International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews

Journal homepage: www.ijrpr.com ISSN 2582-7421

An Assessment on the Impact of Motivation on Employee Retention Among Public Servants – (A Case Study of Central Region Police Headquarters)

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ABSTRACT

Retention of employees has been identified as paramount towards any organization's consistent development as well as achieving the organization's goals. On the same it has been established that employee motivation has a great impact on employee retention. Mainly, the aim of the study was to assess impact of motivation on employee retention among police officers at the Malawi National Police headquarters at area 30, Lilongwe. A sample of 278 out 979 of respondents comprising both Junior and senior police staff, males and females was used using the Krejcie and Morgan's method introduced in 1970. Data collected was analyzed using and quantitative and descriptive statistics. The study found that the most important motivational packages available are salary (and fringe benefits), promotion opportunities, relationship with coworkers and training and development opportunities. Amongst these motivational packages, salary and other fringe benefits were found to have the greatest effect on retention. The study also found that that management communicates effectively with employees and have a style that empowers officers to take responsibility as well as authority and that employees are often given the opportunity to be part of task groups and assignments outside their core job regardless of their gender differences. It is envisaged, that this study will lead to increased awareness of retention processes among managers and the need for further research in the subject area.

1.0 Introduction

Employee retention issues are emerging as the most critical management challenges of the current stand and the immediate future in every organization without sparing the Malawi police service. According to Sinha (2012, researches have shown that in the future, successful organizations will be those which adapt their organizational behavior to the realities of the current work environment where longevity and success depend upon creativity and flexibility.

According to (Mayfield & Mayfield, 2008), the retention of valuable employees is one of the most critical issues confronting leaders. Talented employees who have competencies that are critical for the survival of an organization may be difficult to retain because they often attach more importance to their own career path, if not well managed, which in turn, can result in retention failure (Gostick, & Elton 2007).

The loss of such talented employees may be very detrimental to the company's future success. Outstanding employees may leave an organization because they become dissatisfied, underpaid or unmotivated (Coff, 1996). Similarly, Obikoya(2003) explains that employees may leave their organization or job for many reasons which include the reputation of the company, hours of work, the working conditions, shift work, monotony of work, lack of appropriate fringe benefits, bad recruitment and placement practices, lack of advancement and lack of proper training facilities

Companies' keeping skilled employees via motivation is crucial because of the time and money it takes to replace them (Eberendu& Okere,2015). In addition, (Guilding et al., 2014) stipulate that retention of an employee is a crucial factor which can put an impact upon the accomplishment of the hotel industry The employee retention and turnover crises have been observed in many organizations which also include the Malawi police services (Gursoy, et. al., 2012) Retention rates generally falls as employees become distracted, confused and preoccupied with potential outcomes immediately following an organizational transition (Bridges, 1991).

However, despite the vast literature on employee turnover, which is aimed at identifying factors that cause employees to quit (Griffeth, Hom, & Gaertner, 2000), much less is known about the factors that compel employees to stay. For example, Maertz& Campion (1998) noted "relatively less turnover research has focused specifically on how an employee decides to remain with an organization and what determines this attachment retention processes should be studied along with quitting processes". Steel, Griffeth, &Hom (2002) added "the fact is often overlooked, but the reasons people stay are not always the same as the reasons people leave"

While a small number of employees leaving an organization is naturally acceptable, Arora & Kumar (2012) and other human resources management (HRM) experts opined that high turnover is of serious concern. Increased attrition level adversely affects the overall performance of any organization,

and needs to be monitored and managed carefully. From a retention perspective, employees that are strategic to the mission and difficult to replace should be the focus of most businesses, much effort should be made to keep them (Breslin, 2013).

Motivation forms the basis to keep the employees. Ayeremusah (2018) explains that Employee motivation has been recognized as one of the proven ways of ensuring employee retention. Motivation for employees impact their job satisfaction and consequently their decision to stay at the organization and to contribute their quota to the achievement of the organizational objectives (Shah, 2012).

The concept of motivation comprises of the characteristics of the individual, the situation and also the perception of the situation by that individual (Ifinedo, 2003). Motivation is encouraging employees to perform efficiently in order to achieve corporate goals and this encouragement must be goal-directed always (Olajide, 2000). Furthermore, motivation helps to ensure long term and permanent work for employees as Van Dam (2008) explains that careers have become increasingly boundary-less and self-managed owing to an environment that appears to no longer offer long-term employment.

