

Factors influencing employee retention of academic home tutors in a private school

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ABSTRACT

This study's goal is to investigate the links between pay and benefits, work-life balance, professional development, and employee retention among academic home tutors in a Malaysian private school. Data from 80 respondents from this private school were gathered using a quantitative survey method. Statistical package for social science (SPSS) was employed throughout the study to analyze the data. The study results showed that salary & compensation and career enhancement positively correlate with employee retention. Meanwhile, work-life balance was not statistically linked with employee retention. The management should revise the human resource management practices by including these elements. The management should design salary & compensation packages that fit with individual knowledge, capabilities, and performance. The management may also consider offering flexible work schedules, such as training, mentoring, job mobility, and a reduction in working hours, as well as wellness assistance, such as counselling services and health and wellness initiatives. This will give employees the chance to advance their careers.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In this era where employees are paramount to the success of every organization, employees play an indispensable and important role in organizations. Without employees, no matter how good an entrepreneur is, the business will not be able to establish and flourish well. Thus, strategies aimed at retaining good employees are greatly emphasized by many companies [1]. Therefore, employers should establish effective strategies to foster a conducive working environment for employees to express their needs at work.

Employee retention strategy in an organization is crucial to reduce hiring costs and maintaining organizational productivity, engagement, belongingness, and loyalty of the employees [2]. In addition, employee retention is vital because the expense of replacing and re-training new employees is significant especially for those who possess specialized talents which are rare in the market [3]. Retention of skilled employees remains a challenging task in this ever-changing economy. As a result, top management and human resource departments must commit a considerable amount of time and monetary resources to retain their valuable employees in order to gain a competitive advantage [3]. Good employees may leave the organization without effective employee retention plans for better options. When dissatisfied with their current job or employers, they tend to hop to other organizations offering better compensation packages [4]. The human resource department is the most important department in the organization to retain talented employees.

Compensation packages should be constantly adjusted, especially for employees performing excellently, to reduce unnecessary turnover [5].

The management of the studied private school noticed that the turnover rate in 2022 was high with at 30% [6]. This event has led to the loss of talent and the increasing cost of replacement and re-training of new employees. It is imperative that the management should identify factors that influence employee retention and develop new strategies to overcome the turnover issues. As such, this study focuses on the relationships between salary and compensation, work-life balance, career enhancement, and employee retention among academic home tutors in a private school. Based on the discussion, the research questions (RQ) are established: i) What is the relationship between salary and compensation and employee retention among academic home tutors? (RQ1); ii) What is the relationship between work-life balance and employee retention among academic home tutors? (RQ2); iii) What is the relationship between career enhancement and employee retention among academic home tutors? (RQ3).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

2.1. Employee retention

Employee retention refers to an organization's attempts to maintain a work environment that motivates current employees to stick around. The percentage of employees that stay with the company is a measure of retention. In most occupational groupings, a high retention rate is preferred [7]. Employee retention motivates staff to work for a company for an extended period. The performance and long-term health of a business depend heavily on the retention of key employees. Consumer satisfaction, organizational effectiveness in boosting sales, satisfied colleagues, and efficient succession planning depend on the organization's ability to retain its finest personnel [8]. In a nutshell, organizations must strongly emphasize the elements that influence employee retention for company growth and success [9]. Organizations must design remedies to the cause and adopt correct measures to ensure retention methods fit the requirements of the employees. Hence, it helps improve the company's ability to face continuous organizational changes [10]. Generally, employees can be described as the limbs of a human and the organization is the human itself. Good employees are assets that promote and keep the organization going smoothly and successfully. Employee retention matters in the company, not only knowing its importance, continuous and effective efforts, improvements, and actions from the management should be consistently carried out, followed by constructive follow-ups to ensure its efficiency.

2.2. Salary and compensation

Salary is the term for the sum of all financial and non-financial compensation that employees receive from employers in exchange for important services, sometimes known as compensation [11]. This group includes wages/salaries, incentives, bonuses, and other fringe benefits including vacation days, health insurance, and company vehicles [12]. A crucial retention strategy that is closely linked to employee retention was developed because of the identification of compensation as a motive [13]. Salary is considered a significant factor in retention. With poor salaries, employees tend to leave their organization [14]. To reduce the employee turnover rate, merit-based compensation does play a part. Salary is considered an incentive and an employee retention technique [15]. Additionally, the connection between pay and performance can encourage workers to put in more effort, be more productive, and stay with the company [16]. This is an agreed payment in exchange for work done. Salary is a determinant of job satisfaction and retention [17]. The argument is consistent with Herzberg's two factor theory. Hence, it is hypothesized: salary and compensation have a positive and significant relationship with employee retention (H1).

