Retention Of Highly Qualified Phd Faculty In Private Sector Universities At Kpk, Pakistan A "Case Study" Of Phd Faculty At Private Universities In Kpk, Pakistan

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Abstract

This case study attempts to identify the perception of highly qualified PhD faculty in private sector universities about to switch from private to any public sector organization. Six private sector universities working in district Peshawar have been selected to participate in this study. This case study has been adapted into qualitative method in order to discover any new elements that are able to explain the perception of switching highly qualified PhD faculty. In the first phase of the study, the program coordinator from these six universities will be interviewed. In the second phase the selected faculty members will be interviewed in order to find out the basic theme. In third phase the Secretary Higher Education Department will be requested to shed light on the underlying issue and finally, the Chairman Higher Education Commission Islamabad will be approached to shed light on the issue concerning private sector universities highly qualified faculty members. After conducting interviews, a review of data will be organized with the intention to create initial codes. Accordingly, all the established codes will be revised in order to combine codes into themes. And finally the themes will be presented to develop a cohesive model.

Keywords: private sector universities, PhD faculty, turnover, employee retention, six private universities.

1. Introduction

All organizations regardless of size, are struggling with the issue of retaining productive employee (Fortune, 2017). The establishment of private higher Universities has been comprised both in developed and developing countries as a means of expanding access, equity and equality to higher education. In the context of private sector universities at KPK, the turnover rates of the higher degree holders especially Ph.D degree holders who can be a faculty member, assistant professor, or lecturer is relatively high.

The challenge of maintaining quality of education may be realized through retaining highly qualified academic staff. However, the struggle to retain well trained academic staff poses the most formidable challenge to these Universities and yet it is the most critical in ensuring quality of education. Faculty retention is yet a challenge in Pakistan and is one of the problems facing by the Universities (Siddiqui, 2010). This switching trend among educational university has risen during last decade. Better emoluments from other Universities provide a base to switch the parent university these days (Khan, 2011). In recent years, organizations experienced intensive competition, both domestic and international levels in retaining talented employees. It has become a discouraging task to retain employees for organizations especially in private sector universities. Employee retention is a process which the employees are encouraged to stay with the organization for a maximum period of time to enable them to develop required knowledge, skills and experience to perform exceptionally in particular organization, without the need for continuous training. (Sahin, 2012). According to American University of Research (2009) 'organizations that failed to retain top talents are spending more in term of finding replacement staff and provide training. Apart from this, high turnover event will erode morale among those who stay and would affect customer retention. The reason for organizations to lose their top talents includes multiple factors such as dissatisfaction on compensation and benefits, supervisor and subordinate relations, poor organizational culture, lack of two-way communication, corporate identity or prestige, and the working environment. Academic staffs play a vital role in determining the quality of private higher Universities since it is the core process of the organization. Furthermore, the academic staffs are the front line people who will be dealing with customer, i.e. the students, directly.

1.2 Problem Statement

The success of any organization depends on the support of talented employees. This can apply to the educational Universities as well. In private sector universities, the university has to balance decision between profitability and cost. In KP, many cases have been observed where offered low salaries and perks to its academic and non-academic employees. Not only this, there is no established mechanism to provide them job security and pension system as public sector universities. This causes them to leave for competitor's universities for better offer. Mostly the higher degree holders especially

PhD's are seeking jobs at public sector universities with the aim to secure their job and career. There is no established policy of job security and pension program at private sector universities of KPK to attract and retain capable employees and even Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan have no program of financial support, career development and attraction for the retention of faculty at private sector universities. This situation will cause irritation and dissatisfaction, and pressuring the existing staff to decide to leave the existing university as well (IDS, 2000).

1.3 Research Focus

The problem of academic staff retention is a worldwide issue that is experienced by most Universities of higher learning both in the developing and developed countries. Some researches that have been conducted focus on the role of academic and non-academic factors in improving university retention (lotkowski, robbins, & noeth, 2004). Others examine the staff capacity erosion as a factor that threatens to reduce the impact on retention reforms. Obviously, these researches failed to link retention with quality education in Universities of higher learning more so in private universities. This study therefore, sought to fill this gap of linking PhD qualified staff retention with quality education in private sector universities.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What is the retention rate among academic staff at Private Sector Universities?
2. How factors lead to failure in retaining of academic staff in private sector Universities of KP?
3. How turnover of PhD faculty affect quality of education and research activities.

