

Human Resource Trends and Perspectives: An International HEI Experience

Juana C. Rivera, PhD

“Human Resource Management Office, St. Paul University Philippines”

DOI: 10.29322/IJSRP.9.01.2019.p85112

<http://dx.doi.org/10.29322/IJSRP.9.01.2019.p85112>

Abstract- Cognizant of the crucial reality on employee turnover, this research paper delved into the trends and perspectives of the 31 participants who underwent the exit interview. Primarily, it looked into the proportion of the participants in terms of personal profile and information about resignation; the things they considered as “greatest satisfaction” and “greatest problem” they encountered in the organization, and their recommendations on how to lessen employee turnover and how to improve university best practices. The results showed that the turnover rate was high on the Basic Education Unit. It occurred during the first three (3) years of service, and among the school’s own graduates. Regardless of profile variables, the attrition causes included the following: professional growth, better job opportunity, primarily in the government, and practical reasons that embrace the family, and as to future plans, working in a government unit and going abroad. In terms of level of satisfaction, it revealed that regardless of profile variables, the participants were generally satisfied. The participants’ greatest satisfaction included 19 factors, foremost of these are acquisition of skills that are job-related and personal. On the other hand, there were 23 greatest problems evolved; the mutual problems regardless of profile variables were on office procedures, salary, and workload/load assignment. To help employee retention, at least 24 measures were recommended. These include strengthening SPUP’s best practices. It is concluded that employee turnover is happening during the first three (3) years of employment due to varied reasons and aspirations in life. However, employee retention may be reinforced.

Index Terms- employee retention, employee turnover, human resources, satisfaction

I. INTRODUCTION

In an organization, there are two (2) realities that the human resource practitioners must look into: employee retention and employee turnover. Of these two, the crucial one is employee turnover. This is a scenario where employees would say goodbye to the organization voluntarily due to some reasons. According to Goldstein et.al (2017), the organization’s culture and climate has an effect on employee turnover. An employee will find satisfaction if the culture of the organization fits his/her expectations and values and this kind of satisfaction will be reinforced if the organizational climate is supportive of the expectations, values and other aspects of his/her life. If otherwise, employee turnover happens.

Employee resignations are unavoidable, but too much can ruin a company (Reh, 2014). There are instances wherein an organization cannot grasp the impact because, seemingly, one or two resignees are not significant. However, as some researchers would say, whether one or two resigned, important information from them may affect employee retention.

According to Kokemuller (2018), there are negative effects of turnover. He said that high turnover rates typically mean companies are doing a poor job selecting the right employees, failing to provide a motivating work environment or losing out to employers that offer better pay and benefits. He added that it will lead to decreased performance in the workplace, unfulfilled daily functions, high cost, and lower knowledge base. He further imparts that the Business Link website indicates that the more valuable the positions being turned over are to the company, the more impact the turnover will have on current and future performance.

One of the measures in knowing why an employee leaves the organization is through exit interviews. Accordingly, the conduct of an exit interview can identify areas that can improve the organization, at the same time, to help retain other employees (hrinz.org.nz, 2018). Through this method (exit interviews) one can discover both positive and negative motives for leaving such as employee-employer relationship, their sensitivity about pay, training, career opportunities and performance appraisal schemes. Likewise, exit interviews will obtain from the resignees views on the working conditions offered by the organization, and this is an opportunity to ask for some suggestions for organizational improvement.

On the other hand, employee retention and turnover may be influenced by the person’s motivation in life. According to motivation theories which were based on Abraham Maslow’s human needs, there are factors that affect employees in the organization. Employees’ needs were categorized in progressive categories starting with basic physical needs then will evolve to personal growth and career development (Ingram, D., 2018). Based on the theory of Herzberg, there are two factors that affect people’s attitude toward work (Gawel, 2018). These are hygiene factors and motivators/satisfiers. The hygiene factors would include company policy, supervision, interpersonal relations, working conditions, and salary. The motivators/satisfiers are achievement, recognition, the work itself, responsibility and

advancement. According to the theory, the absence of hygiene factors can create job dissatisfaction, but their presence does not motivate or create satisfaction, thus, the need for the satisfiers.

