

# Developing an Employee Retention Strategy for Improving Organizational Performance in Zimbabwe: Case of Mashonaland Tobacco Company

Anthony Tapiwa Mazikana<sup>1</sup>, Precious Hove<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>PhD student, Department of Economics, University of Zimbabwe

<sup>2</sup>Dean, Faculty of Agribusiness and Entrepreneurship,

Marondera University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology

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## ABSTRACT

This study was aimed at an employee retention strategy for improving organizational performance in Zimbabwe: Case of Mashonaland Tobacco Company. This study was guided by objectives such as to establish the relationship between employee retention strategies and worker performance, to determine factors that influence employee retention, to identify challenges associated with the implementation of the retention strategies and to develop an employee retention model aimed to improve organizational performance at MTC. This study adopted pragmatism research philosophy which assisted the researcher in making decisions in regards to what worked best in finding answers for the research objectives mentioned. A sample size of 218 was determined using Taro Yamane sample size determination method. In this study it was established that the organization have been offering paid time off, incentives, basic salary, career advancement, commissions, rewards and holidays to their employees as a retention strategy. It has been noted that employee retention improves productivity, employee retention increase employee morale and employee retention motivates employees thereby improves their participation. Through the use of employee retention an organization attracts qualified employees. Compensation affects employee retention, organizational culture and structure, ineffective leadership and ineffective communication influence employee retention. Whenever implementing employee retention strategies organizations always face increased resistant to change. Their operations are affected by limited financial resources and budget constraints. Insufficient communication and coordination affect the implementation of employee retention strategy. It has been noted that an organization should pay for performance, have team solidarity in an organization and prioritize recognition of top performers.

## INTRODUCTION

In Zimbabwe various companies have implemented retention strategies (Dewa, 2023). Chikwature and Makamache (2020) asserts tobacco organizations have implemented the employee support strategy in which people are given the tools and equipment to get the job done and employee compensation strategy which stems from one fundamental principle that money alone will not retain employees. According to Mazikana (2019) there is no consensus that every retention strategy can contribute positively to the performance of

organizational performance. It is also argued that the success of an organization and its improved performance can be due to the internal systems, protocols and procedures which has nothing to do with the workforce. Therefore, the researcher intends to empirically examine how effective employee retention can be used as a tool to improve organizational performance.

Magaisa & Musundire (2022) conducted a study on factors affecting employee retention in Zimbabwean Companies. According to Magaisa & Musundire (2022) the deterioration of the Zimbabwean economy, which is exemplified by the country's persistently high inflation rate, has made it challenging for the manufacturing sector in Zimbabwe to keep skilled workers. It has been determined that the corporations are unable to keep talented individuals, and as a result, a large number of employees are quitting their jobs and leaving the organizations (Magaisa & Musundire, 2022). Magaisa & Musundire (2022) did not manage to develop an employee retention strategy which can be used to improve organizational performance hence this study intends to close this gap of knowledge. The recent COVID-19 situation has seen employee retention emerge as the core problem for organizations across the globe (Pullan gott et al., 2021).

Mas honaland Tobacco Company have been affected by Covid 19 and the company had to cut some costs associated with salaries. The operations of the company involve selecting, processing, packaging, storing and shipping of leaf tobacco. Over and above tobacco processing, the company is involved in contract farming in which it provides agronomy expertise and financing the growing of leaf tobacco including but not limited to providing extension advice, mechanization, seeds, fertilizers and other facilities to producers (Mukucha & Chari, 2023). For a long time, Mashonaland Tobacco Company workers in Zimbabwe have been underpaid; the lowest-paid employee there makes less than \$200 a month, which is not even enough to cover the rent on a two-bedroom flat (Mazikana, 2019). As a result of employees' perceptions that they are devalued and their lack of motivation to work and the rate of productivity drops precipitously. It is also possible that the quality of the production have been impacted, which has resulted in disgruntled customers and clients who would then go elsewhere for products and services (Birasnav et al., 2019). Underpayment of employees have brought implications such as leading to some employees searching and looking for greener pastures which results in high labour turnover and a decline in organizational performance.

Mas honaland Tobacco Company has a perennial problem of very high labor turnover. Quantitatively put Mashonal and Tobacco Company has been losing between five and ten employees every month during its selling and grower registration season to its competitors for the past four years (2018-2022) resultantly there has been astronomical increase in recruitment and training cost together with massive process flow disruptions emanating from inexperience among other factors. Retention measures that are not lucrative have also contributed to the loss of workers, along with the continual fall in the worker pay at the organization. Departments have sent various complaining letters to the human resources department raising concerns about delays which emanates when in productivity in replacing a skilled worker who decides to leave the organization and also the delays they face whenever a skilled worker decides to leave the organization. This situation compromises business operations and achievement of set objectives at MTC. The human resources department have attempted to engage the managing directors in a bid to increase salaries of workers but their efforts were unsuccessful. This study therefore formulates an employee retention model aimed to improve performance at MTC.

### **Objectives Of the Study**

1. To establish the relationship between employee retention strategies and worker performance
2. To determine factors that influence employee retention
3. To identify challenges associated with the implementation of the retention strategies.
4. To develop an employee retention model aimed to improve organizational performance at MTC.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Employee retention

Employee retention is not a field that has not been thoroughly investigated (Bhagwan & Rani, 2022). Many authors, and researchers have studied a variety of elements pertaining to employee retention (Iqbal et al., 2017; Maphisa et al., 2017; Ngabirano, 2021; Polyviou et al., 2018). Employee retention is a procedure in which employees are encouraged to remain with the organization for the maximum amount of time or until the completion of the project (Kaim, 2023). Employee retention is good not only for the organization but also for the individual holding the position (Chiekiezie et al., 2017). A competent employer should be able to both recruit new workers and keep the ones they already have (Padhi et al., 2020). Employee retention is an essential component of the talent management strategy and organizational development process that are implemented by highly effective organizations (U. Khan, 2021).

The fact that the success and continued existence of organizations are depended upon the performance and contentment of their employees, organizations are required to fulfil the requirements of their employees in order to keep their talented personnel (Yang et al., 2019). Due to the unprecedented nature of business, which is characterised by a dynamic working environment, a rapidly changing global economy, technology-driven business, and cutthroat competition, there has been an increase in the number of avenues and opportunities available to employees (Stanwick & Stanwick, 2020). At the same time, this has presented organizations with a challenge in terms of attracting, developing, and retaining their employees.