According to Benabou&Tirole (2003), motivation is very essential for explaining and understanding individual behaviour in the workplace. Work motivation is the will and the ability that employees have to perform an activity or a task in the organization for the attainment and achievement of the corporate goals and objectives of the organization (Robbins, 2001).As a result of recent global trends, organizations have a responsibility to adopt motivational strategies that will help them ensure they get the best from their employees (Hennessey & Amabile, 2005) hence, successful employee retention. This so because high levels of motivation translate into high level of employee retention but low level of employee turnover and the same is true for low level of motivation which results in low level of employee retention while enhancing high rate of employee turnover.

2.0 Literature review

2.1 Employee Retention

According to Cran (2012), the biggest challenge facing an organization is keeping or retaining employees, considering today's workers' attitudes and changing times. Retaining talent refers to employers' efforts to create an environment that engages employees for the long term and ensures that they keep desirable workers in order to meet business objectives (Masibigiri& Nienaber ,2011; Frank, Finnegan & Taylor, 2004).

Hollidar (2021) explains that employee retention refers to an organization's ability to prevent employee turnover, or the number of people who leave their job in a certain period either voluntarily or involuntarily. This calls for a number of reasons that may attract employees either to be retained or leave their job. Inded (2022) explains that some employees leave their job as a result of feeling uninspired (lack of motivation), wanting to feel valued, seek a better management relationship, searching for growth and career advancement, in need of a different working environment as well as seeking a more financially secure company, among other reasons.

It is, therefore crucially important to retain an employee. Blake (20220 explains that retaining employees should always be a priority. Companies hold onto their employees to prevent high employee turnover costs, low engagement and low efficiency. In addition, Holliday (2021), states that employee retention also boosts morale improvement, promotes experienced employees as well as promoting recruitment and training efficiency.

This means that lack of poor employee retention leads to quite a numbers challenges. Gray (2017) , argues that absence of employee retention leads to higher costs to hire and train new employees , causes a company to develop a reputation as poor employment brand as well as leading to lower productivity and profitability. Parry (2008) argues that organizations that invest in their staff are best placed to save money, improve staff motivation and increase employee retention

2.2 Motivation

According to Cristescu et al (2013), employees could be intrinsically or extrinsically motivated; the intrinsic factors of motivation are relations between the expectations, perceptions and feelings of an individual on the one hand, and the actual content of the individual's work and behaviour on the other hand. Extrinsic motivation is also based on individual-organization relationship and is meant to meet employee's expectations with regard to the organizational reactions in relation to employees' efforts, behavior and results. Vroom (1964) defines motivation as the 'force' impelling a person to perform a particular action, determined by the interaction of (i) person's expectancy that the act will be followed by a particular outcome and (ii) the valence of that outcome, which in turn is a function of the valences of all other outcomes.

Focusing exclusively on extrinsic rewards costs more and do not increase commitment (Ayers, 2008). However, four intrinsic rewards that increase motivation are senses of meaning, choice, competence and progress. This is in line with Meyer et al (2003) argue that building effective commitment involve more than paying well, and that retention based on compensation base commitment (motivation) is of course sensitive to changes in compensation within the organization. Organizations that indulge in this form of retention strategy are often vulnerable to the possibility that competitors may use better wage offers to lure away employees.

2.3 Theoretical review

2.3.1 Theories of Motivation in detail

There are many competing theories, which attempt to explain the nature of motivation. These theories are all, at least, partially true, and all help to explain the behavior of certain people at certain times. However, the search for a generalized theory of motivation at work appears a vain quest. Motivation varies over time and depending up on the circumstances.

It is because of the complexity of motivation and the fact that there is no single answer to what motivates people to work well, that these different theories are important for the managers to guide them. They show that there are many motives, which influence people's behavior and performance. The different theories provide a framework within which direct attention is incorporated to the problem of how best to motivate staff to work willingly and effectively. It is important to emphasize that these various theories are not conclusive. These different cognitive theories of motivation are usually divided into two contrasting approaches: content theories and process theories.