1.5 Research Objectives

1. To find the retention rate among PhD faculty of private sector universities of KP.
2. To identify the factors which leads to failure in retaining of academic staff specially (PhD's) in private sector Universities of KP.
3. To identify the turnover intention and perception of PhD faculty working at private sector Universities of KP.

1.6 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitatively study is to explore the concept of retention as it related to PhD faculty in the department of business administration. The researcher intended to investigate whether retention or the lack thereof in any way affected faculty retention and productivity in private sector higher education. In this study, researcher will compare faculty perceptions of retention and the retention process. Additionally, the goal of researcher is to examine the years of faculty retention as well as productivity. This qualitatively research, the data will be collected through interviews not only from the faculty of private sector universities but also to the top level management of Higher Education Commission, Islamabad.

1.7 Limitations of the study

According to Denscombe (2010), constraints related to time and cost are frequent in any research. Due to lack of cost and time, the sample size is reduced and there is a possibility to miss the viewpoints of all the PhD faculty of all departments. Since the research will be focus on only department of Management Science of all private sector universities located at KP that is why the scope of the research will also be limited.

1.8 Delimitation

Populations included in this study will be only PhD qualified faculty full-time faculty positions in private sector universities of KP. Individuals in the position of Assistant Professors having no PhD will not include in this study. Adjunct professors and visiting faculty having PhD will also not consider in this research due to their part-time status.

Review of Literature

Higher educated faculty retention is yet a challenge in Pakistan and is one of the problems facing by the Universities (Siddiqui, 2010). This switching trend among educational university has risen during last decade. Better remunerations from other Universities provide a base to switch the parent university these days (Khan, 2011). Employees who have the feelings that they are underpaid or not receiving appropriate training or promotion are highly likely to quit the organization (Coff, 1996). Dockel, Basson & Coetzee (2006) have identified Compensation, training and development and promotion as the most important retention factors. Perhaps for faculty the need of learning and progression in the academic career has now become one of the prominent needs.

Voluntary turnover had been concerned more for educational Universities. This might result in disruption and discontinuity of teaching, research and student mentoring. The organizations could also face serious financial problems as new recruitment process would take its time (Rosser, 2004). Moreover, faculty would go through formal orientation and socialization process to be able to actively play its role. Johnsrud & Heck (1994) argued that turnover is productive to the extent that it provides opportunity for new and fresh blood to join organizations with fresh and creative ideas.

The high faculty turnover over the years has resulted in disruption of innovations and research and has brought uncertainty in educational university. Faculty turnover reflects faculty's transition from one job/ university to another. Since faculty is the lifeblood of the higher education system, priority must be given to recruit talented faculty having sound credentials. The Universities are at the top in their area because they provide value proposition to their faculty and keep them glued to the university.

Although the literature covers a wide variety of factors responsible for teacher retention, it reveals that retention is essential to prolong the dissemination of quality education. It provides competitive advantage to both faculty and an educational institute. Despite putting lot of efforts to retain talent, fundamental problem of talent drain still remain

the same or questionable. Bogdanowicz and Bailey (2002) reported that in fast growing economic and market conditions, knowledge management and intellectual assets/ capital are found significant indicators of success. Therefore, it has become very crucial to retain the talent possessing right knowledge, skills and abilities to uphold their core competitive edge. (Giacometti (2005) conducted a survey on factors affecting job satisfaction and retention of faculty. The survey revealed factors like compensation (salary and monetary benefits); work culture (consisting of administrative support, bureaucracy, collegial support, moral support and evaluation of performance) and job security & social issues like reputation / brand etc. as vital factors for retention of faculty in any private university.

Bhavna & Rajashree (2012) states the fundamental factors related to organization that contributes to teacher's commitment to the workplace which is measured in terms of their dissatisfaction and absenteeism from workplace and is highly correlated with turnover. The study also found that non-monetary incentives like performance based promotion, research allowances, reduced teaching load to promote research, help in recruiting and retaining faculty without increasing salary. In addition, insufficient support (personal as well as financial), receiving disrespectful treatment and mismatched university l and individual goals are negative aspects of the institute's working environment and also influence higher qualified faculty turnover

According to Zakia, Jashim and Shah (2010) faculty turnover is the reflection of dissatisfaction that arises from absence of professional development, autonomy, unfairness in rewards and recognition, toxicity/ harmfulness in working environment, unsatisfactory compensation package, unsatisfactory research & publication facilities and lack of administrative and technical support. Furthermore factors like excessive work load (teaching hours), poor students quality and faculty performance appraisal based of student's feedback, discrimination in recognition, absence of training and career growth are associated and responsible for high rate of mobility of faculty.