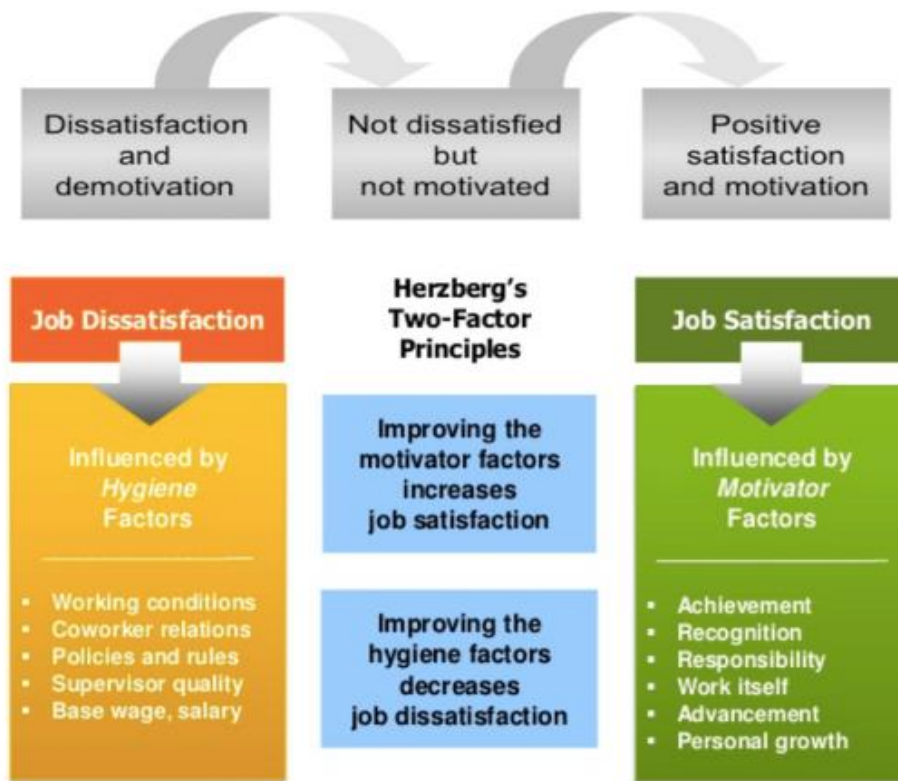
### Organizational performance

The performance of an organization is comprised of the actual output assessed against the anticipated outputs that is goals and objectives (Usai, 2019). The term organization performance refers to the performance of an organization in the past, in the present, and in the future that is projected (H. B. Sharma et al., 2021). Organizational performance is linked to the accomplishment of organizational goals, the advancement of quality and customer satisfaction, the focus on customers and continuous improvement, the perception of the workplace as a source of added value, the establishment of clear connections between training and development and organizational goals, the encouragement of both individual and organizational learning, and the utilisation of self-managed work teams (Butt, 2019). The capacity of an organization to achieve its objectives and get the best possible results is referred to as its organizational performance (Li et al., 2022). It is possible to describe organizational performance in today's workforce as the capacity of an organization to accomplish its objectives while operating in a state of perpetual change.

### Herzberg's two factor theory

An American psychologist Frederick Irving Herzberg developed the two-factor theory in the year 1968 and argued that there are some elements which affect employees' performance in an organization set up. The two-factor hypothesis, which was created by Frederick Herzberg (1968) demonstrated that there are two different groups of factors that have an effect on behavioural patterns in humans. The pleasure factor and the dissatisfaction factor are the two sets that make up this component. According to Herzberg (1968), human motivation is the result of the factors that have been discussed previously. Bhatti et al (2020) asserts that Frederik Herzberg identified two factors that lead to the condition of satisfaction and discontentment in individuals. These elements are referred to be hygienic factors and motivating factors respectively at this point. A visual representation of Frederik Herzberg's finding of these components is shown in Figure 2.1 below

Figure 2.1: The two-factor theory of motivation



Source: Kovach (2019)

According to Rabie & Abdul Malek (2020) intrinsic factors include factors that are inherent to the job itself since they are fundamental to the job. Personal achievement, status, recognition, the work itself, responsibility, progress, promotion, and opportunities for advancement are all examples of intrinsic factors. Other examples include the opportunity to attain advancement (Yang et al., 2019). According to Ward et al (2019) intangible intrinsic components frequently deal with a deeper range of emotional requirements than physical components do. An excellent example of this theory being put into practise is when you take part in an activity that is specifically designed to cater for individual set of hobbies and fields of interest. In spite of the fact that the existence of motivator factors has been demonstrated to boost motivation, satisfaction, and consequently commitment. Khan et al (2018) asserts that the removal of these elements does not necessarily result in a drop in motivation. Extrinsic factors, on the other hand, include things like interpersonal relationships, corporate regulations and administration, working conditions, the quality of supervision, job security, income, wages, and other perks, and a healthy balance between work and personal life (Ahmad et al., 2019). By way of illustration, an example of an extrinsic factor is the pursuit of something with the intention of acquiring extrinsic rewards such as money, fame, or status ( Bhatti et al., 2020). It is for this reason that extrinsic elements are regarded as being material and vital necessities.

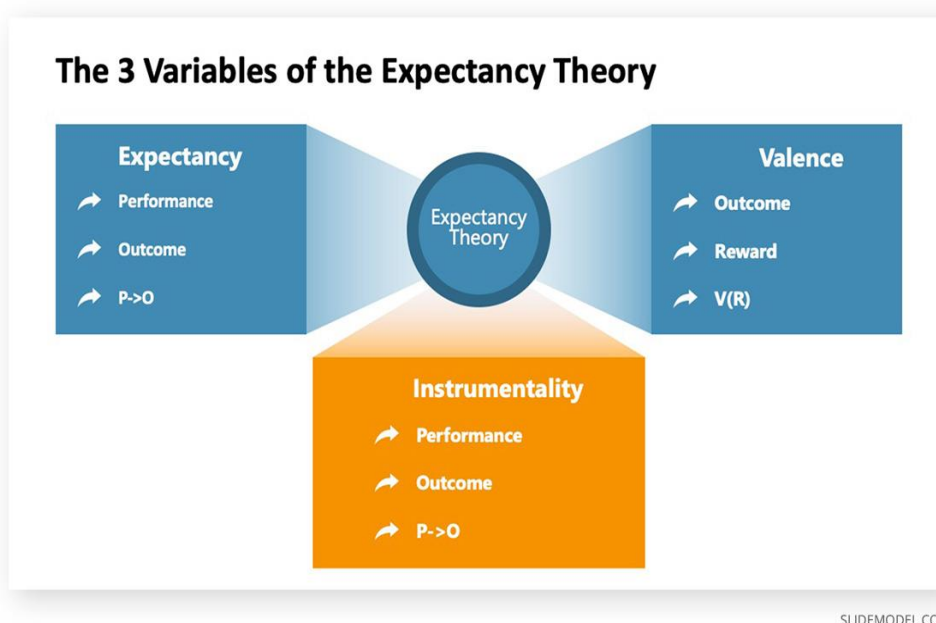
On the other hand, Wilshusen (2017) state that the term intrinsic factors refers to the innate desires and motivations of an individual. These are the sorts of things that are known to have an impact on how people behave. In addition, the presence of cleanliness characteristics will not result in individuals being motivated, but they may prevent them from feeling dissatisfied. On the other side, the absence of hygienic aspects will almost certainly result in a decrease in motivation. According to Abdullah & Azzahra (2021) this is not the case since the factors that are associated with cleanliness are separate from those that are associated with motivation. According to Herzberg (1987) there is a close connection between feelings of contentment and those of discontentment.

