

## The impact of appraisal system, supervisor support and motivation on employee retention: A review of literature

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### Abstract

Employee retention is the most challenging task for the organisations nowadays, since they are the most valuable asset in the organisation. However, leaving a talented employee in the organisation becomes an uncovered loss for the organisation including loss of skills and expertise. In Addition, the organisation incurs a huge cost to recruit and develop skills in the new appointees. Therefore, the organisations have to develop strategies to retain their employees before losing them, by building good supervisor and subordinate relationships, establishing a learning culture based on attractive performance appraisal system in order to motivate the employees towards the organisation and their job. This will helps to retain the talented ones longer in the organisation. This will also give a competitive advantage for the organisation over the competitors. This study aimed to identify the impact of the appraisal system, supervisor support and motivation with employee retention based on the literature.

**Keywords:** appraisal system; supervisor support; motivation; employee retention

### 1. Introduction

Employee retention is retaining talented employees in the organisation in a long run. This has many benefits to the organisation. The rapid growing business world turnover of skilled employees has become a major issue for the most of the organisation throughout the world. This has become the biggest challenge and major concern due to the costs incurred to replace them and loss of productivity by those organisations. According to Thomas (2009) the following are the primary reasons for the employees to leave the organisations; dislike of superior (boss or supervisor) organisational conflicts, organisational culture, unmatched jobs, or being attracted to another employer who meets the expectations of employees. This can be improved by means of effective retention strategies meeting the expectations of both employees and the organisations.

However, effective performance appraisal system is one of the key functions of human resource management (HRM) in terms of employee retention (Selvarajan and Cloninger, 2008; Smither and London, 2009 cited in Abbas, 2014) [1]. According to Zapata-Phelan *et al.*, (2009, cited Abbas, 2014, p. 173) [1] effective performance appraisal system is the most vital factor for effectiveness of human resource management of an organisation being evident from the numerous studies in the past. That's why most of the organisations in the western world have widely study performance appraisal in order to identify and implement best HRM strategy to withhold the skilled employees in the organisations.

Effective workplace relationships are the one of the leading factors that helps to achieve organisational goals and objectives through employees support and cooperation. This results the relationship between superior – subordinate and co-worker cohesion. This has a positive impact on employee turnover intentions. Lather and Singh (2015) [15] concluded with a positive relationship with supervisor – subordinate

relationships influencing turnover intention. However, in line with social exchange theory (Blau 1964) and norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960), effective workplace relationships are relied upon mutual bonding between supervisors and sub-ordinates in terms of emotional support and care. This leads greater attachment between workers and their superior's results their stay longer in the organisation (Lathe & Singh, 2015) [15].

### 2. Objectives of the Study

This study is only a review of literature on the impact of appraisal system, supervisor support and motivation on employee retention and the following are the objectives:

1. To identify various research work that has been done in the study area
2. To explore relationship between study variables

### 3. Methodology and Study Model

This is a descriptive study only secondary data have been used, mostly articles from various research journals.

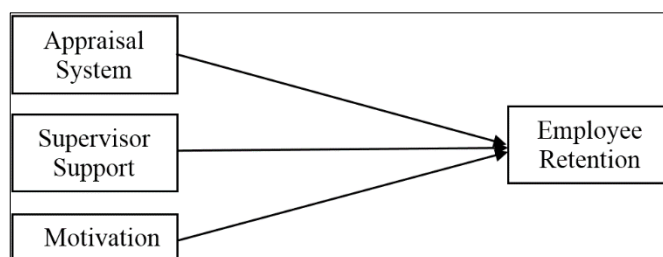


Fig 1: Study Model

### 4. Employee Retention

Retention is holding skilled employees in the organisation for long term. Zineldin (2000, cited in, Zafar, 2015) [21] defined

retention as ongoing activities by an organisation to continue its business. Kumar & Sandhya (2011)<sup>[9]</sup> defined employee retention as a process that support employees remain with the organisation for longer duration. Retention is need of the organisation to prevent skilled loss and to minimize the cost incurred to recruit and train the new employee (Kumar & Sandhya (2011)<sup>[9]</sup>. It is responsible of the employer to hold their talented ones before losing them. Alkandari (2009, cited in Kumar & Sandhya, 2011)<sup>[9]</sup> said that a good manager must know how to attract and hold his subordinates longer in the organisation. There are many factors that have a positive impact on employee retention including appraisal system, supervisor support and motivation. However, the literature on employee retention clearly employees are happy with their organisation, their supervisor, they tend to stay longer in the organisation instead of leaving the organisation.