Dee (2010) on one side suggested that retention strategies for older faculty may include health insurance, retirement package and professional growth among others and on other side of the study he found that higher rate of faculty turnover may be costly in terms of the reputation of university and academic quality. Akila (2012) pointed out that faculty retention can be enhanced through regular feedback on grievances, problems and stress management. Malvern, Michael & Crispen (2010) identified several factors like management attitude, lack of recognition, absence of competitive salary & compensation and lack of retention strategy, which are responsible for motivating faculty to shift from one university to another. Other motivational factors that play important role include; rewards system, job security and promotion policy. Manhertz (2008) suggested in his study that employee recognition, competitive compensation, growth and development opportunities and healthy work life balance play vital role in retention. Whereas Farrell (2009) emphasized on different elements of the campus culture like artifacts, behavioral norms, values, and employee training programs often found significant in continuation of the job. Kwenin (2013) recommends that top

management should provide value element in the job profile and working conditions to make faculty more satisfying to stay. In a survey on Challenges of faculty retention (2009) it has been observed that research facility is one of the best incentive to retain faculty but the survey reveals that 90 percent of the faculty deal with only teaching while a mere 20 percent are involved in research and publications as well. Apart from lack of research facility, compensation along with other employee benefits is also an important professional reason for faculty resignations. The faculty's parameters of satisfactions are different from corporate professionals; rather than high pay packages, teachers need recognition and appreciation so that they feel inspired. Other factors like having salary at par with the industry; providing medical benefits, performance oriented promotions; training, a transparent appraisal system and providing housing facilities are other factors that play vital role in faculty turnover.

Winter (2009) found many issues that are related to retention like salary, research expectations, university/ management commitment and reputation of the university to attract faculty at the level of associate professor and professor.

2.1   Research Gap

The gap in the literature identified in this study could only be closed or narrowed through careful review of existing data and literature integrated with the results of the faculty interviews and focus group performed as a part of this study. This gap could best be addressed through a qualitatively weighted use qualitative interpretation of existing data and other information collected through faculty interviews. The initial gap which is identified via review of literature for this study is little work has been found dearth in retention of PhD qualified faculty at private sector universities. As well as the role of Higher Education Commission in retaining PhD faculty at Private sector universities were found absent.

3.0   Research Methodology

Research methodology is a pattern of conducting research empirically in order to achieve the objectives of research. A research design is a systematic way to conduct a research. It has different phases. According to Saunders et al. (2007) research onion describes more detailed stages of the research process.

3.1   Research philosophy

A research philosophy refers to the set of beliefs concerning the nature of the reality being investigated (Bryman, 2012). According to Williams (2011) research philosophy is the initial step and an essential segment of research methodology which enable the researcher to obtain information in an efficient and proper way. The three different terminologies of research philosophy are: Positivism, interpretivism and realism. Positivism philosophy relies on highly organized methodology to provide quantifiable observations and to analyze the findings by using statistical tools. Whilst interpretivism is based on believes and meaning of simple phenomenon and appropriate for almost

every research issue. On the other hand realism is based on the existence of purposive and external reality that affects individual's social behavior.

Justification: The researcher tries to find out the factors and perception of PhD faculty about the retention in private sector universities, thus the research philosophy will be interpretivism as it helps the researcher to perform the study without biasing it with respect to researcher's judgments (Williams, 2011).

3.2. Research approach

Research approaches are the actions and tactics for a research study (Crowther and Lancaster, 2009). The two types of research approaches are deductive and inductive. In deductive approach, a hypothesis is implemented based on present theory and then a method is designed to test the hypothesis whereas in inductive approach a new theory is formed depending upon the research observations (Mertens, 2009).

Justification: The researcher opting for inductive approach for exploring past studies from a different perspective (Crowther and Lancaster, 2009). The present research is exploring the factors, opinions, and perceptions which has been researched by several scholars from a distinct perspective. Thus the researcher is using inductive approach for this study.

3.3. Research Strategy

Research strategy provides a path that lead the research in an organized way towards the research objectives and it can be exploratory, explanatory and descriptive (Kumar, 2010). Exploratory strategy is adopted when the study aims to find out "what is happening", to ask questions, to evaluate findings form a different perspective. Descriptive strategy aims to find out answers to what, where, who and how of the research topic whereas explanatory strategy aims to develop accurate theory which will be adopted to describe practical generalizations.