Despite the fact that they are both influenced by different factors and take place independently of one another, they both have a significant influence on the behaviour of an individual as well as their level of contentment or discontentment (Maphisa et al., 2017). For instance, a person may point to oneself as a source of happiness while at the same time simultaneously blaming other sources such as the scenario or surroundings for the dissatisfaction that they are experiencing (Singh, 2019). Despite this, it is necessary for every manager to have a good understanding of the theory since it highlights how important it is to give sufficient hygiene elements to employees as a form of motivation that finally leads to fulfilment. According to Hussein et al (2021) the mere existence of these variables is not enough to motivate individuals because it is not adequate on its own. When hygienic practises are not implemented in the workplace, employees will experience a decrease in motivation, which will lead to a loss of productivity. As a result of this, managers need to place greater emphasis on improving factors that motivate workers. One such factor is job enrichment, which entails making work more enjoyable as well as the environment in which it is carried out (Abdullah Al Mamun & Nazmul Hasan, 2017). In order to maintain the motivation of their employees, managers should prioritise the enhancement of job enrichment as one of the elements.

### Expectancy theory

Vroom (1964) developed the expectation theory which is a reflection of the expectations that employees have at their place of employment, which are dependent on the contributions and incentives that employees provide. The purpose of this is not to offer specific recommendations on how to motivate employees rather, it offers a procedural framework that incorporates cognitive characteristics that represent individual variances in job motivation (Abdullah and Azzahra, 2021). For a more straightforward explanation, workers have the belief that there is a connection between the amount of effort they put in at work, the results they accomplish as a result of that effort, and the rewards they receive for the results they obtain (Vroom, 1964). It is possible to say that the employees are highly motivated if all of these factors yield favourable results on the scale. If we were to categorise the expectation theory, we would say that employees will be motivated if they believe that their strong effort will lead to good performance that will lead to the results that they desire (Keller et al., 2020). Figure 2.2 below presents the expectancy theory.

Figure 2.2: Expectancy theory



Source: (Ward et al., 2019)



According to Vroom (1964), the theory of expectation is founded on the identified assumptions. One of the presumptions is that individuals accept jobs at organizations with certain expectations. Specifically, these expectations will pertain to their experiences, as well as their wants and objectives. These factors will impact how they act and how they respond to the organization that they have selected (Vroom, 1964). In the second assumption, the behaviour of the employee is the outcome of a conscious decision made by the employee. In accordance with their expectations, they are free to pick the behaviours that they engage in (Hwang et al., 2018). There are a variety of individuals who have varying expectations and desires regarding the incentives that organizations provide. Depending on the individual, they may be interested in a high wage, job security, career progress, or any number of other factors. According to Vroom (1964) employees will select the incentive option that best suits their preferences from among the available options in order to maximise the overall results. According to these presumptions on the behaviour of an employee in the workplace, there are three components that are significant. They are known as valence, instrumentality, and expectation respectively (Bhana & Suknunan, 2019). Expectancy can be defined as the conviction that one's efforts will result in satisfactory achievement. The performance reward is what is meant by the term instrumentality. A reward's valence can be defined as the value it brings to the satisfaction of the employee (Polyviou et al., 2018). A number between 0 and 1 is assigned to each of the three factors. The lowest possible value is zero, and the highest possible value is one.

According to Polyviou et al (2018) specific kinds of promotions may be restricted to employees who have been with the company for a specific amount of time or to other factors, and some workers have no chance of reaching these requirements. It is not uncommon for organizations to have poor compensation systems, which can lead to a lack of understanding among employees regarding what they consider to be rewarding. This can result in employees losing their enthusiasm to perform their jobs (Shi Yong et al., 2022). An raise in income or recognition for their achievements, such as certificates and individualised awards can serve as a source of motivation for certain personnel. On the other hand, individuals who have a well-established salary scale and a number of years of experience under their belts might find it more appealing to obtain a designation that they consider to be sufficiently rewarding to acknowledge their authority within the organization (Schunk & Di Bene detto, 2020). These strategies should be utilised to maximise productivity through motivation are utilised even in situations where an organization might not be able to afford the kind of incentive that employees feel they deserve. By providing employees with company shares, businesses should be able to successfully accomplish performance goals.

### **The relationship between employee retention strategies and worker performance**

Gicho (2015) conducted a study in South Africa on the effect of employee retention strategies on employee performance: the case of Eagle Africa insurance brokers limited. The overarching purpose of Gicho (2015) research was to gain an understanding of the impact that employee retention strategies have on the overall performance of employees working for Eagle Africa Insurance Brokers Limited. Gicho (2015) study was aimed to identify the impact that strategies for a flexible work environment have on employee performance, to determine the impact that remuneration strategies have on employee performance and to determine the impact that career development strategies have on employee performance. In order to establish the effectiveness of the various employee retention strategies utilised by the organization, Gicho (2015) study utilised means and standard deviations.

Gicho (2015) stated that the flexible work environment made it possible for employees to fulfil the requirements of the organization, and that the work environment made it possible for employees to increase their level of performance. Gicho (2015) study findings demonstrated that workers were able to exercise control over the amount of time they spent working, and as a result, they were able to achieve a better balance between their personal and professional lives. In addition to the fact that the organization had a low rate of absenteeism, Gicho (2015) findings indicated that a reduced hours schedule was a significant element

in the retention of employees.

Based on Gicho (2015) study, it was determined that the organization engaged in job sharing, which was implemented to provide employees with the opportunity to spend more time with their families. According to the findings obtained by Gicho (2015) employees were paid on a consistent basis, which was a positive development in terms of both compensation techniques and employee performance. Gicho (2015) findings also revealed that the organization provided incentives to workers who demonstrated exceptional performance. According to Gicho (2015) the respondents reported that they were encouraged by the organization to put in more effort in their performance, and it was also shown that the organization provided employees with awards that were equitable. The findings of Gicho (2015) study demonstrated that the employees' salaries did not serve as a powerful incentive for them to continue working for the organization, and that the salaries that were provided to the employees did not have any impact on the performance of the employees.

