# ELEVATING TALENT RETENTION AND FOSTERING WORKFORCE ENGAGEMENT WITHIN A PRIVATE UNIVERSITY

## Dr. Rajendrakumar Muljibhai Parmar

Assistant Professor
Parul Institute of Liberal Arts,
Parul University,
Contact Number: - 9979302475, Email ID: - Rajendrakumar78687@gmail.Com
Rajendrakumar.parmar90042@paruluniversity.ac.in

## INTRODUCTION

India is actively striving to compete in the globalized economy by prioritizing sectors that require highly skilled professionals, making the quality of higher education a crucial determinant of success. According to Ewell (1991), the educational and personal growth students experience in higher education largely hinges on faculty performance in their roles as educators and researchers. To ensure institutional success and improve employee retention, effective human resource management practices, such as employee empowerment, training and development, performance appraisal, and competitive compensation, are indispensable (Hong et al., 2012).

Muhammad Asif (2004) underscores the importance of identifying beneficiaries' needs and expectations to evaluate service quality. In the context of higher education, considering faculty as customers aligns with the internal and external customer framework common in business. Institutions that attract and retain talented faculty members cultivate a reputation as desirable workplaces, which in turn fosters a conducive learning environment and upholds educational excellence. Additionally, Chen et al. (2006) highlight the significance of competitive salaries and equitable promotion systems in meeting faculty priorities, which are critical factors for retention (Kaur, 2021).

### Employee Retention
Employee retention involves fostering a work environment where employees feel confident about their future, encouraging them to remain with the organization for a prolonged period or until the conclusion of their contract. This practice benefits both the organization and its employees. In today's competitive job market, employees have a plethora of opportunities, and feelings of insecurity about their future can prompt job switches. Employers must prioritize retaining their top talent, as the departure of skilled employees can leave organizations without the expertise necessary to thrive. As Krishnan (2010) notes, a competent employer must possess the ability to attract and retain valuable employees. Although employee retention demands considerable effort, energy, and resources, the long-term benefits justify the investment (Kaur, 2021).

### Motives for Employee Retention
Addressing employee retention challenges is critical for cultivating a workplace where employees are motivated to stay and that others aspire to join. High turnover disrupts organizational operations, as departing employees take with them valuable institutional knowledge, impacting continuity and service delivery. This disruption can hinder an organization's ability to meet objectives effectively. Moreover, replacing employees is costly—estimates suggest that replacing a single employee can cost up to twice their annual salary, excluding the loss of tacit knowledge and experience (Kaur, 2021).

### The Three R's of Employee Retention: Respect, Recognition, and Rewards
To ensure employee satisfaction and retention, organizations must focus on the "Three R's"—respect, recognition, and rewards:

**Respect:** This is the cornerstone of employee retention. Without respect, other efforts, such as recognition and rewards, will have minimal impact (Kaur, 2021).
**Recognition:** Providing employees with special attention and acknowledgment is vital in addressing morale and retention challenges. Often, these issues stem from management's failure to address employee needs (Kaur, 2021).
**Rewards**: While respect and recognition are paramount, rewards offer additional motivation for employees to go above and beyond. Though a smaller component, rewards remain significant in fostering retention (Kaur, 2021).

## Employee Engagement

Employee engagement reflects an employee's loyalty, dedication, and willingness to exceed expectations for organizational success. Engagement surpasses mere job satisfaction; engaged employees are motivated, enthusiastic, and aligned with the organization's goals. These individuals actively contribute to their personal growth while enhancing the organization's reputation and interests, making them invaluable assets. Therefore, retaining engaged employees is a strategic priority for organizations (Markos & Sridevi, 2010).

## Employee Engagement Activities

To foster engagement, organizations can implement activities such as:

- Organizing regular team-building activities like picnics and outings.
- Sharing daily updates and company announcements directly from the CEO.
- Recognizing achievements publicly through platforms like internal communication systems.
- Establishing suggestion systems with prompt responses to employee feedback.
- Publishing live versions of internal newsletters or magazines.
- Conducting open forums or face-to-face interactions between leadership and employees.
- Celebrating milestones like employee birthdays.
- Initiating monthly staff recognition or awards programs.