2.3. Work-life balance

Work-life balance is defined using an overall evaluation of how well an individual meets the responsibilities given by their superior instead of focusing on the balance between work and family [18]. The work-life balance is not necessarily spending an equal time amount of time on both work and family. However, it generally covers the scope of employees having a balance between the roles of work-related and family affairs [19]. Nowadays, working males and females face daily challenges at work, which has caused imbalance and frustration in their personal or family life. This is because they might unintentionally carry the stress, tiredness, and unhappiness from work to their family, which has influenced their relationship with the family. Being aware of the current situation, work-life balance is exceedingly indispensable and strongly wanted by employees. The balance between one's personal and professional lives depends on how many compromises they are ready to make in other parts of their lives. According to a study in America, the rate and intention of employees resigning increases if managers overlook their personal life activities and engagements [20]. This is supported by Irshad *et al.* [21] that work-life balance is very important as it

increases employee commitment and benefits employee retention in organizations. Therefore, it is hypothesized: work-life balance has a positive and significant relationship with employee retention (H2).

2.4. Career enhancement

Career enhancement is interpreted as an individual using his or her organized, formalized, and planned efforts to achieve the organization's workforce requirements according to her or his own career needs [22]. If there are career prospects available, employees will be more loyal to the company and eager to stay for a longer time. Talented employees want career growth opportunities to advance their career plans and achieve their goals, therefore, to be competitively advantageous in the market, career enhancement plans, promotion pathways and accurate career plans are important [23]. Employees will feel obligated to commit to the organization when employers invest resources to develop their career goals, which in turn reduces employee turnover in the organization. This is supported by previous study [24], citing that employees will be willing to stay in the organization for a longer period and be more loyal to the company if career opportunities are available. The employees will greatly appreciate long-term career enhancement. Based on the discussion, the following hypothesis is proposed: career enhancement has a positive and significant relationship with employee retention (H3).

2.5. Conceptual framework

To examine the research objectives, a conceptual framework has been established. It has three independent variables and one dependent variable. The conceptual framework is depicted in Figure 1.

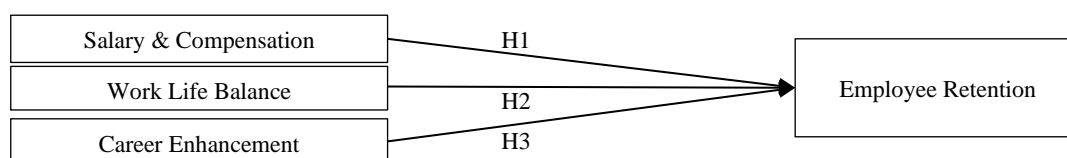


Figure 1. Conceptual framework

3. RESEARCH METHOD

3.1. Population and sample

This research study's goal is to investigate the relationships between pay and benefits, work-life balance, career advancement, and employee retention among academic home tutors at one of Malaysia's private schools. There are 100 academic home tutors that attend the school. Based on the researchers' sampling table [25], for a population of 100, the required sample size is 80. This study utilized a simple random sampling method where a list of academic home tutors was used to select the respondents randomly. The survey questionnaires were then distributed to the respondents using online survey via emails. The researchers successfully collected 80 questionnaires which yielded a response rate of 80%.

3.2. Research instrument

The survey instruments for career advancement (6 things), work-life balance (6 items), pay and compensation (6 items), and employee retention (6 items) were modified from the studies of [26]. The research instruments were tested for validity and reliability using factor analysis and reliability test in the context of this study. The A 5-point Likert scale, from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree, was used to conduct the evaluation. The statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) was used to assess the measurements and get discussion-worthy results from the hypothesis testing.