In terms of career development plans and employee performance, the findings of Gicho (2015) study revealed that the organization provided its employees with training to help them become more conscious of their skills. According to Gicho (2015) the organization enabled its workers to advance their careers by providing them with a platform to do so, and the employees reported feeling driven by the development plan that was supplied because of the organization. The findings of Gicho (2015) study demonstrated that the employees had been able to improve their skills as a result of the development training that was provided by the organization. In addition, the findings of Gicho (2015) study demonstrated that the employees had been able to accomplish their own objectives as a result of the training that was provided by the organization, which had resulted in an increase in their contribution to the organization. Stolovich (2020) conducted a research in United States with the aim of determining staff retention strategies, motivation, and workplace performance, performed research and best practises. According to Stolovich (2020), the purpose of the research was to establish the ways in which employee retention strategies boost work performance, the incentive programmes that are most effective, and the types of employee retention strategies that organizations need to implement. Stolovich (2020) asserts that employee retention techniques are effective in enhancing performance, motivating participation, and attracting skilled workers. The findings of Stolovich (2020) indicate that incentive programmes that provide monetary or tangible prizes have the potential to enhance performance by an average of 22% when they are selected, implemented, and monitored appropriately.

Effective strategies for retaining team members can increase productivity by as much as 44 percent. A study that was conducted by Stolovich (2020) found that incentive programmes have the potential to improve work interest. When the programme that is required to finish the work is presented for the very first time, there is a 15% improvement in performance. Incentives programmes drive individuals to increase their performance by 27% when they are urged to strive towards the goals that they have set for themselves for themselves. According to Stolovich (2020), incentive programmes have the potential to increase the performance of an organization by 26%, which in turn enables the organization to achieve its goals. Employees who meet the requirements are drawn to the reward programme. When an organization implements a well-designed incentive programme, it significantly improves its capacity to both recruit and keep the most talented individuals from within the organization.

## **Factors that influence employee retention**

### **Organizational Culture and Structure**

Cook (2022) comments that there should be a movement away from the traditional hierarchical style of management for effective employee retention to take place. He adds that for the retention process to be successful the organization's culture and structure must be supportive of individual employee learning, self-

development, risk and failure over the long term. This is in consistence with Pascual and Rothstein (2022) who mention that the corporate environment must change radically in order to foster an employee's higher level of information and authority, the process cannot exist in a vacuum and requires a culture of support.

Lahijahi et al (2022) conducted a study which aimed at investigating factors affecting human resources retention process and analyse existing solutions with an analytical approach. The researcher used interviews as a data collection tool and results showed that human resources retention can bring positive performance and efficiency in development projects. Equally, in Bangladesh Narenji et al (2019) studied on factors affecting employee retention in Mazanadarn province airports. The main target of the research was to identify factors affecting employees' retention in Mazanadarn province airports. The study adopted descriptive research design and sampling of 350 employees. The data was collected using questionnaires which contained 44 questions which were designed based on theories and literature on retention. The results of the research showed that HR strategy demonstrated an understanding of employee retention through transformational leadership practices.

### **Worker performance & Productivity**

When it comes to retaining staff, performance management is crucial (Hwang et al., 2018). A strong performance management plan should include goals and objectives, assessment tools, feedback channels, and rewards. It is also crucial to set reasonable expectations, so staff know what to achieve to continue employed (Kaffash poor & Sadeghian, 2020).

### **Communication**

Hugman (2017) posits that organization should include communication and easy access employees to managers and supervisors, transparency and clarity work community of employees with managers and supervisors. Correspondingly, Randolph (2018) comments that it is believed that the success of employee retention schemes depends greatly on the degree of managerial commitment and the constant communication of information. Similarly, Sharma and Bhati (2017) conducted a study in India which focused on investigating the role of organizational retention and motivation factors in enhancing the employees' commitment as measured by affective, continuous and normative commitment in the automotive industry in India.

The researcher adopted a questionnaire as a research instrument tool and used random sample size of 242 employees from an Automotive Industry. Data analysed showed that the 'open-communication' among the employees working across various sections of the plant results in sharing the responsibilities and owning of the organizational outcomes. In the same vein, Isimoya (2017) conducted a research in Lagos, Nigeria to examine the relationship between employee's retention and service delivery. The tested hypothesis confirmed that there is a significant relationship between effective communication and employee retention.

### **Competition**

Elnaga et al (2018) propose that every firm must put its best efforts to perform the work better and before other. They added that this is the only mantra in present situation for survival, grow, stabilize and excel in the business, efforts are put to increase the quality, quantity, decrease the time taken and cost involved. Similarly, this concurs with Jaffe and Scott (2022) who posits that retention of workers is one of the management approaches used by companies in response to the need of meeting a better competition world and to retain employee from leaving their job. Mwesigye (2022) conducted research in Rwanda to assess the contribution of empowering employees on sustainable competitive advantages in telecommunication industry. Data was collected from both primary and secondary sources and the total targeted population under study was 224 employees. The research results indicated that competition drives management to



empower employees in order to gain competitive advantage.

Correspondingly, Saima Akter (2018) undertook a study in Bangladesh in order to determine the factors affecting employee retention. The research adopted structured questionnaire as a data gathering tool. The study was based on the primary data collected from respondents with the help of structured questionnaire. The study revealed that there are mainly eight factors of employee retention that are positively effect on service quality as well as overall organizational prospect competition included. Similarly, Fatahi-Bayat et al (2022) undertook a study in Iran which sought to investigate the variables affecting the employee retention in tobacco companies of Markazi province. The researcher used structured questionnaire as a data collection tool. The results of this research indicate that the personal, structural, managerial and environmental factors specifically competition has a great impact on employee retention. Likewise, Huseyin (2022) did a study in Turkey to examine the relationship between retention and innovativeness, competition being the mediating variable. The study adopted questionnaire as a data gathering tool. The results of the study indicated that competition foster retention have significance in innovativeness.

### **Technology**

Moradian (2019) postulates that with so many online resources and educational tools, managers have what they need to empower each employee in a meaningful way. He adds that teaching them basic networking skills, and showing them how to follow up and building a meaningful long-term relationship with their colleagues and potential mentors help them to be effectively empowered. Agreeably, Thachik (2019) propose that technology endows today's knowledge workers with a real-life superpower: the ability to process enormous amounts of data in real time, increasing productivity while cutting out time-consuming manual labour. He went on to argue that the elimination of many repetitive jobs empowers workers to do things that only humans can do, such as provide contextual information or target specific audiences.