## Factors Promoting Employee Engagement

William A. Kahn (1990) first introduced key drivers of employee engagement, which subsequent research has expanded upon. These factors play a pivotal role in attracting, motivating, and retaining productive employees:

- Career Development: Opportunities for professional growth and advancement.
- Fair Compensation: Competitive salary structures and equitable promotion systems.
- Cultural Diversity: A workplace that values and respects diverse backgrounds.
- Transparency: Open communication and honest decision-making processes.
- Autonomy: Empowering employees to make decisions and contribute meaningfully.
- Motivation and Recognition: Regular acknowledgment of contributions and achievements.
- Effective Communication: Clear and consistent messaging throughout the organization.
- Work-Life Consideration: Flexibility to address personal and professional balance.
- Strong Leadership: Leadership that inspires, guides, and supports employees effectively

## Research Methodology
### Research Design
This study utilized a comprehensive research design encompassing multiple categorical variables:
**Gender:** Male and Female.
**Marital Status:** Married and Unmarried.
**Age Categories:** Nine groups (20–25, 26–30, 31–35, 36–40, 41–45, 46–50, 51–57, 58–60, and above 60 years).
**Educational Qualifications:** Master's and PhD.
**Work Experience in Current Institution:** Four categories (0–12 months, 13–24 months, 3–5 years, and more than 5 years).
**Overall Work Experience:** Four categories (Less than a year, 1–3 years, 5–10 years, and more than 10 years).
**Designations**: Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, Professor, and Head of Department (HOD).
### Objectives of the Study
The research was conducted to:

Assess employee engagement levels in higher educational institutions.
Identify factors influencing employee engagement.
Examine determinants impacting employee retention.
Explore the relationship between employee engagement and organizational tenure intentions.
Investigate the correlation between employee engagement and job satisfaction.

### Variables
**Independent Variables**: Age, Gender, Marital Status, Educational Qualification, Work Experience (current and overall), and Designation.
**Dependent Variables:** Employee Engagement, Employee Retention, Job Satisfaction.
**Control Variables**: The study focused solely on teaching faculty from private universities in Vadodara, excluding non-teaching staff. Confidentiality was maintained throughout.

**Hypotheses**

Employee engagement in private universities is significantly low.

A significant positive correlation exists between employee engagement and job satisfaction.

No significant correlation exists between employee engagement and employee retention.

**Population and Sample**

The study targeted 114 teaching faculty members from a private university in Vadodara, Gujarat, selected randomly. The sample was diverse, including variations in age, gender, marital status, educational qualifications, and work experiences.

**Research Tools**

Primary data was gathered using a self-designed, structured questionnaire with 46 items:

7 demographic questions.

8 questions on employee engagement.

13 questions on employee retention.

10 questions on job satisfaction.

Responses were recorded using a 5-point Likert scale.

**Data Collection Procedure**

Data was collected through face-to-face interviews with faculty members. Before the survey, consent was obtained, rapport was established, and confidentiality was assured. Participants were encouraged to provide thoughtful and unbiased responses without time constraints.

**Statistical Data Analysis**

The data was analyzed using Microsoft Excel and SPSS. Analytical methods included descriptive statistics (frequency distribution, mean scores, and standard deviations) and inferential tests (T-tests and ANOVA).

**Key Findings**

Gender: Male faculty reported higher employee engagement and retention levels than females, with no significant difference in job satisfaction.

**Marital Status:** No significant differences were observed in engagement, retention, or job satisfaction between married and unmarried faculty.

**Educational Qualification:** Faculty with PhDs exhibited higher engagement and retention levels compared to those with Master's degrees, although job satisfaction levels were similar.

**Age**: Older faculty displayed slightly higher engagement and retention levels, with no significant variation in job satisfaction.

**Work Experience:** Faculty with over 5 years of work experience demonstrated higher engagement and retention than those with shorter tenures.

**Designation**: Professors reported the highest engagement and retention levels compared to associate and Assistant Professors, with job satisfaction remaining consistent across designations.

The findings emphasize that demographic and occupational factors, such as age, educational qualification, work experience, and designation, significantly influence employee engagement, retention, and job satisfaction in higher educational institutions. Understanding these dynamics can help institutions develop targeted strategies to enhance faculty engagement and retention.

**Summary and Interpretation**

The study highlights significant relationships between employee retention, engagement, and job satisfaction. A clear positive correlation exists between employee retention and engagement, indicating that increased retention fosters higher engagement, and vice versa. Similarly, job satisfaction tends to rise with increased employee engagement.

**Subjective Responses:**

When asked if they would move to another institute, respondents cited several reasons for potentially leaving. The most common reasons were the lack of salary increases amidst rising living costs and the need for better professional development opportunities. Some respondents felt overburdened by workloads, and others mentioned the desire for recognition, promotions, and a better work environment. Suggestions included separating administrative duties from teaching and offering roles that match their qualifications and experience.

**Positive Aspects of the Workplace:**

Participants expressed enjoyment in several aspects of their work, including the challenges of teaching, the freedom to experiment with teaching methods, and the relationships they have with students. They appreciated the flexibility, autonomy, artistic freedom, and supportive environment fostered by colleagues and supervisors.