According to the Need Theory of McClelland as cited by Lewis (2015) there are three (3) needs that are important in and to the workplace: achievement, power, and affiliation. On the other hand, Adams's Theory (Lewis, 2015) explores how human resources consider "forms of exchange like salaries and recognition" while Vroom's Expectancy Theory (Lewis, 2015) explains that employees' performance is influenced by what he or she hopes to receive.

Maslow emphasized that failing to meet employees needs can result to dissatisfaction in employees' personal lives and will eventually fulfill these needs on their own, or possibly find a new employer who can provide better opportunities (Gawel,2018).

At St. Paul University Philippines, it had been observed that for the past years, there were employees leaving, even those who served the University for a long time. With this premise, the researcher was motivated to look into the trends of turnover, the factors that led to employee turnover, and the resignees' perspectives that may help address employee retention in the future.

Purpose and Statement of the Problem:

This study aimed to look into some variables that may have contributed to employee turnover. Specifically, it sought to answer following:

1. What is the proportion of the participants in terms of the following?
 - 1.1. Personal profile:
 - 1.1.1. School/Office of Assignment;
 - 1.1.2. Years of Service; and
 - 1.1.3. School Graduated From
 - 1.2. Information about resignation:
 - 1.2.1. Reasons for resigning;
 - 1.2.2. Future plans; and
 - 1.2.3. Level of satisfaction
2. What are the things considered as:
 - 2.1. "greatest satisfaction" and
 - 2.2. "greatest problem" in the organization?
3. What recommendations can be proposed to lessen employee turnover and to improve University best practices?

II. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study made use of a mixed method employing purposive sampling to illustrate some factors that may have contributed to employee turnover.

Participants of the Study

The participants of the study were the thirty-one (31) resigned employees of St. Paul University Philippines from 2015 to the first quarter of 2018.

Research Instrument

The study primarily utilized the Exit Interview Form available at the Human Resource Management Office.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was employed, together with simple statistical tools –frequency and mean distribution. Likert scale of five (5) was employed for the level of satisfaction.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

There were six (6) groups of participants, namely administrators (3 or 9.68%), Basic Education Unit (BEU) faculty (13 or 41.93%), college faculty (5 or 16.13%), guidance counselors (3 or 9.68%), Knowledge Information Resource Network (KIRN) staff (2 or 6.45%), and support staff (5 or 16.13%). These participants rendered years of service as follows: less than a year to 3 years (16 or 51.61%), 4 to 6 years (7 or 22.58%), 7 to 9 years (3 or 9.68%), and 10 years and above (5 or 16.13%). Majority of these are Paulinian graduates (25 or 80.65%) and the rest were graduates from other others (6 or 19.35%).

There are 12 reasons why the participants resigned. The common reason for resigning is professional growth (4/6 on work assignment, 2/4 under years of service, and 2/2 on school graduated from). These were literally expressed by the participants who wrote the following: "*more professional growth; for professional growth; professional career growth*"; *to widen my horizon in my chosen field of expertise.*" As to work assignment, the second shared reasons by three (3) groups include better job opportunity in the locality (BEU Faculty, guidance counselors and KIRN); family (faculty and staff); and government job (administrators, BEU faculty and KIRN). In terms of years of service and school graduated from, the common reasons are related to attitude, family, government job, and practical reasons. Professional growth as top most reason is similar to the point of view of the article of Doyle (2018) from the Balance Career where she claims that career growth is the common reason for resigning from a job. This career growth may be fulfilled in other job opportunities available in the local or international market. Likewise, this finding is likened to the point of view of Goh (2014) when she mentioned in her article that some of the most rational and easy to understand and accepted reasons for quitting a job are the following: "*you are looking for better career prospects, professional growth and work opportunities; you want a change in career direction; you are looking for new challenges at work ; you need to be able to take better care of your family; and you want to study or go travelling for a prolonged period of time.*" In addition, attitude as a reason is a silent reason when one leaves an organization. According to Doyle (2018), there are things that one should not mention when quitting a job. These include: "the boss is a jerk; the manager is not good and team member's performance or bad attitude." However, for the improvement of the university, this reason on attitude can be viewed as a positive aspect for cultivating a culture of professionalism.