Motiei et al (2019) conducted a study to investigate the effects of information technology on productivity, employment and retention of employees at Sepid Gatch Saveh Company in Iran. The research sample consisted of 294 people. The researcher made use of questionnaire as a data collection tool. The outcomes showed that information technology greatly impacts employee retention and the absence of it lead to costs increase profits reduction. Likewise, Qudah and melhem (2022) carried out a research in Saudi Arabia aimed at testing the impact of information in general (GE) and information technology (IT) in particular on the impact of empowering employees in the private school sector in Southern region in Jordan. The results revealed that there is a positive relationship between information technology and employee retention.

### **Challenges associated with the implementation of the retention strategies.**

#### **Dissatisfaction with compensation**

Compensation, which includes salary and benefits, continues to be the primary driver of employee turnover, despite the fact that in today's world, there are clearly other reasons that are contributing to a rise in employee turnover (Abdullah & Azzahra, 2021). It will be difficult for an organization to recruit exceptional individuals if it does not provide a wage that is adequate and benefits that are appealing to those who are considering working for the company. When a person is employed, they will not remain without a pay that is in line with the cost of living. They will be more likely to look for other employment chances with companies that provide a higher salary and better benefits (Ete et al., 2021). When it comes to finances, some organizations may believe that it is impossible for them to provide fair and equitable compensation. However, when a manager takes into consideration the costs that are involved with staff turnover, as well as the fact that inadequate remuneration is one of the primary drivers of turnover, it becomes evident that it will be challenging for an organization to maintain a heavy bottom line if it is unable to recruit and keep good personnel (Nasaruddin & Abdul Rahman, 2016). A competitive advantage can be gained by

organizations that, in addition to providing equitable compensation, also provide benefits that cater to the requirements of employees and address the problems that are driving them to leave their jobs (Shafique et al., 2018). Employees are more likely to remain with an organization if their demands are catered to by the organization. Employees are more likely to perform their jobs to the best of their abilities and to remain loyal to their employer when they are adequately compensated for their labour through monetary compensation, benefits, and other employee incentives (Patil et al., 2021).

### **Ineffective Leadership**

When it comes to maintaining people and keeping them engaged, leadership is of the utmost importance (Mostafa & Eneizan, 2018). The relationship that an employee has with their direct boss is the primary factor that determines the length of time that they have been employed by the company. One of the most critical aspects of any organization's strategy for employee retention is making certain that leaders at all levels within the organization are demonstrating the organization's basic values and establishing relationships with employees that are founded on trust. This procedure ought to start with the recruitment stage (Xiao et al., 2019). Investing in leadership development for the top talent of the firm and providing career pathing and other professional assistance is an excellent approach to retain employees who possess the skill set that the organization requires.

### **Few Advancement Opportunities**

If they do not advance professionally or if they do not see any potential for progression in their existing organizations, a significant number of employees may have feelings of dissatisfaction in their positions, and they will be more likely to leave their current employers (Chiekezie et al., 2017). It is essential for employees to have the perception that they are professional development, as well as the development of their skills and intellectual talents. If an employee believes that they are making progress in their position, they are more likely to be involved in their work and even more likely to remain with the company. It is necessary for an organization to convey to its talented employees that they have a future in the organization and that the leadership is invested in them in order to retain valuable personnel (Maphisa et al., 2017). To increase employee retention, businesses can take a number of different approaches. Some of these approaches include providing employees with opportunity to progress their careers through learning opportunities, such as in-person or online training, tuition reimbursement, leadership development, and assistance in charting their career trajectories (Fant et al., 2016).

### **Lack of Recognition**

When they are recognised, employees thrive. In the event that their achievements are not acknowledged, this lack of acknowledgment may ultimately lead to them looking for new employment opportunities (Kaffash poor & Sadeghian, 2020). It is possible that praise is a potent incentive. It is possible that leaders in business are unaware of the significance that praise and recognition may have for their employees; yet, it is true that it provides a variety of advantages to both organizations and the teams that they employ. According to psychological research, praise is the most important source of positive reinforcement, which refers to the process of altering conduct in order to achieve a more favourable outcome (Shafique et al., 2018). The use of praise is a method that leaders can apply to acknowledge and promote positive behaviour in their workforce (Luu, 2020). Genuineness, specificity, and consistency are three qualities that should be adhered to while recognising someone. When it is done correctly, recognition indicates to employees that leadership is paying attention to them and that they value the job that employees accomplish.

### **Failure to Provide Job Clarity**

When employees are confused of what is expected of them in their employment, it creates a situation in

which they suffer conflict on a daily basis regarding the duties and responsibilities that they are responsible for (Owoye & Onafowora, 2021). The first step is to create a job description. There are a lot of companies that continue to use the same old job descriptions from one hire to the next, without reevaluating them to discover how things have changed with the role or how it might change in the near future (Metwally et al., 2019). On the other hand, it is necessary for employees to be aware of what is expected of them, to have new responsibilities and areas of responsibility highlighted for them as the situation evolves, and to be made aware that the job they perform is noticed by leadership. The job descriptions of an organization should be reviewed on a regular basis, and the organization should always make sure that employees are aware of what is expected of them in their respective roles. Clarifying job responsibilities through regular one-on-one interactions can be an excellent approach to do so (Addai-Duah et al., 2020).

### **The need for more autonomy**

Workers' preferences for autonomy have been found as a significant element in their job-seeking behaviours (Charoensap et al., 2018). When it comes to providing employees with the tools they need to work independently, the first step is to provide them with the flexibility in their work schedules, whenever it is possible to do so. Providing employees with the opportunity to work from home provides them with the flexibility to better care for their families and personal needs (Jia et al., 2019). Employees are better equipped to achieve this when they are not required to spend hours each week making those lengthy drives to an office to perform work that they can do just as effectively from home (Khan et al., 2018).

### **An employee retention model aimed to improve organizational performance at MTC.**

#### **Offering rewards**

The organization values each and every minute of time that an employee is able to devote to the company. It is possible to experience stress when working for a company that offers perks such as sick days and vacation days that are distinct from one another. As a result of the fact that many of their employers provide a significantly greater number of paid sick days than paid vacation days, taking sick leave is a big source of anxiety for workers. A significant number of individuals are of the opinion that corporations ought to offer paid time off and paid vacation benefits rather than setting aside certain days for vacation or sick leave. The provision of paid vacation time has a multitude of benefits, including the reduction of administrative expenses, the enhancement of employee morale, and the enhancement of staff retention and loyalty. In the event that employees are provided with paid time off, there is a greater likelihood that the organization's goals will be accomplished in solidarity.