Content theories attempt to explain those specific things, which actually motivate the individual at work. These theories are concerned with identifying people's needs and their relative strength, and the goals they pursue in order to satisfy these needs. Content theories place emphasis on what motivates.

Process theories attempt to identify the relationship among the dynamic variables, which make up motivation. These theories are more concerned with how behavior is initiated, directed and sustained. Process theories place emphasis on the actual process of motivation.

2.4 Conceptual framework

Conceptual framework is a representation of the relationship expected to be seen between variables, or characteristics or properties to be studied (Swaen& George,2022). It contains keyconcepts and issues which a researcher wants to explore in the study (Straus andCobin, 1998).

Figure 2.1:conceptual framework of employee motivation and retention
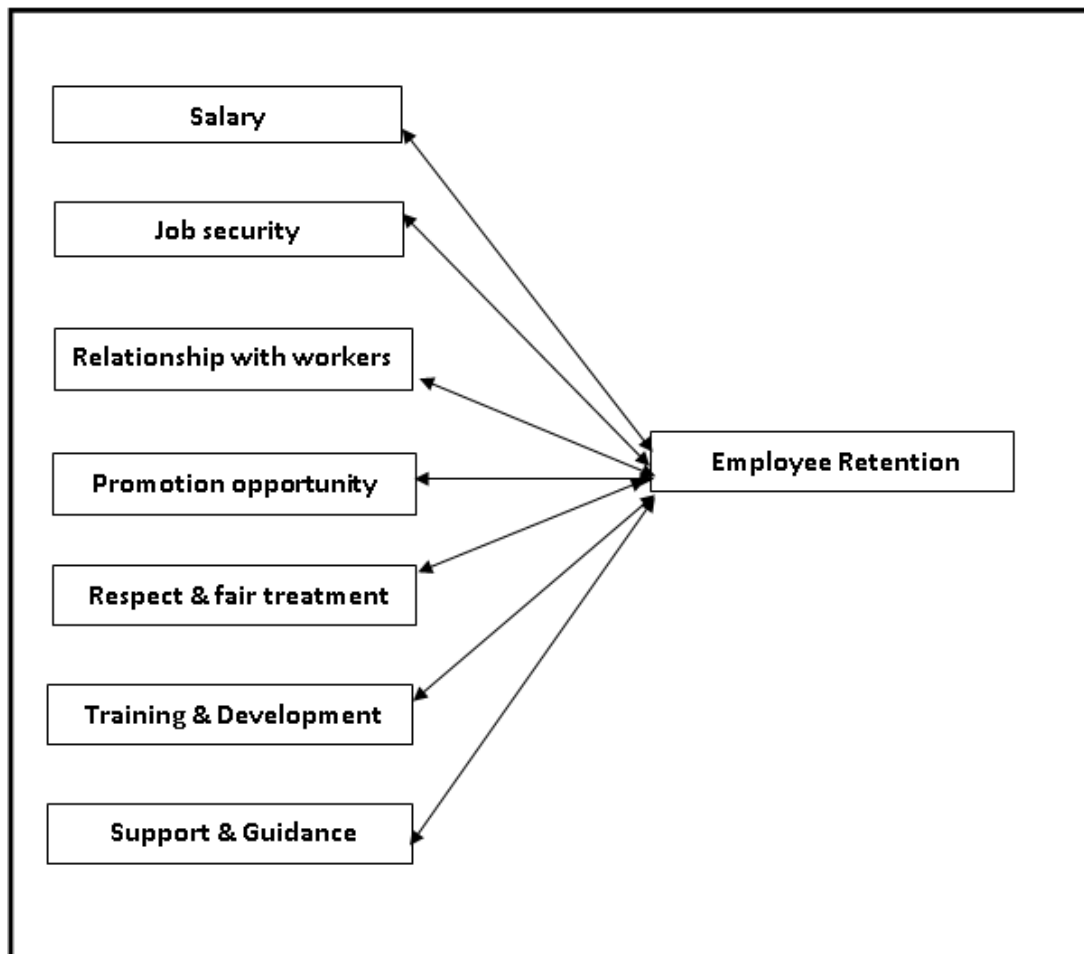
There are some factors in the workplace that may appear not basic among workers but once they are no longer taken into serious consideration, they impact existence of the workers. The following are independent factors (with hypothesis) being critically assessed in this study: Salary, job security, relationship with workers, promotion opportunities, respect and fair treatment, training a development as well as support and guidance.

