

FACTORS AFFECTING EMPLOYEE RETENTION: A CASE STUDY OF TAN PHU LOGISTICS COMPANY IN HO CHI MINH CITY, VIETNAM

Van Tai Pham ⁽¹⁾, Thi Van Le ⁽²⁾

Abstract--- This research was conducted at a Vietnamese logistics company which has experienced low employee retention in the past five- year 2015 – 2019. The purpose of the study is to examine major factors influencing the employee retention at the company as well as give some recommendations for improving employee retention issue. In order to write the article, consulting several sources such as books, newspapers, magazines, reports as well as other articles was necessary. Both qualitative and quantitative research are applied in the study.

Key words: Employee retention, research model, Cronbach's alpha, EFA, Logistics Company

Van Tai Pham ⁽¹⁾, Thi Van Le ⁽²⁾

(1) College of Foreign Economic Relations, Phd (2) Paris Graduate School Management, MBA

I. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the demand for skilled workforce in Vietnam is increasing dramatically. First, it comes from the increasing in number of newly established companies of Vietnam, from 80,000 companies in 2011 to more than 120,000 companies in 2019. The appearance of new companies has been created recruitment demand as well as many job opportunities for Vietnamese workers, especially for skilled and experienced workforce. The second reason is because of high turnover rate. According to the report of VietNamWork (2019) about Recruitment trend of 2019, there are 79% of employers said that they were in a shortage of personnel within the first 6 months of 2019. One of main reason leading the shortage come from the high turnover rate of companies. According to report of Anphabe (2019) from 600 companies in Vietnam, the average turnover rate is 19.1% in 2017; 20.5% in 2018 and expected to be 24% in 2019. Top three industries with the highest turnover rate were retail (32.2%), real estate (18.8%), and consumer goods (17.3%). Based on above statistic, it can be said that the demand for skilled workforce and turnover rate of companies are increasing quickly. It leads to the competition in recruitment area among companies to recruit and attract new talents. Therefore, the employee retention plays important role for each organization.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Definition of Employee Retention

In the research of Mengjun, Chen (2014), the term employee retention are defined as serious and critical problem for all kind of organization. The first definition of the term appeared on the business scene in the 1970s and early 1980s. According to David Zinger (2010), employee retention is the art and science of engaging people in authentic and recognized connections to strategy, roles, performance, organization, community, relationship, customers, development, energy, and well-being as companies leverage, sustain, and transform their work connections into results. Employee retention is the overall strategy or ability of an organization to retain its best employees and hence maintain a lower turnover. According to Johnson (2000) (cited by Vu, Nguyen Bao Ngoc, 2018), employee retention is the ability to hold onto those employees which the organization want to keep in the organization for a long period of time. Employee retention is defined as a process in which the employees are encouraged to stay with the firm for the maximum period of time or until the finish of project (Das & Baruah, 2013, cited by Vu, Nguyen Bao Ngoc, 2018)

2.2. Employee retention theoretical base

2.2.1. Herzberg's two factor theory

The original of this theory comes from a research of Frederick Herzberg about the employee's attitudes and motivation in "the motivation to work" (1959). In the theory, Herzberg researched the factors which cause satisfaction and dissatisfaction of employees, which are motivation factor and hygiene factor. Motivation factor is considered to motivate employee to improve their working performance and increase job satisfaction, which include: achievement, recognition, the work itself, responsibility, advancement growth.

Hygiene factors which will not encourage employees to work harder. However, employees will be demotivated if the factors are not present, which are: company policies, supervision, relationships, work conditions, salary, status, security.

2.2.2. Maslow's hierarchy of needs

Maslow's hierarchy of needs is one of the most common motivation theories. According to the theory, each person has hierarchy of needs with five levels from low to high. Needs in lower level in the hierarchy must be satisfied before individuals can attend to needs higher up. From the bottom of the hierarchy upwards, the needs includes: physiological, safety, love and belonging, esteem and self-actualization.