#### **The importance of having a spirit of solidarity**

The members of a team who are highly driven, polite, and devoted to the group are more likely to earn paid time off than those who are less so. This is according to the findings of a study. It has been suggested by Muller and Trahar (2020) that the value of the solidarity spirit that exists within a team increases. It is possible to cultivate a culture of cooperation and the adoption of competitive strategies within an organization by allowing teamwork to permeate the organization (Mbedzi, 2019). When there is a strong sense of collaboration existing inside an organization, the morale of the employees is typically quite high. In certain circumstances, the foundation of a productive team can be found in the presence of a strong sense of belonging to a group. Stuit (2020) asserts that team members who embrace the spirit of solidarity are more cohesive than those who do not.

#### **The importance of compassion, as well as the shared visions**

Paid time off and the opportunity to collaborate with others as a group are two factors that can help cultivate

compassion and teamwork in employees. Due to the fact that it represents the individual objectives of each member of the team, a shared vision is said to be able to cultivate a sense of commitment, belief, and cooperation among the members of the team, as stated by Duvanage (2015). According to Stuit (2020), having a shared vision makes it easier for members of a team to perform to the optimal level of their abilities. Compassion among the members of the team can be an assistive factor in the process of developing a common vision. According to Kindle and Delavega (2018), the strength of a person's deep caring for the vision is what contributes to the development of personal visions among members of a team. Compassion is a social value that can be equated to this kind of great caring, and this interpretation is plausible. The members of a team can develop a shared vision through the use of compassion. According to Mangaliso (2018), a collegial environment is established when individuals assist one another in their working environment. It is possible for members of a team to develop a common vision if they take the time to get to know one another and show concern for one another.

### **Regard and esteem for one's dignity**

Managers who have the practise of providing their staff with paid time off are regarded as role models by their employees. According to Muchinako, Mpambela, and Muzingili (2018), human relationships would be ineffective if there was no trust between the parties involved. It is a positive anticipation that another person will not act opportunistically to one's harm through words, acts, or decisions, according to Robbins' (2019) definition of trust. It is possible for members of a team to develop mutual trust by expressing their different opinions and concerns in a setting that is both secure and open (Holton, 2021). This can be accomplished through interactions that are regular and meaningful. For every group to realise its full potential, it is necessary to establish and maintain a formalised mutual trust. According to Pretorius (2019), the reduction of uncertainty and ambiguity among members of a team can be accomplished through the establishment of personal trust among those individuals. In order for a group to achieve success, it is necessary for its members to demonstrate trust in one another. According to Mugumbate and Chereni (2019), as long as there is a lack of trust among the members of the team, the chances of the team being successful and effective are extremely low.

### **Enhancing employee retention**

According to St-Onge et al (2019), this can be accomplished by observing aspects such as the individual's friendliness, alertness, physical appearance, and attitude, as well as the manner in which they carry out their work or the tasks that have been assigned to them. According to Greenberg and Baron (2013), the fundamental idea of providing remuneration to workers dates back to the beginning of the field of human resource management. During the course of his research on employee remuneration, Adi (2017) discovered that employees have demands that must be satisfied in order for an organization to achieve its goals of maximising employee productivity and increasing profitability. According to Dobre (2013), throughout the course of human history, organizations have frequently employed both financial and non-financial strategies in order to encourage their staff. A few examples of non-financial ways include job rotation and job enrichment, as well as flexible working hours and job expansion. Financial methods include profit sharing, bonuses, and remuneration that is tied to profits. Paid time off can be utilised to boost productivity by defining goals or targets for the work that is currently being done. Some examples of these goals and targets include exceeding sales or fulfilling strategic objectives. An employee who meets or surpasses their target or achieves strategic goals may be offered an incentive to work harder (Maund, 2020).

### **Offering career advancement programs**

Kakui's (2020) conducted a study in Kenya and looked into the effects of career development on the performance of public sector employees, the National Cereals and Produce Board served as a case study for the analysis. According to Kakui (2020), it is common practise to employ career development as a means of

bridging the gap between the outcomes that are currently occurring and those that are predicted. There are a lot of people working in the public sector who are putting in a lot of effort to enhance their skills, but there are few opportunities for growth accessible to them. Workers in Kenya’s public sector are coming under increased pressure from a diverse range of stakeholders, including members of the general public, organizations that are part of civil society, and organizations that engage with development partners. For the most part, the conditions that were most prevalent in the workplace were low performance and bad performance. A subpar level of service has been provided as a consequence of poor job performance in the public sector. The National Grain Production Commission served as a case study for the purpose of the research project, which aimed to assess the impact that career development has on the performance of employees working in the public sector. According to the findings, on-the-job training improves employee performance by enhancing critical competences and job specifications, motivating people, minimising intimidation, giving extra skills, knowledge, and capabilities, and allowing employees to network with one another. Career mentors have been found to have a favourable impact on employee performance, according to a study. Career mentors provide students with direction and assistance, and they also assist students in developing their own ways for troubleshooting problems.

**Conceptual framework**

The reviewed literature shows a direct relationship between flexibility, stability, independency and interdependency with cultural alignment. The literature also shows a direct causal relationship between cultural alignment and employee retention in high-stress environments. Figure 2.3 below gives a diagrammatical representation of the conceptual framework for the model.