### 5. Appraisal system

It is one of the key HRM practices; (El Sagheir, 2014; *Hong et al.*, 2012; Mittar, Saini & Agarwal, n.d.; Nirmala, 2014)<sup>[4, 5, 15, 16]</sup>. Performance appraisal “evaluates the individual overall contribution to the organisation through assessment of his internal characteristics, working performance and his capability to pursue a higher position in the organisation (Gruman and Saks, 2011, cited in, El Sagheir, 2014)<sup>[4]</sup>.

It identifies the capability of employees in meeting their set targets and rewards them according to their level of performance. Appraisal systems also identify the gaps between employees’ actual performance and their set performance. It also helps to determine the necessary skills to be given to employees in order to improve their job performance. Moreover, performance appraisal is a good indicator to decide who will be retained in the organisation, who will be leaving the organisation, and who need further training etc.

### 6. Supervisor Support

It is another key HRM practice; - (Irshad & Afridi, 2011; Mahmud & Idrish, 2011; Patel & Patel, 2014)<sup>[7, 17]</sup>. Sheikh, Ul-Qamar, & Iqbal (n.d.) mention that the relationship between an employee and his/her supervisor is the one of the most important factors that have influence on employee retention. Eisenberger (1990, cited in Sheikh, Ul-Qamar, & Iqbal, n.d., p. 2) added that “supervisors are the ‘human face’ of an organisation”. Ontario (2004, cited in Sheikh, Ul-Qamar, & Iqbal, n.d., p. 2) explains that supervisor support is vital to employee retention, because employees leave their bosses not jobs. However, supervisor focuses should be on the employee’s progress than formal evaluation process, this will lead employees intention to stay in the organisation and more committed to the work and organisation (Freyermuth, 2007, cited in Sheikh, Ul-Qamar, & Iqbal, n.d., p. 2).

### 7. Motivation

Employee motivation is one of the important areas in the organisational context. I do believe it is the single most significant factor that accelerates an organisation’s growth and success. Motivation by means it is behaves a certain way to achieve something, of it is something that makes people towards it. In an organisation there are many factors that make people motivated in order to retain in the organisation. Kassa (2015)<sup>[8]</sup> conducted a study in Ethiopia to identify employee motivation and its effect on employee retention in

the Ambo Minaeral Water Factory. He used 237 staff as the study sample to identify the expected outcome of the study. Based on the data collected, the study indicated employees were mostly motivated with the reward motivational factors while they were less motivated with training and development, interesting work and work environment motivational factors. However, with correlation it was identified that, a positive and significant relation between the following variables with employee retention; (1) reward and employee retention, (2) recognition and employee retention, (3) promotion and employee retention, (4) security and employee retention, (5) salary and employee retention, (6) training and development and employee retention, and (7) working environment and employee retention (p. 19). He further mentioned that the employees are not motivated with interesting work motivational factors and the management should consider modifying these factors in order to gain employee motivation. He also mentioned that training development seems to be the most motivating factor in any organisation, but in this factory it was not considered due to educate / not conducting the required training to the employees. And even they are not motivated with working environment or organisational culture. Therefore, the management should consider the following to retain their best employees.

According to Management Study Guide (2017)<sup>[11]</sup> motivation plays vital role in employee satisfaction and ultimately employee retention. They further mentioned that motivation works better than anything dealing with employee retention. They suggested that if employees performed well appreciate their work and by using simple words like (“well done”, “Good”, “Keep it up”, “you did a great job”) increases their motivation. The best employee should be recognised and rewarded to ensure that they are the better part of the organisation. This will help to have loyal employees within the organisation. So they will retain in the organisation longer considering organisation and the job they performed are a part of their life.

It is also important to build a good mechanism for communicating among the staff, especially between the supervisors and their co-workers. The supervisors should send motivating emails to the employees once a week or even when the complete the task on the scheduled time. It is also important to display posters with motivational messages to encourage the team members towards their job and organisation. The leaders should be aware that the organisation may face failures, difficult situations, in such circumstances encourage the employees, work with them, show them you’re with them and failure is a natural process in organisational life. It will be easier for them to overcome such situation with continued guidance and encouragement from the leader if the leader. This will increase their motivation and they will be more loyal to the organisation resulting retention of the potential employees (Management Study Guide, 2017)<sup>[11]</sup>.