There are 12 elicited future plans of the participants. Regardless of profile variables, the common plans included *working in a government unit* and *working abroad*. This finding shows that they look forward to greener pasture. It is a public knowledge that the compensation abroad and in the government is higher compared to private educational institutions much more outside the National Capital Region. On the other hand, some of the participants have varying plans which were closely related to their reasons in resigning. This means that while they were conceptualizing to resign they do have clear plans after their respective resignation is approved.

The participants are generally satisfied in all the given sources of job satisfaction. The administrator group is very satisfied along the following: “#1.Close match between performance goals and actual performance, #4. Knowing that I have “reached” students and they have learned/profited from our encounter, #5. Enjoyment of teaching / work experience and use of skills, #6. Development of personal skills, #20.Quality of supervision, #23. Working conditions, #24.Freedom to be innovative and creative.” This means that the administrators believed that they were able to perform well in the attainment of institutional goals and in their performance as a teacher, and as a supervisor. Likewise, they believed that they were able to develop their personal skills. In addition, they were happy to have good working conditions and exercise their freedom to be innovative and creative as administrators. However, they were dissatisfied on the following: “#11.Time for travel and holidays (especially in summer), #15.Load assignment, and #25.Time to pursue own interest after office/class hours.” This connotes that the administrators are so much preoccupied that they were not able to find time to relax during summer time and after office time. On the other hand, they were neutral along the following: “#3.Dean/Principal/Head regard us, their staff, as competent independent professionals, #10.Respect from others, and #16.Inspiring and challenging students/work.” This denotes that the administrators did not feel being seen as competent professionals who can do challenging work and they felt that they were not given due respect. The level of satisfaction of the BEU and Guidance group in all the items is from satisfactory to very satisfactory. This means that they were satisfied and happy during their stay in the University. As to the College and KIRN groups, their level of satisfaction is from satisfactory to very satisfactory except on some items. For the College group, they were neutral on the following: “#13.Salary and #14.The number of subject preparation.” This means that they find neither satisfaction nor dissatisfaction on how much they are receiving, and on their load assignments. For the KIRN, they are neutral on the following: “#14.The number of subject preparation, #15.Load assignment, and #25.Time to pursue own interest after office/class hours.” This means that they had some adjustment problems along teaching and workloads as well as on time management. On the other hand, the staff group is generally satisfied. However, they have some areas of dissatisfaction. These include the following: #11.Time for travel and holidays (especially in summer), and #25.Time to pursue own interest after office/class hours.” This denotes that they need time for themselves to relax and enjoy. In addition, they were neutral on the following: “#12.Security of income or position, #17.Time

schedule, #18.Administrative support, and #20.Quality of supervision.” This implies that they have expectations about their take home pay but understand that they are compensated as staff who is expected to report for duty on a definite time schedule, and as staff they were not directly involve with administrative matters and have not directly felt the impact of top administrative supervision. On the other hand, the neutral feeling on the quality of supervision means that they have some issues with their immediate head. As to years of service, it is good to note that those below 4 years of service were relatively satisfied; nevertheless, the lowest means of 3.7 are on “#12.Security of income or position, #13. Salary and #15.Load assignment.” Looking further, as the years of services increases, there are some areas of neutrality such as “#11.Time for travel and holidays (specially in summer)[4-6 & 10 years and above; #13.Salary [7-9 years]; #15.Load assignment & #25.Time to pursue own interest after office/class hours [10 years and above]. This means that the tenured employees have some realizations about how their summer vacation and after office time are being spent, about their compensation, and about their workloads. In addition, the finding shows that regardless of school graduated from, the participants are generally satisfied. However, for the Paulinians, the two lowest means of 3.5 and 3.6 are on “#15.Load assignment and #13.Salary”, respectively. On the other hand, the non-Paulinians have areas of neutrality such as on “#11.Time for travel and holidays (especially in summer), #12.Security of income or position, #13.Salary & #15.Load assignment.” This denotes that these are the immediate areas of concern for review in order to increase the level of satisfaction among the employees. This finding is related to the theory of Herzberg which states that the absence of hygiene factors such as company policy, supervision, interpersonal relations, working conditions, and salary can lead to job dissatisfaction Gaweł (2018), hence the need for satisfiers such as looking into the work itself, giving of recognition and other forms of motivation.