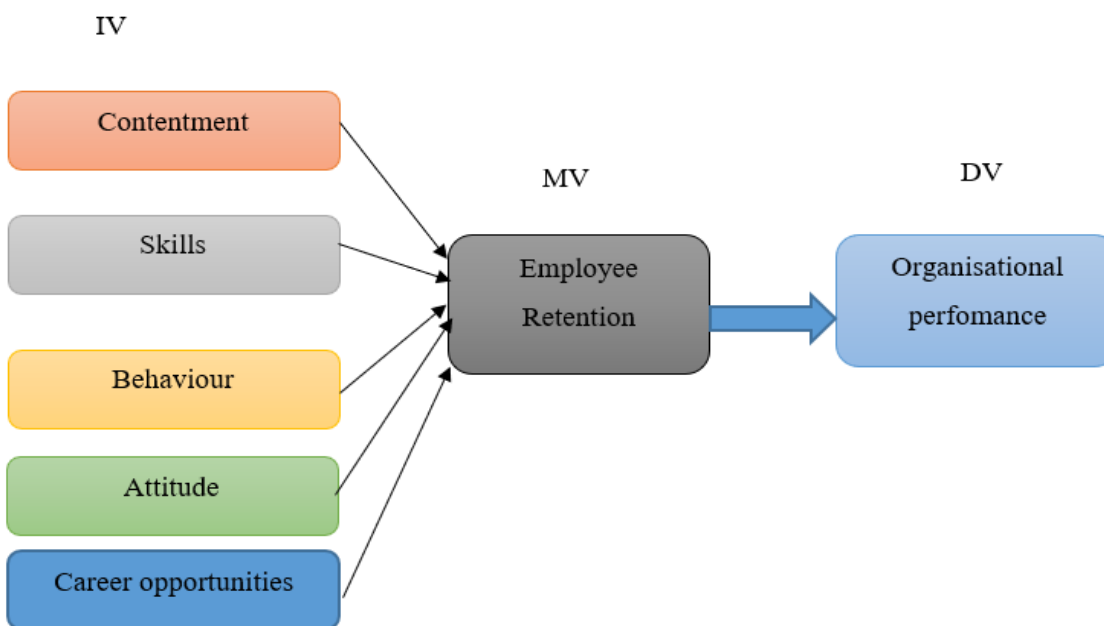
**Key:**

IV – Independent Variable

MV – Mediating Variable

DV – Dependent Variable

Figure 2.3: conceptual framework



Source: Prepared for this study



From the figure 2.3 above it can be seen that aspects such as flexibility, stability, independency and interdependency have a positive effect on employee retention. According to Keller et al., (2020) contentment, skills, behaviour, attitude and career opportunities tend to affect employee retention.

### Research gap

Stolovich (2020), Widhianingrum (2018), Eldridge & Nisar (2011), Terera & Ngirande (2014), Denton (2018), and Kakui (2016) investigated the effect of motivation on employee performance. They also looked at productivity and employee satisfaction. Employee retention strategies, paid time off, and advancement opportunities were all sadly overlooked. Meanwhile these studies did not manage to establish the relationship between employee retention strategies and worker performance, determine factors that influence employee retention, identify challenges associated with the implementation of the retention strategies and develop an employee retention model aimed to improve organizational performance at MTC hence this study closed this gap.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this study the researcher adopted pragmatism research philosophy. Pragmatism encourages the employment of several approaches to the issues under study. Belás et al. (2021) noted that pragmatism works by combining qualitative and quantitative findings. A common research strategy among pragmatic researchers is the mixed-methods design, which integrates multiple research techniques into a unified study. On the other hand, researchers must focus less on methodology and more on the topic at hand in order to identify appropriate methods (Sekaran & Bougie, 2018). The use of both quantitative and qualitative research strategy enabled the researcher to acquire insights on examining the effectiveness of the current employee retention strategies used by MTC, identify challenges associated with the implementation of the retention strategies, analyse the effect of remuneration on retention of workers at MTC, examine the effect of working conditions on retention of workers at MTC and develop an employee retention model aimed to improve organizational performance at MTC. It was necessary to use a case study methodology for this study. Yin (2016) defines a case study as an empirical study of a phenomenon as it occurs in the actual world. The case study approach allowed for in-depth, multi-faceted examinations of complex problems or obstacles as they actually occurred, which is particularly relevant to this study of Mashonal and Tobacco Company. The case study method is highly useful when one has to gain a thorough understanding of a topic, occurrence, or phenomenon of interest in its actual, real-world context. A total of 480 participants were considered for this study. There are 480 respondents working for Mashonal and Tobacco Company, including managers and non-managers (MTC company records, 2023). The procurement, marketing, operations, call centre, human resources, and finance departments will make up the targeted demographic of 480 respondents for this study. In this study the researcher adopted Taro Yamane sample size determination method as shown below

The variables in this formula are:

$n$  = the sample size

$N$  = the population of the study

$e$  = the margin error in the calculation

Sample size =  $480 / (1 + 480(0.05)^2)$

Sample size =  $480 / (1+1.2)$

Sample size = 218

## ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

The reliability test was utilized to establish whether or not a scale possesses an internal consistent. The researcher relied on Cronbach’s alpha coefficient as the indicator in order to determine whether or not there was adequate consistency. The value of Cronbach’s alpha for each construct and variable must be greater than 0.6, as this is a requirement. In a perfect world, Cronbach’s alpha would be greater than 0.7. Nunnally (1967) makes the assertion that the Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of a scale can be considered reliable if it is more than 0.6. In light of this, the Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of a scale was determined to be 0.6 for the purposes of this study. In a perfect world, the Cronbach’s alpha would be higher than 0.7. Cronbach’s alpha was used by the researcher for this study, and the value of Cronbach’s alpha for the study was 0.9, which indicates that it may be suitable for the study. The outcomes of the test of reliability are detailed in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1: Reliability statistics

Concept	Cronbach’s Alpha
Paid time off	0.822
Incentive	0.697
Basic salary	0.833
Career advancement	0.707
Commission	0.737
Offering rewards	0.673
Flexible scheduling	0.810
Creating a roadmap	0.727
Fostering communication	0.657
Offering holidays	0.771

The reliability analysis presented in Table 4.2 above shows Cronbach’s alpha values of paid time off, incentive, career advancement, intrinsic motivation, offering rewards, flexible scheduling, creating a roadmap, fostering communication, offering holidays to be more than 0.7 which entails that the questions aimed to get answers to these concepts are reliable as supported by Sekaran who noted that values above 0.5 are reliable

### The relationship between employee retention strategies and worker performance

This section presents descriptive statistics in relation to the relationship between employee retention strategies and worker performance

Table 4.2: Descriptive statistics on the relationship between employee retention strategies and worker performance

Constructs	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
Employee retention improves productivity	1.00	5.00	3.021	.664

Employee retention increase employee morale	1.00	5.00	3.282	.633
Employee retention motivates employees thereby improves their participation	1.00	5.00	2.976	.461
Through the use of employee retention an organization attracts qualified employees	1.62	5.00	3.088	.554

The table 4.1 above presented descriptive statistics on relationship between employee retention strategies and worker performance. Respondents agreed that employee retention improves productivity (Mean= 3.021, SD= 0.664), employee retention increase employee morale (Mean= 3.282, SD= 0.633), employee retention motivates employees thereby improves their participation (Mean= 2.976, SD= 0.461) and through the use of employee retention an organization attracts qualified employees (Mean= 3.088, SD= 0.554). Gicho (2015) conducted a study in South Africa on the effect of employee retention strategies on employee performance: the case of Eagle Africa insurance brokers limited. Gicho (2015) supported that employee retention increase employee morale.

### Factors that influence employee retention

Respondents were also asked to indicate the extent to which they agree on factors that influence employee retention. Table 4.2 below presents descriptive statistics on factors that influence employee retention.