However, monetary values are one of the motivating factors of employees in any organisation, such as; Incentives, bonuses and cash prizes are a good way to motivate the employees. Most of the organisation they will keep annual conference and award the best employees with a piece paper and the audience will give a loud applause. But nowadays paper never works much, instead of it provide them with monetary prizes, they will be happier and become motivated. These are the best strategies practiced by most of the World giants to retain their

employees with high motivation. Also, they can display the names of the best performers in the organisations notice board. This will be a big count of the employees (Management Study Guide, 2017) [11].

According to Management Study Guide (2017) [11] appraisals are known to be an important way to motivate the employees. The employee appraisal should be performed in a way it provides an opportunity for the employees to develop their career path within the organisation. It should also facilitate training and development required for job performance. It should be a basis of increase employee salaries and other monetary benefits. It should align with a good reward system. Therefore, a good appraisal system will attract the skilled employees towards the organisation in terms of employee retention.

Moreover, without motivation, it is unfair the management to expect maximum from the employees. Indeed, no employee will leave the organisation where he/she is being treated well. So make your organisation as a place where employees enjoy with their work and feel that he /she is a part of this organisation, such; “my organisation” etc.

**Theories of Motivation**

In 1943, Abraham Maslow developed a theory to explain human motivation. His theory was basically consists of five hierarchies of needs. He believed human needs are unlimited. So when they fulfill one level need their motivation level is not satisfied, they claim to reach / achieve the second level. In an organisational setting when the employee’s basic needs (e.g. Salary) are fulfilled, they are not motivated, they claim for security needs (e.g. Pension plan, job security, etc.), afterwards social needs (e.g. spending time with a friend at work, etc.), then esteem needs (e.g. need to feel good about themselves, the job itself, etc.), finally, self-actualization needs (e.g. good job responsibilities, challenges, etc.) and they will feel better themselves with high motivation in the organisation (McLeod, 2016) [13]. Therefore, organisations need to develop better strategies to cater the needs of employees (e.g. adding incentives and other benefits) to keep them motivated in order to retain the expert employees before they leave the organisation.

In 1959, Fredrick Herzberg developed a theory known as hygiene theory. He agreed with Maslow and believes in two-factor theory. He also believes that the organisation can introduce certain factors that can directly motivate the employees to perform maximum, these factors are known as motivators (motivational factors; such as challenging work,

recognition, relationships, and growth potential). He also suggested there are certain factors that satisfy the employees, known as satisfiers (hygiene factors; such as status, job security, salary, and fringe benefits). He further explains that hygiene factors are not necessarily motivators, but if the organisation fails to present those factors in the work environment, the employees will get demotivated (Boundless, 2016). However, hygiene factors will make employees satisfy with their job while motivation factor will make employee motivate with their work and organisation. Thus the potential employees will retain in the organisation instead of leave. Dartey-Baah & Amoako (2011) [3] did a study to examine Frederick Herzberg’s two-factor theory and assesses its application and relevance in understanding the essential factors that motivate the Ghanaian worker. In their study, they combine both hygiene and motivation factors and the results are as follows (p. 2-3);

1. High hygiene + high motivation, the ideal situation where employees are highly motivated and have few complaints.
2. High hygiene + low motivation: Employees have few complaints but are not highly motivated. The job is then perceived as a pay check.
3. Low hygiene + high motivation: employees are motivated but have a lot of complaints. A situation where the job is exciting and challenging but salaries and work conditions are not.
4. Low hygiene + low motivation: the worse situation unmotivated employees with lots of complaints.

Therefore, this theory is to encourage managers to consider both two factors (motivation and hygiene factors) to have high motive and high level satisfied employee base to gain maximum out of them instead of considering one side factors (either motivation or hygiene) to motivate employees (Dartey-Baah & Amoako, 2011) [3].

