and workflows, and
6. Invest in employee growth opportunities

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