There are 19 factors that are considered as the “greatest satisfaction” among the participants. It is revealing that regardless of work assignment, the top 2 factors are on acquisition of skills / capabilities (job-related and personal) and professional development. It further shows that the participants have varied factors that were contributory to their “greatest satisfaction” in the university. The factors range from personal to professional development; from physical, material, financial to human resources; from colleagues to students; and from school policies, activities to goals and objectives. This finding is related to motivation theories cited by Ingram (2018) wherein he mentioned that employees’ needs were categorized in progressive categories starting with basic physical needs then will evolve to personal growth and career development. Based on the theory of Herzberg, there are two factors that affect people’s attitude toward work (Gaweł, 2018). One of these is the hygiene factors. The hygiene factors would include company policy, supervision, interpersonal relations, working conditions, and salary. As regard years of service, the common factors expressed by the participants regardless of years of service include the following: *acquisition of skills / capabilities (job-related and personal), personal development, professional development, & work environment.* For those who rendered less

than 4 years, they have a longer list of other factors compared to the tenured ones. The unique factors revealed by the tenured participants include *culture & social activities* (4-8 years), *students & family atmosphere* (7-9 years), and *supportive / trusting head* (10 years and above). This denotes that they find more satisfaction in community activities that involved students and are carried out in a spirit of 'Paulinian family' and of course, when the head is supportive. The Paulinian graduates have longer list of factors that contributed to their greatest satisfaction in the university than the non-Paulinians. On the positive note, the common factors that made them happy include the following: *acquisition of skills / capabilities (job-related and personal), friendly environment, personal development, professional development, relationship with co-employees, salary, students, work environment*. This finding shows that regardless of school graduated from, the participants were satisfied with their personal and professional growth, with their social relationship, with their work atmosphere, and to some extent, with their compensation. These findings are related to the article of Suzono (2018) when she mentioned that in the study of Josh Bersin, he considered "growth opportunity" (including training and support on the job and self-directed, dynamic learning) to be one of the five factors of a "simply irresistible organization." In addition, she included that employees themselves are likely to assert this research finding: '87% of millennials (and 69% of non-millennials) rate "professional or career growth and development opportunities" as important to them in a job.'

On the other hand, there are 23 factors considered as "greatest problem" of the participants. Varied factors were elicited. Regardless of profile variables, some of these factors are common to three or two groups; e.g. *office procedures, salary, and workload*. This means that there are issues on the policies of the organization particularly on loading and compensation. On work assignment, the *office procedures* as a factor is common to the administrators, college faculty, and guidance group; *salary and subject preparation* are common to faculty and KIRN group; and *workload/load assignment* is true to the administrators and faculty members. The *hours of work (on call)* is a problem for the college faculty and the staff group; *less support (faculty and administration)* for the BEU faculty and guidance group; and *Time Management* for the BEU faculty and KIRN. The administrators have problems with *communication* that is associated with *grapevine*, with *inter-office politics*, and with *outsource personnel*. The BEU faculty members have problems with their *administrators, classrooms/class size, fellow teachers who irresponsible, parents, students*, and with their own *adjustment*. On the other hand, the college faculty members have problems on *benefits* and *paper works*. These findings show that the participants have diverse negative experiences that reinforced their reasons for quitting their jobs in the university. These experiences are also reasons for dissatisfaction. According to Gawel (2018), Maslow had emphasized that failing to meet employees needs can result to dissatisfaction in employees' personal lives and will eventually fulfill these needs on their own or possibly find a new employer who can provide better opportunities. As to the years of service, there are issues common to three or two groups such as the following: *Less support from faculty and administration and Workload/Load assignment* (less