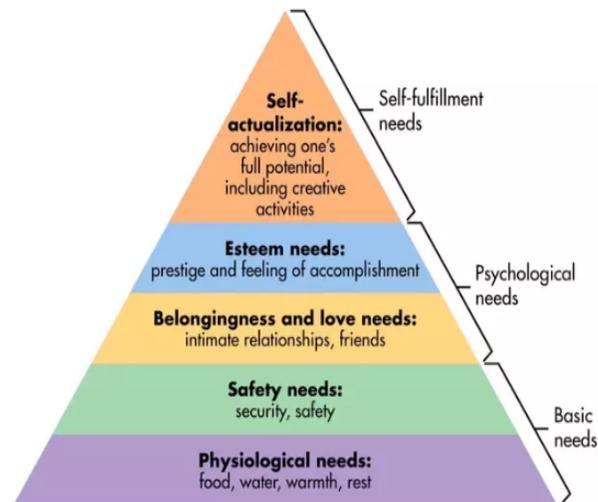


Figure.1. Maslow's hierarchy of needs

- **Physiological needs:** these are biological and basic requirements which help each person to survive such as air, food, drink, clothing, sleep. If these needs are not satisfied, the human body cannot function optimally. Maslow considered physiological needs the most important as all the other needs become secondary until these needs are met. In a company, salary and healthcare can be seen as physiological needs of employees.
 - **Safety needs:** The basic needs provide safety feeling to people, which protection from elements, security, order, law, stability, freedom from fear. In an organization, physical working condition is related to safety needs.
 - **Love and belongingness needs:** in the level, each person needs the feelings as a sense of belongings and acceptance among their social group. In an organization, long and belongingness needs can be showed through positive relationship among colleagues and with supervisor.
 - **Esteem needs:** The need is fulfilled when the individual has self-respect. In an organization, esteem needs is satisfied through awards and recognitions to employees. .
 - **Self-actualization needs:** the need refers to the desires to realize the potentials. In an organization, the need is satisfied when employee has freedom, power to do their job. Moral, ethical behaviors and creative tasks are important source for the need.
- According to Maslow, if we want to motivate a person, we have to identify their current level as well as their desire for next level.

2.3. Previous studies of employee retention

2.3.1. Previous related studies

Bui, Nguyen Bao Khue and Ho, Nhut Quang (2018) proposed that there are 6 key factors affecting employee retention, which are: training, pay, recognition, career development, leadership and working environment. For working environment factor, there are 3 dimension which are: organization system, interpersonal relationship. The survey of research was conducted from 422 office staffs in Ho Chi Minh then only 395 qualified responses. Through analyzing data by SPSS and AMOS tools, only 4 factors have significant positive relationship with employee retention, which are: (1) recognition, (2) working environment, (3) leadership and (4) career development.

According to studies of Nancy, K (2018), there were 06 key factors which positively impact on employee retention, which are: (1) promotion opportunities, (2) training and development, (3) relationship with supervisor (4) relationship with colleagues, (5) work-life balance, (6) benefit package. The survey was conducted through group discussion and individual answer. Answering from 400 staffs working in IT industry are calculated by SPSS.

The research of Qiaoqin, W. and Zhaoyang, L. (2018) showed that: (1) working environment, (2) job characteristic and (3) work engagement which have impact on employee retention of hospital organization. Working environment factor in this research included physical working condition, relationship with supervisor and colleagues. The survey was conducted from 720 experienced nurses from seven hospital in China from March to May, 2017. Participants were sampled through a two-stage sampling method. First, purposeful sampling was used to select seven hospitals, which were all tertiary public hospitals with more than 500 beds. Second, random cluster sampling was used to select study participants.