2.4.1 Salary

This is the most critical factor and determines length of stay of an employee at a work place. Pay is a major consideration in human resource management because it provides tangible incentive for employees' service" as (Bohlander, Snell and Sherman, 2001, cited in Petcharak, 2002). Wheelhouse (1989) stated "payday should be one of the happiest days of the week", it should be delivered to employees on time and in a friendly manner. In another study, Stone (1982) stated that "people are motivated by money because of many different reasons, the need to provide the basic necessities of life motivates most people. Michael S. (2008) found that competitive salary package is the most important motivational variable that contributes to retain employees in the organization.

2.4.2 Job Security

According to Maslow's theory, security is a very vital factor whether in life or work. Most of the companies according to Wheelhouse (1989) offer the general security of insurance benefits, retirement programs, and saving plans. As he mentioned if employees are worried about their job for instance whether they will have the job next week so they are not likely to be very responsive, and they are not motivated to perform well. (Samuel M. and Chipunza C. 2009) found that security significantly influenced employee retention.

2.4.3 Promotion

Promotion opportunities is one of the necessary motivation factors and helps to boost employee morale and engagement at the work place. Promotion, according to Mpumgusi (2015) identify the high achievers in your department and keep them challenged with new opportunities for growth and advancement, if you don't you may lose them" (Wheelhouse, 1989). However promoting employees is only one of the ways of motivation and this should be mentioned that it is not what all the employees want; and therefore if a manager is using just promotion as a motivator he or she is not motivating everyone.

2.4.4 Training & development:

These improve working performance and skills while enabling employees to have vital knowledge in the field of their work. Mpungi (2015) explains that Training and development also play vital role in motivating employees and preventing them from failing, due to a lack of abilities. Hence, managers should provide employees with as much training as possible in order to increase their competencies and chances of doing a successful job. Training can be formal, i.e. at a class, or informal, i.e. on-the-job. Informal training is probably the most important training

employee can get and it includes the sum of experiences he/she undergoes at work. Whereas informal training usually costs nothing, formal training comes with a cost. Despite these costs, managers must send employees to formal training, as this is their only chance to learn and bring new ideas back to the department. Samuel M. and Chipunza C. (2009) found that training and development significantly influenced employee retention.

2.4.5 Relationship with workers

According to Indeed (2023), relationship among coworkers at a work place in important in that it fosters collaboration, improves individual productivity, it boosts employee morale and also increases employee retention rates. In addition, it leads to a transfer of skills and knowledge, inspires creativity and also that it facilitates intake of new team members

2.4.6 Support & Guidance

Amodeo (2021) Explains that benefits of support and guidance frosupervise are extremely large and so allows employees to attain such benefits as positively influencing workplace culture. Support and guidance strengthens culture, increases confidence, develops leadership skills, assures employee satisfaction. Further on, support and guidance is important in that it reassures trust and improves personal health

2.4.7 Respect & fair treatment

Khan (2020) stipulates that respect is a feeling when you treat someone well or for their qualities or character traits. It can also be a manifestation of dignity towards people and, importantly, it creates a good work environment which increases employer's productivity. Fair treatment establishes zero tolerance for corruption and bribery.

3.0 Methodology

For the purpose of this study, explanatory research design was employed as it considers explanation of the nature of certain relationships (Kwaw, 2017). According to Zikmund (2003) explanatory research design is used to give explanations to the cause of an action. Sarantakos (2005) indicated that one of the strength of the explanatory research design that, it gives a more accurate picture of a phenomenon that has already happened and becomes easy to know the perceptions and behaviour of people. However, the explanatory design also has a weakness that relies on the respondents' memory and honesty and if they forget or decide not to be honest it will affect the findings of the study. However, this weakness is not considered to be serious with regard to the study because the issues involved were current and required no recall, (Kwaw, 2017). The study combined both probability and non-probability sampling techniques to select the respondents. The study used the simple random sampling technique to select the various respondents to make up the sample size. The research focused on employees because most grievances related to motivation originate from them and it is these organization employees who suffer a lot from challenges of motivation. A sample of 278 employees out of 979 respondents involved in this study included both male and female employees regardless of their ages, marital status and religion. The researcher determined the sample size from the 979 employees using Krejcie and Morgan's method introduced in 1970.