3.3. Data collection procedure

The study was carried out quantitatively, and the survey questions were written in English using Google Forms. The researcher emails the questionnaires directly to all academic home tutors to streamline the data gathering process. After a week, the human resource (HR) staff members assist in following up with the respondents for the feedback.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Profile of the respondents

The online survey successfully produced a total of 80 usable questionnaires. Table 1 shows the profile of the respondents. The number of male respondents is 31 (38.75%) while the rest 49 (61.25%) are

females. 33 of the respondents are within the age range of 26–30 years old (41.25%) whereas 32 respondents (40.44%) are aged between 20–25 years old. Regarding the categories of religion, there are 56 respondents (70.00%) who identify as Buddhists, 13 respondents (16.25%) who identify as Christians, 7 respondents (8.75%) who identify as Muslims, 2 respondents (2.50%) who identify as Hindus, and 2 respondents (2.50%) who identify as Free Thinkers. Calculated 53 respondents (66.25%) of the respondents have a Bachelor's Degree, followed by 17 respondents (21.25%) who have a Diploma. Regarding marital status, 71 respondents (88.75%) are unmarried, while 7 respondents (8.75%) are currently married.

Table 1. Profile of respondents

Description (n=80)		Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	31	38.75%
	Female	49	61.25%
Age	Below 20	3	3.75%
	20–25	32	40.00%
	26–30	33	41.25%
	31–35	12	15.00%
Religion	Islam	7	8.75%
	Buddhism	56	70.00%
	Hinduism	2	2.50%
	Christian	13	16.25%
	Other	2	2.50%
Education level	High School	9	11.25%
	Diploma	17	21.25%
	Bachelor's Degree	53	66.25%
	Master's Degree and above	1	1.25%
Marital status	Single	71	88.75%
	Married	7	8.75%
	Divorced	1	1.25%
	Other	1	1.25%

4.2. Validity test and reliability test

Data from 80 surveys were subjected to factor analysis in order to evaluate the validity of the measuring items used in this study. The research variables in the conceptual framework were evaluated using Bartlett's test of sphericity and Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measures of sampling adequacy (KMO). As seen in Table 2, the independent variables (income and compensation, work-life balance, and career improvement) have KMO values of 0.760 and the significance of Bartlett's test of sphericity is at the level of $p < 0.001$. According to Hair *et al.* [27], With Bartlett's test of sphericity significant at the $p < 0.01$ level, a good KMO score should be greater than 0.6. Table 2 has three components with Eigenvalues greater than 1 according to the results of the principal component analysis (PCA). With component 1 (work-life balance) accounting for 38.673% of the variance, component 2 (career advancement) accounting for 18.128% of the variance, and component 3 (salary and compensation) accounting for 9.761% of the variance, it explained a total of 66.561% of the variance of employee retention. The factor loading values of the scale were in the range between 0.637–0.854. Items for S3, S4, S6, Q1, Q2, Q3 and Q4 were removed due to cross loadings.

Table 2. Factor analysis for the independent variables

Item	Description	Factor loadings		
		1	2	3
R4	By choosing the appropriate working shift, I have plenty of free time to spend with my family.	0.854		
R5	Using staggered hours will improve the level of customer service I provide.	0.853		
R6	Because of the installation of staggered working hours, I have a strong commitment to show up for work	0.817		
R2	By choosing a good work shift, I can spend more time with my family.	0.781		
R3	By choosing the right shift, I may handle my personal business at home without interfering with working hours.	0.747		
R1	Compared to the regular work schedule, I am at ease with the introduction of staggered working hours.	0.674		
S2	We talked about my chances for career advancement with my direct supervisor		0.789	
S1	I have access to data for planning my career.		0.765	
S5	Promotions are given based on merit and performance.		0.637	
Q6	My remuneration is generally on par with the pay for jobs identical to mine in other businesses in the same sector.			0.846
Q5	My pay is on par with that of my coworkers in my level or position.			0.826
	Eigenvalue	4.254	1.994	1.074
	Percentage of common variance (%)	38.673	18.128	9.761
	Cumulative	38.673	56.801	66.561

*Remarks: KMO=0.760, Bartlett's test of Sphericity $p < 0.001$

As shown in Table 3, the value of KMO is 0.789 and the Bartlett's test of Sphericity is at the level of $p < 0.001$ for employee retention. There was one component with an Eigenvalue greater than 1 according to the principal component analysis (PCA). The extracted factor explained a total of 56.463% of the variance in the questionnaire items with one component contributing 56.463% of the variance. The factor loading values were in the range of 0.465–0.853. None of the items were removed. Cronbach's alpha values were utilized to determine the internal consistency for each item in the research variables to test dependability [28]. Table 4 indicates the reliability test results for the study variables. Employee retention is the dependent variable, and Cronbach's alpha for this variable is 0.837, which is considered reliable. Besides, the Cronbach's alpha for work life balance is 0.887 which is strongly reliable whereas salary and compensation and career enhancement recorded 0.683 and 0.63 of the Cronbach's alpha. Both values are acceptable [29].