**McGregor’s X and Y Theory**

In 1960, Douglas McGregor developed his theory X and Y based on his studies. He explained there are two groups of people in an organisation known to group X and Y. He further explained that the theory X people are motivated with external sources (e.g. salary, incentives, etc.) while theory Y people are internally motivated - they love their work (Ingram, 2017) [6]. Therefore, it is important organisations to determine keeping their employees with the organisation based on either theory X or Y. According to Mind Tool (2017) [14] the following are the characteristics of the people in theory X and Y;

**Table 1:** Characteristics of People in theory X and Y

<b>Theory X</b>	<b>Theory Y</b>
Dislike working.	Take responsibility and are motivated to fulfill the goals they are given.
Avoid responsibility and need to be directed.	Seek and accept responsibility and do not need much direction.
Have to be controlled, forced, and threatened to deliver what's needed.	Consider work as a natural part of life and solve work problems imaginatively.
Need to be supervised at every step, with controls put in place.	Commitment to objectives is a function of expected rewards received.
Need to be enticed to produce results; otherwise they have no ambition or incentive to work.	Most workers will use imagination and ingenuity in solving company problems.

These characteristics are being observed in most of the organisation today. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the

employer to decide who are needed for the organisation based on the work they performed. Meanwhile the leadership should

recognise the potential employees develop and apply the strategies to retain them before the organisation get closed down. Indeed, employees are the most valuable assets in an organisation.

**8. Relationship between appraisal system, supervisor support and motivation with Employee Retention**

**8.1. Appraisal System and Employees Retention**

The appraisal system plays a vital role in retaining the talented employees in the organisation. This helps to identify the strengths and weakness of the employees. Also, it allows the supervisor to identify the skills need to be developed by the employees for the future performance. It is also acts as a door to enhance employee career within the organisation. Thu (2017, p 23) [20] concluded a study suggesting that the organisations need to retain the skilled employees for the managerial practices. It is to meet the targets and objectives of the organisations. However, an effective appraisal system ensures the quality of organisation and performance of the individual staff through effective two-way communication to support setting goals, providing timely feedbacks. This helps the organisations to identify problems at the initial stage and to develop plans to overcome those problems (Murphy & Cleveland, 1995, cited in Thu, 2017, p 24) [20]. In addition, expectations of the staff are higher in the appraisal system in their organisation, as they believe (1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the employees) appraisal system helps to improve their performance (Gruman & Saka, 2011, cited in Thu, 2017, p 24) [20]. Therefore, appraisal system of the organisations meets the expectations of the employees it will have a high influence on the their stay longer in the organisation.

**8.2. Supervisor Support and Employee Retention**

The evidence from the past studies on the supervisor and subordinate relationship becomes the most important aspect of the organisation (Deluga, 1998; Elicker, 2006, cited in Thu, 2017) [20]. This helps employees to ease communication with their supervisor in a friendly environment to clarify and resolve work related issues and problems. This makes them feeling of equality among the teammates and easier to perceive it (Elicker, 2006, cited in Thu, 2017) [20]. It is important the supervisor to understand the expectations of the employees in

order to establish a ground with mutual understanding and respect. It is also important to communicate with the employees regarding the expectations of the organisation, some organisations expect positive outcomes and productivity, whilst others expect the respectful behaviours from their subordinates (Thu, 2017) [20].

However, an effective supervisor is to be considered as a catalyst in the organisation. His /her role is to motivate employees towards the achievement of organisational goals and objectives. In addition, supervisor support is the most important source for the subordinates to minimize work related stress and to develop positive attitudes and behaviours Carlson (1999, cited in Zafar, 2015) [21]. Researchers have concluded with positive findings in their studies that supervisor support may increase affective commitment (Casper, Harris, Taylor & Wayne, 2011, cited in Zafar, 2015, p. 24) [21], and job satisfaction (Belau, 1981, cited in Zafar, 2015, p. 24) [21], and may reduce role conflict and role ambiguity (Carlson & Perrewe, 1999, cited in Zafar, 2015, p. 24) [21] and psychological stress (Baker, Israel & Schurman, 1996: Glass & Estes, 1997, cited in Zafar, 2015, P. 24) [21]. Therefore, based the effectiveness of the role of the supervisor the employee tends to stay longer in the organisation.

**8.3. Motivation and Employee Retention**

Motivating employees is one of the biggest challenges in most of the organisation today. Organisations are developing, testing and implementing different strategies for employee motivation in order to retain the talented employees in the organisation. Motivation is both intrinsic and extrinsic, in earlier organisations focused on the extrinsic motivating factors and today mostly on the intrinsic motivating factors (Thomas, 2000, cited in Zafar, 2015) [21]. Sajjad, Ghazanfar & Ramzan (2013) concluded their study on the impact of motivation on employee turnover in Telecom sector of Pakistan with a positive relationship with motivation and reduce employee’s intention to quit. Kumar & Sandhya (2011, p. 1782) [9] and Kassa (2015, p. 19) [8] have similar conclusion in their study on employee retention by motivation. In addition Kassa (2015) [8] has recommended to increase motivational factors as the most influencing factors in order to retain the employees.