than 3 years, 4-6, & 10 years and above), *Salary* (less than 3 years, 4-6 & 7-9 years), and *Office Procedures* (4 years and above). This means that they have issue on the people whom they work with and with the policies of the organization particularly on loading and compensation. On the other hand, two groups have some issues along the following: *Administrators, Subject Preparation & Student Schedule* (<1-3 & 10 and above years), *Communication: grapevine* (4-6 & 10 up), and *Students' Attitude /behavior & Student-teacher ratio / Class size* (<1 to 6 years). This denotes that there are issues with the middle managers, with the loading, with interactions among faculty and administrators and among students. Further, the younger group has other concerns such as the following: *classrooms (some not conducive), irresponsible teachers, parents, self-adjustment, teacher attitude, and time management*. This means that their issues are ranging from personal to physical facilities. They need more understanding on the values of education that learning should take place in any venue regardless of the physical structure. They still need to develop more confidence to become more proactive in dealing with the teachers and parents. And they have to learn more how to discipline themselves so that they can adjust and manage their time productively. The tenured ones have these concerns: *benefits, hours of work (on-call), inter-office politics, and line of communication* (4-6 years group) -this denotes that they have some questions about the policies and the manner of transacting business in the organization; *paper works* (7-9 years group) -this means that they resent having too much work that is routine in nature – report writing, keeping records and the like; and the most tenured group has problem about the *outsource personnel and security of income* -this connotes that they have predicament about the presence of the non-employees working in the organization and they do not feel secured about the benefits and compensation packages of the university. Further, the results show that regardless of school graduated from the common problems raised by the participants are: *administrators, communication: grapevine, hours of work (on-call), less support (faculty and administration), office procedures (protocols), salary, subject preparation, students' attitude/behavior, Tme/time management, workload/load assignment*. This means that both groups have difficulties about the middle managers/their management styles, gossiping employees, policies and personal organization. The other concerns of the Paulinian group include the following: *benefits, irresponsible teachers, line of communication, outsource personnel, paper works, parents, security of income*. This denotes that they have some concerns about policies, work attitude of employees, and indirect clients of the university. Similarly, the other concerns of the non-Paulinian group includes *classrooms (some not conducive), inter-office politics, and self-adjustment*. This means that they may have some expectations about SPUP as an educational institution where all facilities are of the-state-of art and where employees live harmoniously. As such, they were not able to adjust.

Finally, there are 24 suggestions or recommendations of the participants to improve the university. The mutual recommendation from three groups (college faculty, guidance and staff) is "strengthening of SPUP best practices." The unique recommendations from each group are as follows: for the

administrators, they listed the following: *consultative management style; help address outsource personnel concerns; professionalism; and respect for human dignity*; for the BEU faculty, they are suggesting to *improve information dissemination as well as parent interaction; to have more classrooms; to review administrators' qualifications and the student-teacher ratio or class size* particularly the preschool; to *have more trainings and seminars* especially on handling students' with special needs; and *support from the tenured faculty*; for the college faculty, they are recommending to *include more employee benefits one of which is a birthday leave and salary increase (improved compensation package); to give equal opportunity for trainings; to lessen workload; to have responsive office procedures; and to streamline clearance procedure*; the KIRN group is suggesting to *have more time for travel and holidays*; and the staff group is recommending the following: *continue gatherings/team building/assemblies, improve customer service by administrators, and thorough evaluation of teachers*. When grouped according to years of service, some of these are collective thoughts from two groups such as the following: *Review of teacher-student ratio and class size particularly pre-school, salary increase or improved compensation package, trainings and seminars, one of which is on handling students' with special needs, and to strengthen SPUP best practices*. The younger group (<1-3) and the tenured participants (4 years up) have included some other recommendations. As to school graduated from the Paulinians have their own recommendations just like the non-Paulinians.