Justification: The researcher intends too little bit touch the descriptive strategy as well as exploratory strategy as the study aims to build up new proposals for future studies (Kumar, 2010). As the present study investigate the concept of retention of higher qualified faculty from a new perspective, exploratory research help the researcher to investigate and explain the situation in the research in a more detailed way.

3.1.4. Research design

According to Carsrud and Brannback (2014), research design is a detailed outline of how a study will be performed and it can be an experiment, survey, action research, case study, narrative enquiry, grounded theory and ethnography.

Justification: The research is using case study as it is highly efficient in gathering precise information from a population in a time and cost efficient manner (Carsrud and Brannback, 2014). Moreover, as stated by Mertens (2009), the data gathered through

interview will be informative and will enable the researcher to understand the PhD faculty opinion on regarding retention in private sector universities.

3.2. Data collection methods

Data collection is the most important process in a research and it includes two types: primary and secondary data collection methods (Lim and Ting, 2013). Secondary data collection method evolves the collection of data which are source materials previously obtained by some other researchers for the study purpose. Secondary data's are collected quickly through referring sources like online articles, books, journals etc.

As per stated by Khan (2011) primary data collection methods helps the researcher to do more efficient analysis of the research through collecting fresh information related to the research matter and it can be qualitative or quantitative. Quantitative research is an objective and organized process that evaluates the relationship between variables and translate data into digits for statistical evaluation. Methods such as case studies, surveys, interviews etc, used to collect quantitative information.

Justification: The researcher is using both primary and secondary methods for exploring the research topic. Secondary data collection method enabled the researcher to collect information related to retention of PhD faculty at private sector universities of KP that has already been gathered by any other researchers for any other purpose. Regarding primary data, the researcher is using qualitative method 'interview' which enabled the researcher to recognize the viewpoint of PhD faculty of private sector universities and the top level management of HEC, Islamabad.

3.3. Sampling methods:

Sampling methods are adapted to choose a group of representative units from a population, observes Lim and Ting (2013). Probability and non-probability are the two sampling methods used in research studies. In probability sampling each individual in the population has equivalent chances of being included in the sample whereas in non-probability sampling individuals do not have identical chances of being included (Levy and Lemeshow, 2013). Probability sampling is divided into simple random, cluster, systematic and stratified random sampling. On the other hand, non-probability sampling is classified into convenience, quota and purposive sampling.

Justification: The researcher is using simple random sampling method for interviewing program coordinators of 6 private universities located at District Peshawar and one is located at District Nowshera.

3.4. Data analysis plan

A both primary and secondary method is being used by the researcher to gather research data. The researcher has collected secondary information by referring data sources like articles, journals, and books etc, related to the retention of PhD faculty at private sector universities. This analysis enabled the researcher in creating proper questionnaires for primary data collection.

The primary data is gathered by using interview. Analysis of qualitative data is carried out manually and then collected data is fed into computer by using Leximancer software for content analysis.

3.5. Accessibility issues

In this research, the researcher faced constraints related to the accessibility of both primary and secondary information. The issue in primary data accessing is related to interviewing faculty at universities; it was difficult for the researcher to obtain access to the PhD faculty as were busy in peak hours. This was turn affect the preciseness of data and in such cases the researcher was conducted primary data collection at a faster rate with respect to participant's convenience. Accordingly, the primary data from the top level management is also not an easy arrangement, it was required several visits to HEC for taking approval for interview, as the top level of HEC including DG and Chairman HEC was also considered as part of this study.

3.6. Ethical issues

The researcher has strictly followed the research ethics & respect and give equal importance to all the participants in the research. Prior to the commencement of the research, the researcher has provided detailed outline of the research and did not force any person to participate in the analysis. Moreover, the researcher is bound to keep the confidentiality and privacy of collected data as well as details of the participants.

4. Analysis

Several steps have been taken to analyzing the data, towards achieving the research objectives. The next stage is coding process, the researcher will do the process of coding from labeled information, and the objective here is to narrow down or to perform a data reduction and to obtain a comprehension about the data. Coding can be done by just include words, sentences, paragraph. In this research, the researcher will do coding sentences since it's provide multiple information that will be difficult to analyze if these are broken apart. Nvivo software will be used to analyze the qualitative data. In this connection the interviews data will be analyzed in six steps. These steps composed of transcribe the interview recordings, group the responses to each question, find and catalogue themes to make sense of the data, evaluate the connections between themes and move towards analytical insight, making codes and themes and finally classifications will be developed to visualize the results.

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