**Table 2:** Factors, contributing authors and research papers

Variables	Authors / Years	Research Papers
Appraisal System	Hong <i>et al.</i> , (2012) [5].	An Effectiveness of Human Resource Management Practices on Employee Retention in Institute of Higher learning: A Regression Analysis (International Journal of Business Research and Management).
	El Sagheir (2014) [4].	An empirical study of the impact of HR practices on employee satisfaction and employee retention: The case of AASTMT ( <i>Proceedings of 3rd European Business Research Conference</i> ).
	Nirmala (2014) [16].	Effectiveness of Human Resource Management Practices on Faculty retention in higher education: An empirical study in Mysore City (EPRA International Journal of Economic and Business Review).
	Mittar, Saini & Agarwal (2014) [15].	Human Resource Management Practices for Employee Retention in Apparel Export Houses in Delhi NCR (Scottish Journal of Arts, Social Sciences and Scientific Studies).
	Thu (2017) [20].	The effects of Performance Appraisal on Employee Retention: A comparison of finish and Vietnamese Enterprises (TAP CHÍ KHOA HỌC ĐẠI HỌC ĐÀ LAT).
Supervisor Support	Irshad & Afridi (2011) [7].	Factors affecting employees retention: Evidence from literature ( <i>Abasyn Journal of Social Sciences</i> ).
	Mahmud & Idrish (2011) [12].	The Impact of Human Resource Management Practices on Turnover of Bank Employees in Bangladesh ( <i>World Review of Business Research</i> ).
	Patel & Patel (2014) [17].	To Study the Impact of HR Practices on Employee Retention - a Case Study of L & T Ltd, Hazira, Surat ( <i>Indian Journal of Research</i> ).

	Zafar (2015) <sup>[21]</sup> .	The Consequences of Supervisory Support on Employee Retention in Rawalpindi, Pakistan (IISTE - Developing Country Studies).
	Thu (2017) <sup>[20]</sup> .	The effects of Performance Appraisal on Employee Retention: A comparison of finish and Vietnamese Enterprises ( <i>TAP CHI KHOA HOC ĐAI HOC ĐÀ LẠT</i> ).
	Sheikh, Ul-Qamar, & Iqbal (n.d.).	Impact of HRM Practices on Employee Retention (Human Resource Management Research).
Motivation	Dartey-Baah & Amoako (2011) <sup>[3]</sup> .	Application of Frederick Herzberg's Two-Factor theory in assessing and understanding employee motivation at work: a Ghanaian Perspective (European Journal of Business and Management).
	Kumar & Sandhya (2011) <sup>[9]</sup> .	Employee retention by motivation (Indian Journal of Science and Technology).
	Sajjad, Ghazanfar & Ramzan (2013) <sup>[18]</sup> .	Impact of Motivation on Employee Turnover in Telecom Sector of Pakistan (Journal of Business Studies Quarterly).
	Kassa (2015) <sup>[8]</sup> .	Employee Motivation and its Effect on Employee Retention in Ambo Mineral Water Factory (International Journal of Advance Research in Computer Science and Management Studies).
	Zafar (2015) <sup>[21]</sup> .	The Consequences of Supervisory Support on Employee Retention in Rawalpindi, Pakistan. (IISTE - Developing Country Studies).

## 9. Conclusion

Retaining talented employees has many benefits to the organisation. It helps an organisation to increase productivity and maintaining the quality of the organisation. This will help to attract and hold a strong customer base leading high profitability. Retaining can be enhanced by establishing good relationship between managers/supervisors and subordinates. Also by establishment of an effective appraisal system which provides equal opportunity for each and every employee in the organisations to build their career and growth. And developing motivational strategies to attract and retain the employees before they leave you and the organisation. However, this paper tries to explore appraisal systems, supervisor support and motivation on employee retention by various researchers. There is much scope remaining to explore more in the field, impact of appraisal system, supervisor support and motivation on employee retention. By taking consideration the findings of the researchers this review concludes that there is a positive relationship between appraisal system, supervisor support and motivation with employee retention

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