Identification and Explanation of the Criteria for Attracting and Retaining Human Resources in Mazandaran University
(Findings of a Qualitative Study)

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to identify the criteria for attracting and retaining human resources focusing on the staff of Mazandaran University. To achieve this goal, a case study and descriptive and mixed research method were used. The statistical population of the study consisted of 356 people. In the quantitative section, 185 of them were selected using a stratified sampling method, and in the qualitative section, 10 people were selected using a targeted snowball sampling. The data gathering tool in the quantitative section was a researcher-made questionnaire in 2012 which the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of it was 0.89 and in the qualitative section, it was a semi-structured interview. In order to analyze the quantitative data, one-sample T-test was used and in the qualitative section, inductive content analysis based on open coding was used. The findings of the research showed that, firstly, the status of the criteria for attracting and retaining human resources of staff is lower than the hypothetical mean of research. Secondly, the criteria that are considered in attracting and retaining human resources include three categories of criteria: personal merit and abilities, faith, ethical and religious issues, and having special privileges.

Introduction

Today, the fully transformed conditions of the organizations, increasing competition and the need for its effectiveness in such circumstances, reveal their need for a valuable generation of employees, the generation that is referred to as organizational troops. Undoubtedly, these employees are deference aspect of effective organizations. (14) Financial and technological resources are not the only benefit of organizations; it is having able and talented individuals that can be considered as a competitive advantage of organization and also it can compensate defects of other resources. In the current competitive situation and in an environment where successive changes and ongoing innovations are the main features of it, only organizations can succeeded in acquiring excellence that understand the strategic role of their human resources and have skilled, knowledge-based, competent, elite, and capable human resources. (9) One of the major issues in human resources management literature is intellectual capital. Intellectual capital includes human, structural and relational capital, and human capital is its most important part. This intangible asset plays a key and critical role in determining the value of the national and international arena. In the modern era, due to the strong competition and the lack of highly skilled employees, finding and retaining human capital is one of the basic priorities of today's organizations (18) The strategic and economic advantages in the future will be given to the organizations that can attract, train and retain the best and most brilliant human capital in the labor market (4). Accordingly, the challenge facing organizations today is the attraction, excellence and retaining of human capital (19). The capital that is the national wealth of any land and its effective presence increases the speed of development and greatly reduces its time. The factors that affect the attraction and retaining of human resources are the nature of the job, management and

leadership, the identification of goals and expectations, the area of cooperation and team cohesion, assignment of work on the basis of competence, effective evaluation system, job security, conditions of work environment, nature of work and communication, education and development, social protection, support of colleagues, supervisory support, managerial incentive behaviors, employee motivation, distributive justice, procedural justice, interpersonal justice, demographic factors including: education, age, gender, length of service and degree, and occupational factors including: independence and job diversification, automatic importance, appreciation by the manager, expertise and knowledge necessary to carry out work, job enrichment, basic design for salary proportional to the experience and so on (13-23) At the University of Mazandaran, the need for human capital has been exacerbated. In this pyramid organization, the heterogeneous demographic of the bachelor and management body of the organization, due to the inability to retain and train specialized human resources in previous years, it has created a deep gap in this area and has therefore decided to attract and retain human resources in the last few years so that they can cleverly select the right method of work and best ideas. Today's organizations which operate in a knowledge-based, competitive, customer-oriented, accountability, qualitative-oriented, participatory, entrepreneurial, and transformative atmosphere, require quick access to a powerful, happy, and committed manpower as a competitive tool because of having satisfied, energetic and creative staff, or committed human capital is the most important source of organization. Given that efficient human resources are a major indicator of the superiority of an organization compared to other organizations, the emphasis on effective and efficient human resources in the field of education is increasing (15); therefore, the only stable competitive advantage of each organization is its human resources and their fundamental role in success of the organization that it will be achieved by attraction and retaining of human

resources. Therefore, in this paper, identification of the criteria for attracting and retaining human resources has been addressed.

Research questions

1. How much do we consider the criteria for attracting and retaining human resources in the staff of Mazandaran University?
2. What are the criteria for attracting and retaining human resources in the staff of Mazandaran University?

Theoretical foundations and research background

The attraction and retaining of human resources is a set of management measures that support the retaining of human resources in the organization. Retaining the security, morale, interest, and specialty ability of the people are kept (16). Retaining is the process that management uses the factors such as effective payment systems, education and upgrading, promotion on the basis of merit and the provision of amenities and appropriate services, and so on and tries to increase the tendency for employees to continue to serve in the organization, and retaining is a favorable employment situation for employees, so that they are not willing to transfer to another organization (3) Retaining the staff has a very close link with the organization's performance management system. It is very important to take into account the challenges and employees' expectations for their retaining. Talents force the organization to continuously improve their abilities and capabilities. In this regard, formulating a kind of merit-based approach is one of the main strategies. (26) The human resources retaining system has several dimensions. In total, they can be divided into two categories: 1. The cases that are more about retaining and strengthening of the body of staff, such as health and safety at workplace, the implementation of sports and fitness programs and some other personnel services;

2. The cases that enhance the employees' morale and interest in the work and the workplace, such as job security, supplying the needs for present time, oldness and disability period, job satisfaction, etc. (13)