According to Vu, Nguyen Bao Ngoc (2018), there were 7 key factors affecting employee retention: (1) compensation, (2) recognition, (3) relationship with supervisor, (4) relationship with colleague, (5) working condition. (6) work-life balance. The research was conducted for a Vietnamese company with 110 respondents. Top three factors which have highest impact on employee retention are: relationship with supervisor, relationship with colleague and compensation. The data was collected in Mar, 2018 and calculated by SPSS.

Through study about work force retention of Umamaheswari, S. and Jayasree, K. (2016), there were three factors: (1) working environment, (2) organization commitment, (3) relationship with supervisor which are positive impact on employee retention. Working environment and relationship with supervisor are two factors which have strongest impact. The survey was conducted by 416 employees working in five ceramic sanitary ware factories located at different places in India.

According to ‘Employee concern survey’ of RGF (2018) about “Understanding why employees move job”, each employee would consider four elements to decide if stay or leave current job which are: (1) compensation & benefit. (2) work-life balance, (3) working environment, (4) promotion opportunities. The working environment factor included physical working condition and interpersonal relationship in company. The results were conducted through survey from 550 employees in nationwide, which focus on Ho Chi Minh city.

Table .1. Summary of selected factors relating to former studies

Author/Factor	Nancy, K. (2018)	Jayasree, K. & Umamaheswari, S. (2016)	Qiaoqin, W. & ZhaoYang, L. (2018)	Vu, Nguyen Bao Ngoc (2018)	Bui, Nguyen Bao Khue & Ho, Nhut Quang (2018)	RGF report (2018)
Compensation & Benefit	x			x		x
Recognition				x	x	
Training	x					
Promotion opportunities	x				x	x
Relationship with supervisor	x	x	x	x	x	x
Relationship with colleagues	x		x	x	x	x
Job characteristic			x	x		
Physical working condition		x	x	x		x
Work-life balance	x			x		x

Source: Authors' self-collection

2.3.2. Factors influencing employee retention

2.3.2.1. Compensation & Benefit

According to a research of Chan and Kuok (2011) (cited by Vu, Nguyen Bao Ngoc 2018) more than 90% of firms acknowledge that salary is a dominant reason for employee's turnover in the hospitality and tourism industry in Macau. According to Bui, Nguyen Bao Khue and Ho, Nhut Quang (2018), employee retention can be positively influenced by monetary compensation; however, compensation is not enough to keep employee stay. Majority of organization believe that money is primary retention factor and employees cite better pay or higher compensation for leaving one organization to another (Mathis and Jackson, 2003). According survey of RGF (2018), 75% believe that pay rise is a main reason for change job and 38% think being paid fairly will help increase their engagement at work.

Many studies show that employee benefits packages have become an important part of the total compensation or organizational expenses (cited by Mussie, T, 2013). Benefits have grown in size, importance and variety which become one of the greatest challenges in business today in attracting and retaining quality employees. Employee benefit package increase employee commitment and reduce tendency to seek for new opportunities outside.

Hence, in this research, the author set compensation & benefit as one of the factors influencing employee retention.

H1: Compensation & benefit impacts positively to employee retention.

2.3.2.2. Recognition

According to various research of Daniels (1999), Darling et al (1997), Nelson (2005), Gostick & Elton (2007) (cited by Mussie, T, 2013), recognition make employees feel appreciated and increase their ability to contribute. In the studies, it can be seen that recognition can inspire loyalty and commitment, as well as encouraging employees to extend their efforts. Ali and Ahmed (2009) (cited by Mussie T, 2013) stated that

The value recognition has a positive relationship with employee retention.

The research of Bui, Nguyen Bao Khue and Ho, Quang Nhut (2018) and Vu, Nguyen Bao Ngoc also determined recognition as one of affecting factors to employee retention.

Hence, in this research, the author set recognition as one of the factors influencing employee retention.

H2: Recognition impacts positively to employee retention.