Table 4.2: Descriptive statistics on factors that influence employee retention

Constructs	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
Compensation affects employee retention	1.00	5.00	3.82	1.227
Organizational Culture and Structure	1.00	5.00	3.77	1.462
Ineffective leadership	1.00	5.00	3.83	1.296
Ineffective communication	1.62	5.00	4.07	1.145

From the table 4.2 above it can be noted that respondents strongly agreed that compensation affects employee retention (Mean= 3.82, SD= 1.227), organizational culture and structure affects employee retention (Mean= 3.77, SD= 1.462), ineffective leadership affect employee retention (Mean= 3.83, SD= 1.296) and ineffective communication affect employee retention (Mean= 4.07, SD= 1.145). Hugman (2017) posits that organization should include communication and easy access employees to managers and supervisors, transparency and clarity work community of employees with managers and supervisors. Correspondingly, Randolph (2018) comments that it is believed that the success of employee retention schemes depends greatly on the degree of managerial commitment and the constant communication of information. Similarly, Sharma and Bhati (2017) conducted a study in India which focused on investigating the role of organizational retention and motivation factors in enhancing the employees' commitment as measured by affective, continuous and normative commitment in the automotive industry in India. Sharma and Bhati (2017) showed that the 'open-communication' among the employees working across various sections of the plant results in sharing the responsibilities and owning of the organizational outcomes.

### Challenges associated with the implementation of the retention strategies

Respondents were also asked to indicate the extent to which they agree on challenges associated with the implementation of the retention strategies. Table 4.4 below presents descriptive statistics on challenges associated with the implementation of the retention strategies.

Table 4.4: Mean and standard deviation on challenges associated with the implementation of the retention strategies

<b>Descriptive Statistics</b>				
<b>Constructs</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
We always face increased resistant to change	1	5	3.93	1.274
Our operations are affected by limited financial resources and budget constraints	1	5	3.88	1.018
Insufficient communication and coordination affect the implementation of employee retention strategy	1	5	3.90	1.371
Lack of skilled experts	1	5	3.93	1.318
Ineffective leadership	1	5	4.00	1.262
Valid N (list wise)				

From the table 4.4 above it can be seen that respondents agreed that the company always face increased resistant to change with a mean rating of 3.93 and a standard deviation of 1.274. Some respondents agreed that the company operations are affected by limited financial resources and budget constraints with a mean rating of 3.88 and standard deviation of 1.018. Some respondents also agreed that there tend to be challenges such as insufficient communication and coordination affect the implementation of employee retention strategy with a mean rating of 3.90 and standard deviation of 1.371. Others were neutral on lack of skilled experts with a mean rating of 3.93 and standard deviation of 1.318. Some respondents agreed that ineffective leadership affects our operations with a mean rating 4.00 and a standard deviation 1.262. In this study respondents agreed that red tape affect operations of the organization. When it comes to maintaining people and keeping them engaged, leadership is of the utmost importance (Mostafa & Eneizan, 2018). The relationship that an employee has with their direct boss is the primary factor that determines the length of time that they have been employed by the company. One of the most critical aspects of any organization’s strategy for employee retention is making certain that leaders at all levels within the organization are demonstrating the organization’s basic values and establishing relationships with employees that are founded on trust. This procedure ought to start with the recruitment stage (Xiao et al., 2019). Investing in leadership development for the top talent of the firm and providing career pathing and other professional assistance is an excellent approach to retain employees who possess the skill set that the organization requires. This helps to guarantee that the cultural DNA of the organization is not lost as a result of employee turnover (Sharma et al., 2019).

### **An employee retention model aimed to improve organizational performance at MTC**

Descriptive statistics were adopted for this study on an employee retention model aimed to improve organizational performance at MTC. They are shown in Table 4.5 below

Table 4.5 Descriptive statistics of an employee retention model aimed to improve organizational performance at MTC

<b>Constructs</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
Pay for performance	1.00	5.00	3.478	.654
Having team solidarity in an organization	1.00	5.00	2.299	.680
Recognition of top performers	1.00	5.00	3.039	.663

Results attained in table 4.5 above shows descriptive statistics of employee retention model aimed to

improve organizational performance at MTC. Majority of respondents indicated that the organization should pay for performance with a mean rating of 3.478 and a standard deviation of .654. Other respondents agreed that it is important to have team solidarity in an organization with a mean rating of 2.299 and standard deviation of 0.680 whilst others agreed that the organization should recognize top performers with a mean rating of 3.039 and standard deviation of 0.663. The organization values each and every minute of time that an employee is able to devote to the company. It is possible to experience stress when working for a company that offers perks such as sick days and vacation days that are distinct from one another. As a result of the fact that many of their employers provide a significantly greater number of paid sick days than paid vacation days, taking sick leave is a big source of anxiety for workers. A significant number of individuals are of the opinion that corporations ought to offer paid time off and paid vacation benefits rather than setting aside certain days for vacation or sick leave. The provision of paid vacation time has a multitude of benefits, including the reduction of administrative expenses, the enhancement of employee morale, and the enhancement of staff retention and loyalty. In the event that employees are provided with paid time off, there is a greater likelihood that the organization's goals will be accomplished in solidarity.

## SUGGESTIONS

Companies must regularly assess and change salaries to ensure they are paying competitive wages to their employees. Bonuses and other types of additional remuneration should be considered even if a salary raise is now out of the question for the company. Boosting retirement and health care benefits is another great way to make workers happy in their jobs. The significance of effective communication in the workplace has been brought to light. It is important that organizations should direct reports, regardless of whether they work on-site or remotely, have the impression that they can approach the management at any time with ideas, questions, and concerns. In addition, as a leader, a manager should have the responsibility of ensuring that employees are doing what they can to facilitate communication that is timely, productive, and positive among the entire team. The management should also make it a point to reach out to every member of the team on a regular basis in order to gauge their level of job satisfaction and the amount of work they are putting in.

## CONCLUSIONS

Most organizations have been offering paid time off, incentives, basic salary, career advancement, commissions, rewards and holidays to their employees as a retention strategy. In this study it has been noted that employee retention improves productivity, employee retention increase employee morale and employee retention motivates employees thereby improves their participation. Through the use of employee retention an organization attracts qualified employees. It has been noted that compensation affects employee retention, organizational culture and structure, ineffective leadership and ineffective communication influence employee retention. Whenever implementing employee retention strategies organizations always face increased resistant to change. Their operations are affected by limited financial resources and budget constraints. Insufficient communication and coordination affect the implementation of employee retention strategy. It has been noted that an organization should pay for performance, have team solidarity in an organization and prioritize recognition of top performers.

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