4.0 Results

The researcher distributed 180 questionnaires and received a total of 278 back for analysis representing 99.3% response rate. This high response rate was achieved by much personal involvement and hiring some people in the collection of data. Additionally, the central location of the respondents in one geographical area also played a role in breeding the high response rate response. **Table 4.1** below shows results of the extents (levels) to which the employers are motivated.

Note: 1= Not at all important   2= Not very important   3= Neutral   4= Somewhat important   5= Very important

Table 4.1:Factoors which motivate employees

No.	Questions	Responses on the Level of Motivation				(%)
		1	2	3	4	5
1.	Salary and other fringe benefits	0%	0.7%	1.1	3.2%	95 %
2.	Job security	3.3	3.4	6.3	11.1	75.9
3.	Relationship with co-workers	0.4	1.6	9.1	22.7	66.2
4.	Support and guidance from my supervisor	1.7	8.6	14.6	29.4	45.7
5.	The degree of respect and fair treatment received from my supervisors	0%	2.3	15.3	23.6	58.8
6.	Optimistic about promotional opportunities	0.0	2.2	9.3	29.8	59.7
7.	Training and development opportunities	0.8	4.1	13.2	27.0	54.9

4.1 Salary and other fringe benefits

From the table above, a maximum of 95% view salary and other fringe benefits as being outstanding and very important as a factor of motivation, 4.2% of the respondents said it was somewhat important while 0.7% viewed it on the neutral perspective. In addition, 0.1 said it was not very important, while none of the respondents indicated that salary and other fringe benefits are not at all important when it comes to employee motivation. Conclusively, salary is the primary factor to be considered before other benefits. Most of employee's view salary as the determinants of their status.

4.2 Job Security

The table also shows that 75.9% said that job security was a very important motivational factor, 11.1% considered job security somewhat important, 6.3% for the neutral view to the statement, 3.4% said that it was not at all important, while 3.3% said job security was not very important.

4.3 Relationship with co-workers

The table above also indicates that 66.2%% of the total sample viewed relationship with co-workers as very important, 22.7% somewhat important motivational factor, 9.1% remained neutral to the relationship with co-workers, 1.6% not very important factor and 0.4% of the respondents considered relationship with coworkers as being not at all important.

4.4 Support and guidance from my supervisor

Furthermore, the table indicates that 45.7% of the sampled population saw support and guidance from supervisors as motivating, 29.4% as somewhat important, 14.6% viewed it on the neutral, that they were motivated by support and guidance from their supervisors. To 8.6% of the respondents the statement was not very important, while the statement was not at all important to 1.7% of the respondents.

4.5 The degree of respect and fair treatment received from my supervisors

The table further revealed results on employees' view on degree of respect and fair treatment received from supervisors. Out of the 278 respondents, 58.8% responded that it was very important, 23.6% said it was somewhat important, 15.3% were neutral with regards to this statement, 2.3% of the respondents saw it as not very important, while none of the respondents said it was not at all important.

4.6 Optimistic about promotional opportunities

The table shows that optimistic about promotional opportunities were observed to be significant in explaining employees 'ability to determine their retention levels. The table revealed that out of the 278 respondents, 59.7% responded that it was very important, 29.8% said it was somewhat important, 9.3% were neutral with regards to this statement, 2.2% of the respondents saw it as not very important as 0 % said it was not at all important.

4.7 Training and development opportunities

The table further indicates that 54.9%% of the respondent's total number saw training and development opportunities as very important and were therefore motivated by it, 27.0% somewhat important motivational factor, 13.2% remained neutral to the relationship with co-workers, 4.1% not very important factor where as 0.8% of the sample said it was not at all important.

5.0 Findings

5.1 Motivating factors that determine high retention level of police officers

➢ **Salary**.
   This was considered to be the most important of all the motivating factors (264 out of the 278 respondents considered it very important where none of them considered it not very important at all (0%). This is because Police officers are men and women who put their lives on the risk to protect life, property, fundamental freedoms and rights of all individuals in Malawi despite that salary is considered as a determination of their status.