2.3.2.3. Training

In the studies of Bidisha Lahkar, D and Mukulesh, B (2013), one of the important factors in employee retention is investment on employee. Organization always invests in the form of training and development on those workers from whom they expect to return and give output on its investment.

The research of Nancy, K (2018) also pointed out training as one of key six factor which positively impact on employee retention.

Hence, in this research, the author set training as one of the factors influencing employee retention.

H3: Training impacts positively to employee retention.

2.3.2.4. Promotion opportunities

Research by Meyer al. (2003) showed internal career development of employees is often the best predictor of an employee's effective commitment (cited by Rugshana, J 2017).

Prince, B.J (2005 also identified career growth opportunities to rise in career ladder as a significant reason for which employees decide to leave or stay in an organization and went further by identifying influential factors pertaining to career growth opportunities, which are: advancement plans, internal promotion and accurate career previews.

According to a survey of RGF (2018), 66% employee believe that career progression opportunities will help increase engagement at work. According to research of Nancy, Kumari (2018), Bui, Nguyen Bao Khe & Ho, Nhut Quang (2018), promotion opportunities can be seen as strong factor impacting on employee retention.

Hence, in this research, the author set promotion opportunities as one of the factors influencing employee retention.

H4: Promotion opportunities impacts positively to employee retention.

2.3.2.5. Relationship with supervisor

According to Wasti, S (2003), supervisor support was found to be an important factor of organization commitment. Employees who receive high support from supervisor expressed stronger loyalty to the organization. According to Kaye and Jordan-Evans (2002), a manager should be "a good boss" to positively influence retention (cited by Christeen, G 2015).

All above six studies conclude relationship with supervisor have impact on employee retention.

Hence, the author also suggest relationship with supervisor which positively impact on employee retention

H5: Relationship with supervisor impacts positively to employee retention.

2.3.2.6. Relationship with colleagues

Relationship among colleagues in an organization also play important role for employee retention. Employees tend to stay in company when there is healthy cooperation with their colleagues (Clarke, K 2001). According to Mathis and Jackson (2008), coworker relationship can be an important signal that a workplace is positive. In other words, it is not just about where people work, but also with whom they work affecting employee retention.

There are 5 models find out relationship with colleagues as affecting factor of employee retention.

Hence, the author also suggest relationship with colleagues which positively impact on employee retention

H6: Relationship with colleagues impacts positively to employee retention.

2.3.2.7. Job characteristic

J.Richard Hackman and Greg Oldham (1980) proposed the job characteristic model. According to the model, there are five core job characteristic that make employees more satisfying and motivating, which are: task identity, task significance, skill variety, autonomy, feedback.

Andrews and Wan (2009) observed that autonomy as a determinant factor of job retention. (Cited by Bodjrenou, K, Ming, X and Bomboma, K 2016). Autonomy "can be seen to be characterized by the ability to choose how to do one's work, having influence over one's work, and flexibility in workload" (Christeen, 2015). The research of Qiaoqin, W (2018) and Vu, Nguyen Bao Ngoc (2018) stated job characteristic have positive impact on employee retention. Therefore, this study also propose there is positive correlation between job characteristic and employee retention.

H7: Job characteristic impacts positively to employee retention

2.3.2.8. Physical working conditions

The physical working conditions is stated in studies of Demet, L (2012) that includes computers, machines as well as general furniture and furnishings. The physical environment is a tool that can be leveraged both to improve business results and employee well-being. To achieve high levels of employee commitment, organizations must ensure that the physical environment is conducive to organizational needs facilitating interaction and privacy.

In the studies of David, M (2009), the provision of inadequate equipment and adverse working conditions has been shown to affect employee commitment and intention to stay with the organization as well as levels of job satisfaction and the perception of fairness of pay. From a safety perspective, Gyekye (2006) indicates that environmental conditions affect employee safety perceptions which impact upon employee commitment. (Cited by David, M 2009)

The research of Jayasree, K 2016), Qiaoqin, W (2018), Nancy, Kumari (2018) stated job characteristic have positive impact on employee retention.