Table 3. Factor analysis for the dependent variable

Item	Descriptive	Factor loading 1
P4	I would select to work for this business if I could start over.	0.853
P2	I adore my job at this organization.	0.835
P5	I would surely continue working for this company for the ensuing five years if it were up to me.	0.822
P1	I can see myself progressing within the organization.	0.774
P3	Within a three-year window, I have no ambitions to work for another organization.	0.686
P6	If another employer made me a tempting job offer, I would not accept it.	0.465
	Eigenvalue	3.388
	Percentage of common variance (%)	56.463
	Cumulative	56.463

*Remarks: KMO=0.789, Bartlett's test of Sphericity $p < 0.001$

Table 4. Reliability test

Variables	No. of items	Cronbach's alpha (α)
Employee retention	6	0.837
Salary and compensation	2	0.683
Work life balance	6	0.887
Career enhancement	3	0.637

4.3. Multiple regression analysis

Multiple regression analysis was used to conduct the hypothesis testing and verify whether the relationships of the variables were significantly related. Table 5 exhibits the results of multiple regression analysis between salary and compensation, work life balance, career enhancement and employee retention. With an F value of 13.045, the multiple regression model was significant at the 0.001 level. The analysis results show that salary & compensation ($\beta = 0.298$, $p < 0.05$) and career enhancement ($\beta = 0.428$, $p < 0.05$) were significantly and positively associated with employee retention. However, work-life balance ($\beta = -0.128$, $p > 0.05$) was not significantly linked with employee retention. Hence, H1 and H3 were supported whereas H2 was not supported. The model explained 34.0% ($R^2 = 0.340$) of the variance of employee retention.

Table 5. Multiple regression analysis

Independent variable	Employee retention		Hypothesis	Result
	beta β	Sig.		
Salary and compensation	.298	.004	H1	Supported
Work life balance	-.128	.194	H2	Not supported
Career enhancement	.428	<.001	H3	Supported
F value			13.045	
R square			0.340	

*Remarks: **Significant at the 0.001 level

This finding signifies that salary and compensation which deals with pay in general, wage, salary, and benefits, is one of the human resource management practices that plays an essential part in retaining employees [19]. Higher pay and benefits than those offered by competitors in the market help to recruit and keep proficient academic home tutors. This statement was supported by the Herzberg Two Factors Theory which emphasizes the fact that pay, and salary are the hygiene factors of which the employee will keep demanding until it fulfils the individual's needs. Thereafter, the motivating factors such as acknowledgement and job contents will take place to determine whether an employee stays with the job [17]. Besides, the finding also indicates that career enhancement also plays an important role in employee retention. Employees

wanted to be satisfied with what they did for 8 hours during the day, and they intend to work for an organization that they feel engaged and could grow. Career enhancement programs are the interventions where employees' career objectives and aspirations are brought to fruition while connecting their career goals with the needs, opportunities, and goals of the business. As employees develop skills and knowledge in fulfilling their career goals, a plan is haphazardly established to respond to future office needs and processes [30]. Career enhancement is an effective technique to create future leaders with essential skills and experience needed to carry out the organization's plans.

5. CONCLUSION

The results from this study indicate that salary and compensation and career enhancement are significant predictors for employee retention at the 0.05 level. However, work-life balance was not significantly related to employee retention. The findings of this study propose that the management of the company should revise its human resource management practices to focus on salary and compensation packages and provide the employees with the opportunity for career enhancement. It is recommended that the management should provide more job flexibility to the employees, such as career advancement training, mentoring, job mobility, and shortened workdays. Additionally, flexible wellness options like counselling services, health and wellness programs can be implemented to retain employees. In this way, employees will feel that they are valued and happy to stay with the company.

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