**Areas for Improvement:**

Participants highlighted various areas where the organization could improve:

1. Establish better work-life balance and clear HR policies.
2. Support employees more effectively and promote teamwork.
3. Consider employees' psychological well-being.
4. Allow more autonomy in teaching styles.
5. Offer regular salary increments and rewards.
6. Reduce administrative workloads and improve transport management.
7. Update curricula, improve student dress codes, and enhance system maintenance.
8. Base salaries on qualifications and experience, and provide more holidays.

**Additional Feedback:**

Some participants appreciated the infrastructure and working conditions but emphasized the need for a respectful, pleasant working environment across departments. They also called for reductions in teaching loads and adjustments to student numbers to maintain teaching quality.

**Findings on Employee Engagement and Retention:**

- Males showed higher engagement and retention compared to females.
- Higher engagement and retention were found among Ph.D. holders, older employees, and those with longer tenure.
- Professors had significantly higher engagement and retention compared to Associate or Assistant Professors.
- Interestingly, marital status had no impact on either engagement or retention.

**Job Satisfaction Findings:**

- Job satisfaction showed no significant differences based on gender, marital status, educational qualifications, age range, work experience, or designation.

**Conclusion:**

Participants voiced concerns about stagnant wages, workloads, and limited professional development. However, they expressed enjoyment in the freedom and challenges of teaching, collegial relationships, and the support they receive. Suggestions focused on improving work-life balance, reducing administrative tasks, and increasing recognition, opportunities, and remuneration.

**Limitations of the Study:**

- Non-teaching staff were not included.
- The study was limited to one private university in Vadodara.
- Salary considerations were excluded.

**Suggestions for Future Research:**

- Expand the study to include government universities.
- Include non-teaching faculty in future studies.
- Conduct similar studies in other regions or states of Gujarat for broader insight.

## REFERENCE

[1] Ahluwalia, Amardeep, Kaur, & Preet, Kamal. (2014). An Empirical Study on Job Satisfaction amongst College & University Teachers. Pacific Business Review International, 6(11). Retrieved November 11, 2017, from: www.pbr.co.in/May2014/10.pdf

[2] Bhutia, Yodida. (2005). A Study of Higher Education in the State of Sikkim. PhD.Thesis. Shillong: North Eastern Hill University.
Barman, Arup & Roy, Mr. (2011). 1. Faculty Engagement in Higher Educational Institution -A proposed model;. Revista Romaneasca pentru Educatie Multidisciplinara;. Vol. 3, No. 6,. 7-17;. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/215713725_1_Faculty_Engagement_in_Higher_Educational_Institution_-A_proposed_model

[3] Bhatnagar, Jyotsna, and Biswas, Soumendu. (2010). Predictors & Outcomes of Employee Engagement: Implications for the Resource-Based View Perspective. Indian Journal of Industrial Relations, 46(2), 273-286.

[4] Daly, Matt. (2012). Why Employee Engagement Matters More Than Ever. JPL Creative Evolution. Retrieved October 30, 2017, from: https://www.jplcreative.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/Why-EmployeeEngagement-Matters-More-Than-Ever-.pdf

[5] Deci, Edward and Ryan, Richard M. (1985). Self-Determination and Intrinsic Motivation in Human Behavior, Springer.

[6] Gatenby, Mark. Rees, Chris, Soane, Emma, Soane, & Truss, Catherine. (2008). Employee Engagement in Context, Interim Report to the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD). Kingston Business School, Retrieved November 09, 2017, from: https://pure.royalholloway.ac.uk/.../employeeengagement-in-context(bfc5d2d4-b3ad

[7]    Gupta, Rachit, Chauhan, Hemant, & Setia, Palki. (2011). Faculty Retention: A Challenge for Business Schools. International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research, I(8), 355. Retrieved November 10, 2017, from: www.zenithresearch.org.in/images/stories/pdf/.../29_VOL%201_ISSUE8_ZEN.pdf

[8]    Herzberg, Frederick. (1968). One More Time: How do you Motivate Employees. Harvard Business Review, 46(1), 53-62.

[9]    John Stacey Adams, Equity Theory of Motivation,1963

[10] Joshi, Rama J. and Sodhi, J.S. (2011). Drivers of Employee Engagement in Indian Organizations. Indian Journal of Industrial Relations, 47(1), 162-182

[11] Kaur, Pritpal (2021) Employees Retention Policies and Problems In Private Universities of Punjab. http://hdl.handle.net/10603/327473

[12] Khandekar, Dimple (2018) Employee engagement in Nationalized banks with special reference to selected banks in Rajasthan. http://hdl.handle.net/10603/337464

[13] Kahn, W. A. (1990). Psychological Conditions of Personal Engagement and Disengagement at Work. The Academy of Management Journal, 33(4), 692–724. https://doi.org/10.2307/256287

[14] Kopelman, Richard E., Prottas, David J. (June 2008). Douglas McGregor'sTheory X and Y: Toward a Constructive – Valid Measure. Journal of Managerial Issues, 20(2), 255-271.