Therefore, this study also propose there is positive correlation between physical working condition and employee retention.

H8: Physical working condition impacts positively to employee retention

2.3.2.9. Work-life balance

Work-life balance is defined as balance among family, life and work. Work-life balance can be defined as "a state of equilibrium in which the demands of both a person's job and personal life are equal. Work-life balance is also stated on the New Zealand Department of Labor work life balance website as being about "effectively managing the juggling act between paid work and the other activities that are important to people". According to report of RGF (2018), a work-life balance has become increasingly popular in recent years.

More than 50% of respondent of RGF feel that flexible working hours and work-life imbalance have direct effects on their decision to change jobs.

Vijaya, T.G and Hemamalini, R (2012), in their article titled also found that there exist a positive correlation between affective commitment, continuance commitment and work life balance variables.

The research of Nancy, K (2018) stated work-life balance have positive impact on employee retention.

Therefore, this study also propose there is positive correlation between work-life balance and employee retention.

H9: Work-life balance impacts positively to employee retention

2.3.3. Demographic factors

In the study of investigating the linkage between gender and employee commitment, Moses, S (2014) pointed out that overall turnover rates of man is higher than woman. Women have to work under unusual conditions which led to their negative job commitment. Women were more likely to leave their jobs personal or family-related reasons such as pregnancy, and the quite rated of women especially occurred in their early stage of career. However, when the traditional culture variable of gender nature was disregarded, it is found that women were more committed to job than men.

The research of Moses, S (2014) also determined that level of education have influenced intention to quit or stay. Among the employees, the employee hold highest degree have higher intention to quit. This finding is similar to Manlove and Guzel's (1997) position that better educated employees are more likely to quit. It is also consistent with the findings of Golang, Elsik and Russ (1999) that employees with limited education turn to remain with the organization for longer periods of time than those who have moderate degrees of educational attainment (cited by Moses,, S 2014).

The search of Moses, S (2014) also give some previous studies about the influence of demographic factors. Based on finding of Somers (1995), junior position level has higher turnover rate than senior position level. The confirmation is similar to result of Moses's research that junior and middle level intend to quit more than senior level.

Length of service, or number of Length of service at company also impact on employee retention. The research of Moses, S (2014) determined that the employees who serve the bank for less than 15 years want to stay more than the employees with more than 15 years. However, in the findings of Poole (1997), employees with shorter length of service quit their organization more than those who were employed longer (cited by Moses, S 2014)

The finding of Moses (2014) also define the difference among age group. Employees who are from 36 to 40 years have intention to quit higher than all the other age groups, and there is not difference among less than 31 years, 31-35 years and 41-45 years.