The above recommendations from the participants show that they still wish the university to improve along its processes, procedures, policies, human relationships, employee development and benefits. The participants are also trying to impart their opinions as to how the organization may improve its processes in order to uplift job satisfaction among the employees. As opined by Vroom in his Expectancy Theory (Lewis, 2015), he explains that employees' performance is influenced by what he or she hopes to receive. These may be in the form of what Herzberg presented in his hygiene factors - company policy, supervision, interpersonal relations, working conditions, and salary (Gawel, 2018).

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it is concluded that an educational organization suffers from fast turnover during the first three (3) years of service. It is predictable among its own graduates and it happens due to various reasons. On the positive note, employees leaving the organization still impart their views on how to improve the organization for employee retention. Hence, it is recommended that the University may consider reviewing some of its policies that have direct impact on the quality of life of the employees.

REFERENCES

[1] Boe, J. (2010). Retention is a problem that won't go away. The American Salesman, 55 (3). Retrieved from http://www.johnboe.com/articles/retention_is_a_problem.html

[2] Doyle, A (2018). Resignation Letter for Career Growth (Published on 17 Jan 2018). Retrieved from <https://www.thebalancecareers.com/resignation-letter-for-career-growth-2063535>

[3] Doyle, A (2018). 10 Things You Should Not Say When Quitting Your Job (Published on 17 Jan 2018). Retrieved from <https://www.thebalancecareers.com/top-things-not-to-say-when-you-quit-your-job-2061013>

[4] Gawel, J. (2018). Herzberg's Theory of Motivation and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. ERIC Digest. Retrieved from <https://www.ericdigests.org/1999-1/needs.html>

[5] Goh, R. (2014). How to explain the reasons for leaving your previous job (Published on 20 Nov 2017). Retrieved from <http://www.morganmckinley.com.cn/en/article/how-explain-reasons-leaving-your-previous-job>

[6] Goldstein, H., Pulakos, E., Passmore, J., Semedo, C., Ehrhart, M., & Kuenzi, M. (2017). The Impact of Organizational Climate and Culture on Employee Turnover. John Wiley & Sons Ltd. DOI: 10.1002/9781118972472.ch23

[7] Hrinz (2018). Resignations & Exit Interviews. Retrieved February 2018 from https://www.hrinz.org.nz/Site/Resources/Knowledge_Base/Q-Z/Resignation_and_Exit_Interviews.aspx

[8] Ingram, D. (2018). Motivation Theories & Employee Turnover. Retrieved from <http://smallbusiness.chron.com/motivation-theories-employee-turnover-11785.html>

[9] Kokemuller, N. (2018) Negative Effects of Turnover. Hearst Newspapers, LLC. Retrieved Feb 2018 from <http://smallbusiness.chron.com/negative-effects-turnover-18531.html>

[10] Lewis, T.E., (2015). A Research Study on the Reasons for High Employee Turnover Rates in a Manufacturing facility. Georgia Educational Research Association Conference. 33. Ret. From <http://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/gera/2015/2015/33>

[11] Reh, F. J. (2014). Employee turnover. Retrieved from <http://management.about.com/od/EmployeeMotivation/a/Employee-Turnover.htm>

[12] Suzuno, M. (2018). Why Your Employees Are Leaving—And 5 Ways to Help Them Stay: A Lack of Growth Opportunities Leads to Attrition (Published on 29 Mar 2018). Retrieved from <https://business.udemy.com/blog/employees-leaving-5-ways-help-stay/>

AUTHOR

Juana C. Rivera, PhD, Human Resource Management
Director, St. Paul University Philippines,
jrivera@spup.edu.ph