[15] Kular, Sandeep, Gatenby, Mark, Gatenby, Rees, Chris, Soane, Emma, & Truss, Katie. (2008). Employee Engagement: A Literature Review, Kinston Business School, Working Paper Series No. 19, 1-28, Retrieved October 20, 2017, from: eprints.kingston.ac.uk/4192/1/19wempen.pdf

[16] Latha, Lavanya K. (n.d.). A Study of Employee Attrition and Retention in Manufacturing Industries. Retrieved October 10, 2017, from: www.bvimsr.com/documents/publication/2013V5N1/09.pdf

[17] Ludviga, I. & Kalvina. (2016). Exploring the Relationships between Job Satisfaction, Work Engagement and Loyalty of Academic Staff. International Journal of Social, Behavioral, Educational, Economic, Business and Industrial Engineering, 10(1), 99-105.

[18] Maslow, A.H. (1943). A Theory of Human Motivation. Psychological Review, 50, Retrieved January 18, 2020, from: http://psychclassics.yorku.ca/Maslow/motivation.htm

[19] Mitchell, Terence R., Holtom, Brooks M., Lee, Thomas W., Sablynski, Chris J. and Erez, Miriam. (2001). Why People Stay: Using Embeddedness to Predict Voluntary Turnover. Academy of Management Journal, 44(6), 1102-1121.

[20] Mittal, Raj & Singh, Raj Kumar. (2017). Determinants of Faculty Retention: A Study of Engineering and Management Institutes in the State of Uttar Pradesh and NCR Delhi. International Journal of Management Excellence. 8. 916-923. 10.17722/ijme.v8i2.881.

[21] Payal, Monika(2022). Employee engagement and retention of faculty members in higher educational institutions in Sikkim, 2022. http://hdl.handle.net/10603/391085

[22] Pandey, Sonal, & David, Shine. (2013). A Study of Engagement at Work: What drives Employee Engagement? European Journal of Commerce and Management Research, 2(7), 155-161.

[23] Pati, S.P., & Kumar, P. (2010). Employee Engagement: Role of Self-efficacy, Organizational Support & Supervisor Support. Indian Journal of Industrial Relations: Economics & Social Dev, 46, 126-137.

[24]  Pati, Surya, Prakash, and Kumar, Pankaj. (2011). Work Engagement: A Rethink. Indian Journal of Industrial Relations, 47(2), 264-276.

[25]  Raina, Khushboo & Khatri, Puja. (2015). Faculty engagement in higher education: prospects and areas of research. On the Horizon. 23. 285-308. 10.1108/OTH-03-2015-0011. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/284279913_Faculty_engagement_in_higher_education_prospects_and_areas_of_research

[26] Swetha, G. & Kumar, Pradeep D. (n.d.). Implications of Employee Engagement on Critical Business Outcomes: An Empirical Evidence. IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 60-68, Retrieved October 12, 2017, from: www.iosrjournals.org/iosr-jhss/papers/ICIMS/Volume-1/10.pdf

[27] Shavita Deshwal. A study of job satisfaction in relation to employee engagement. Int J Appl Res 2015;1(9):303-304.

[28] Soomro, Tariq Rahim, & Ahmad, Reyaz. (2013). Faculty Retention in Higher Education. International Journal of Higher Education, 2(2), 147. Retrieved November 12, 2017, from:

[29] https://www.researchgate.net/publication/236668970_Faculty_Retention_in_Higher_Education

[30] Singh, JD. (2011). Higher Education in India – Issues, Challenges and Suggestions. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/282293148_Higher_Education_in_India_-_Issues_Challenges_and_Suggestions

[31] Thakur, P. (2014). A Research Paper on the Effect of Employee Engagement on Job Satisfaction in IT Sector. Journal of Business Management & Social Sciences Research, 3, 31-39.

[32] Vorina, Anton, Simonic, Miro & Vlasova, Maria. (2017). An Analysis of the Relationship between Job Satisfaction and Employee Engagement. Economic Themes, 55 (2), 243-262.

[33] Wellins, Richard S., Bernthal, Paul, & Phelps, Mark. (2015). Employee Engagement: The Key to Realizing Competitive Advantage. Development Dimensions International, Inc., Retrieved October 09, 2017, from:

[34]     https://www.ddiworld.com/ddi/media/.../employeeengagement_mg_ddi.pdf?ext=.pdf

https://www.gapgyan.org/