➢ **Job security**

   Job security was second from salary to be considered very important. This was so because it helps develop employee work stability in the quest to participate in the organization development and growth processes. Only 3.3% of the total considered it not important at all.

➢ **Relationship with coworkers**

Much as positive management-employee relationship creates room for a conducive work environment and high productivity , it was considered very important by a maximum number of 180 out of a total 278 respondents where 0.4% of the same total considered it not important at all.

➢ **Optimistic about promotional opportunities**

According to the respondents, Promotion opportunities is one of the necessary motivation factors and helps to boost employee morale and engagement at the work place. This is why none of the respondent police employees considered it to be not important at all.

➢ **The degree of respect and fair treatment received from my supervisors**

This, according to the study, helps create room for positive work culture and a feeling of being valued among the employees. This why a good number (58.8%) of the respondents considered it very important at all cost in the workplace.

➢ **Training and development opportunities**

These according to the study conducted, improve working performance and skills while enabling employees to have vital knowledge in the field of their work. A number of respondents above average (54%) of the total considered very significant.

➢ **Support and guidance from supervisor**

From the study, it has been shown that employees' work mood, performance and interest are boosted and ,at the same time, psychological stress, absenteeism and turnovers are reduced when there successful support and guidance from the workers' employers. However, it was regarded as the least being very important of all the factors.

5.2Retention Factors

The study has clearly shown that, at times, supervisors sit down with employees to discuss their Development Plan and sometimes not. This was indicated by the largest neutral responses that were given by the respondents during the study. However, larger number of employers strongly agreed as compared to the number that strongly disagreed to the statement. It must be noted that an efficient sitting down of management with employees for discussion allows employees to be active the more in decisions that affect them through additional responsibilities that provide creative challenges, such as workers career ladders and work groups created to solve departmental problems. This fosters worker's development and reinforces the link between the department and employees by demonstrating the value of the organization for them.

The study also revealed that a large number of employees agreed that employees are given opportunity to be part of tasks and assignments outside core job even though a very small percentage of them strongly disagreed. This is a clear indication of the possibility to yield positive performance by the employees.

Poor communication at a work place results in an environment of no openness and no trust among the workers. On the other hand, efficient communication is a vital key to an organization's success thereby driving better impacts on individuals, it also boosts work satisfaction and productivity and employee engagement. This is clearly indicated by the large number of the police respondents that agreed upon that employees are given opportunity to be part of task and assignments outside core job.

The study has revealed that quite a number of police officers experience unfair treatment from their management as a result of racism and economic inequalities, among other factors. This was clearly indicated by the large number of respondents that disagreed to the statement that employees are fairly and respectfully treated. To some extent, this may have hazardous impacts on the employee performance and hence productivity. Studies have shown that the moment employees are unfairly treated, productivity lessens and therefore, stand at the high risk of indulging corrupted behavior. Additionally, it can also lead to employees leaving the organization for a better one.

Furthermore, it was observed from the study that altitude of the management towards the employees was considered to be good under the authoritarian style of supervision.

5.3 SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following points were considered for recommendations from the study

- Employees in the police require improvement in remuneration including salary, fringe benefits (medical care risk, provision of office equipment, transport, utility and house allowances) and promotions should be comparable with those received by others doing similar work, both in the public and private sector.

- The Malawi police service should provide opportunities for personal growth and development to boos working skills

- Malawi Police service should make sure that they provide more on-job trainings frequently as the police work requires officers who are well trained and up-to-date.

- Should be conducting appraisals to know employee's performance and identify gaps for improvement

- There should also be a consideration in improving working conditions for the police employees by means of fair treatment and provision of better working equipment, among others.

- It is also recommended the police officers should be given an opportunity to participate in the various decision making processes will in turn, improve productivity and quality service and morale for the

5.4 Conclusion

The study has established that the way employees are treated or motived determines whether employees will be retained or not at a work place. Mainly people, both skilled and potentially skilled leave their job as a result of dissatisfaction at the working conditions. It must be noted that highly level of motivation attracts high level of retention and, hence low level of turnover. This is why it is highly urged of the Malawi police service management to ensure that living conditions of police officers are uplifted and that, will consequently, enhance the officers' morale and their commitment to work while reducing psychological stress, absenteeism and all sorts of dirty performances.

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