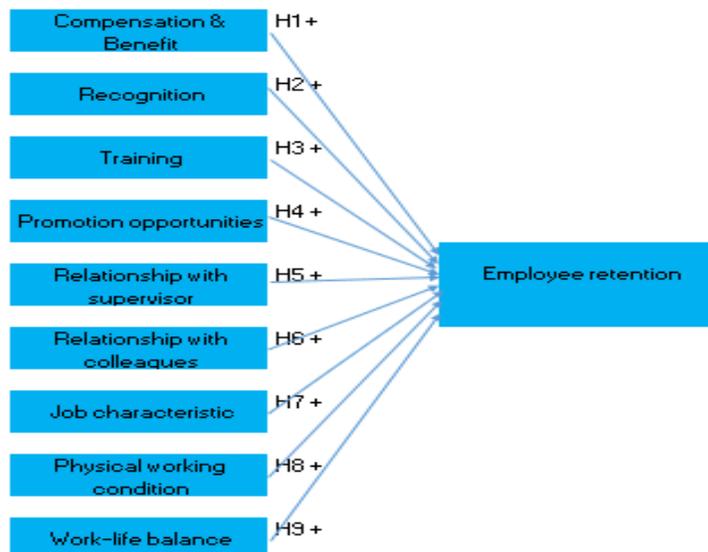


Figure 2.2. The research model

III. DATA COLLECTION

Data is collected by qualitative and quantitative research. In the research, qualitative research is conducted by interview method with 10 experts from various function: Human resource, sales & marketing, finance & accounting and manufacturing. The convenience sampling is selected in this research. The questionnaire is answered by random staffs as long as they are working for the company. Only the remaining 160 questionnaires were used in the research. 25 observational variables measuring 9 concepts in the study were coded for data entry and analysis in SPSS software version 20.0. In this quantitative research method, data analysis techniques are deployed including:

reliability test, explanatory factor analysis (EFA), analysis of variance (ANOVA), and multiple linear regression.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS

The study administered 198 questionnaires to employees, out of which 160 useable ones were received which 80.8% respondent rate. The demographic data of the participants showed that 120 (80%) out of 160 respondents were female, while the remaining 40 (20) were male. The age showed that there is youthful population of employee at company, which 30% of the respondent are within the age range 18-25, 30% of within 26-35, 25% within 36-45, 15% is over 45. Regarding marital status, 65% of participants are married, and 35% are single. About education level, there are 43.8% are high school graduates, 30% have college degree, 25% are university graduate, and 1.3% are post graduate. Majority of respondents are staff/executive level with 93.8%, the remaining 6.3% are manager level. Regarding of working years at company, there are 37.5% of participants under 1 year, 33.8% are from 1 to under 3 years, 16.3% are from 3 to under 5 years, 12.5 are from 5 years and over.

V. STUDY RESULTS, SUMMARY AND CONTRIBUTION

According to the results of data analysis, from the proposed model with 9 main factors and 25 sub items, a new model is adjusted and created with 06 main factors and 19 sub items through data analysis

- ❖ The study administered 198 questionnaires to employees, out of which 160 useable ones were received which 80.8% respondent rate. The demographic data of the participants showed that 120 (80%) out of 160 respondents were female, while the remaining 40 (20) were male. The age showed that there is youthful population of employee at company, which 30% of the respondent are within the age range 18-25, 30% of within 26-35, 25% within 36-45, 15% is over 45. Regarding marital status, 65% of participants are married, and 35% are single. About education level, there are 43.8% are high school graduates, 30% have college degree, 25% are university graduate, and 1.3% are post graduate. Majority of respondents are staff/executive level with 93.8%, the remaining 6.3% are manager level. Regarding of working years at company, there are 37.5% of participants under 1 year, 33.8% are from 1 to under 3 years, 16.3% are from 3 to under 5 years, 12.5 are from 5 years and over.
- ❖ Based on previous studies, the proposed research model includes nine factors. In reliability analysis, the cronbach's alpha of all nine factors is higher than 0.6, and the corrected item total correlation value of all element is higher than 0.3. Therefore, after reliability analysis, all nine factor and 25 elements are kept to be used for EFA analysis
- ❖ After EFA analysis, the research model still kept 9 independent factors with 25 elements.
- ❖ After multiple linear regression, there are 06 remaining factors which are: (1) compensation & benefit, (2) recognition, (3) relationship with supervisor, (4) relationship with colleagues, (5) job characteristic and (6) physical working condition. The factor "compensation & benefit" has strongest impact on employee retention. The next factors affecting the dependent factor in turn are "physical working condition", "relationship with supervisor", "relationship with colleagues", "recognition" and "job characteristic". Multiple linear regression results show that the linear regression model was constructed is suitable with the data set at 66.5%.
- ❖ The results of ANOVA analysis show that: there are differences among groups of people with different marital status, in which married people group tend to be more committed than single people group, and there are differences among the group with difference number of working years, in which the group with higher number of working years tend to be more loyal than the group with lower years.

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