Research method

This study sought aims to achieve a profound and comprehensive understanding of the issue of attracting and retaining human resources and its related issues; therefore, a case study was used and in this regard, both quantitative and qualitative data was used to achieve this goal. In this regard, descriptive and mixed research method was used. In a descriptive and mixed research method, the researcher assigns the original weight to quantitative data in order to describe a phenomenon, but uses qualitative data to describe various aspects of the phenomenon. Also, the process of collecting data is done in two steps. In the first step, quantitative data is collected, then qualitative data is collected. In other words, qualitative data is used to explain more and reveal some ambiguous aspects (2) The statistical population of the study was 356 (192 males and 164 females) in quantitative stage, which according to the Cochran sampling formula with a 0.05 error rate, the sample size was estimated to be 185, and stratified sampling was used. In the qualitative stage, targeted snowball sampling was used to know the comments, analyzes and experiences of staff. Snowball sampling is a kind of sampling that the researcher asks participants to introduce another person to be examined (21) In addition; the number of individuals in the sample group was based on theoretical saturation. This means that sampling continued so that newer theories and perspectives were presented by the sample group. It is worth noting that with the availability of such a basis, 10 employees were surveyed. In order to collect quantitative data, a researcher-made questionnaire was used that it was previously used by Zare'e et al. (2005) and Esfandiari et al. (2012). This questionnaire contains 19 questions regarding the two general dimensions of attraction and retaining(occupational dimension and organizational dimension);

occupational dimension includes four variables of job safety, job nature, direct supervision and collaboration, and organizational dimensions includes the seven variables of the possibility of improvement, the amount of facilities and amenities, the policy of execution and the process of work, the information process, the salary and benefits and appreciation and rewards (11 questions). The research tool in the qualitative section was an unstructured interview. The reason for using this tool was to allow participants to express their views freely and without any theoretical limitations. It is worth noting that during the interviews and with the permission of the participants, the tape recorder was used to record the data and then it was converted into text manuscripts. Due to the different data collected in the study, different methods were used to validate it. In the quantitative section, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to measure the reliability of the questionnaire, which was 89%, that it is an acceptable coefficient for reliability; in addition, content validity was used. In the qualitative section, the participant feedback method was also used. This method is based on providing interpretations and analyzes of the researcher to the participants during the interview for modifying and editing issues that are not well understood by the researcher. To analyze quantitative data, one-sample t-test was used; and for analyzing the findings, the qualitative interview, an inductive content analysis method that is based on open coding was used. In this type of analysis, the information is first collected from the participants, and then the data, without regard to the theoretical basis, is coded, and the process of reduction of codes continues so that we reach a broader categories and classes including more detailed codes (21).

Data analysis and research findings

In this section we first examined the demographic characteristics of the statistical sample: 44% (75 people) of the statistical sample were women and 56% (95 people) were men. The findings of the education of

statistical sample indicate that the highest frequency is for those with bachelor's degree with 42.9% (73 people)) and the least frequent is for those with a PhD degree (2.9%) (5 people). The results of the sample based on work experience, experienced people with 5 and 10 years of work experience with 24.27% (42 people) have the highest frequency and the lowest frequency is for people under 5 years of experience with 15.9% (27 people). In examining the statistical sample based on age, it was found that 41 to 45 year old people with 24.7% consist of the highest number of statistical sample and 46 to 50 year old people with 1/8% have the least frequency.

Quantitative data analysis

A single-sample t test was used to examine the status of each of the criteria related to human resources attraction and retaining, and the results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Determine the status of the criteria for attracting and retaining of human resources of the staff (research hypothetical mean-3)*

Indices Components	Mean	Standard deviation	T value	Differences of averages	Freedom degree	significance
Job dimension	3/21	-/71	3/98	-/21	169	0/00
Organizational dimension	3/43	-/68	-10/79	-0/57	169	0/00
Attracting and retaining of human resources	3/84	-/62	-3/17	-0/16	169	0/02

Regarding the results of Table 1, it can be admitted that since the criteria for attracting and retaining human resources in the occupational dimension, which include occupational safety, job nature, direct care and cooperation, is higher than the hypothetical average of the research, they are considered but since the organizational dimension that includes the possibility of improvement, the amount of facilities and amenities, the policy of execution and the process of work, the information process, the salary and benefits and appreciation and rewards, is lower than the hypothetical average of the research, it is not considered.

Qualitative data analysis

In order to determine what other criteria have been taken into consideration in attracting and retaining human resources in the staff of the University of Mazandaran, some employees were asked to express their experiences regarding the issues of attracting and retaining human resources. The findings of interviews have interesting points that the categories obtained from the interviews are presented below.

The criteria for attracting and retaining human resources in staff of Technical Campus of the Tehran University

Main categories	Secondary categories
	Expertise and commitment to work
Personal merits and abilities	Creativity
	Having a very good educational, research and work resume
	Teamwork morale
Faith, ethical and religious issues	Good behavior
	Political and social conditions
Special privilege	Patent
	Work efficiency

What are other criteria for attracting and retaining human resources in the staff of Mazandaran University? As shown in Table 2, the criteria for attracting and retaining human resources among the staff of the University of Mazandaran can be categorized into three main categories, each of these main categories include the other sub-categories, which are described below.

A. Personal competencies and abilities

This category includes the abilities and competencies that make sense more in cognitive and psycho-motor areas; so that the applicant must have a set of professional abilities, obtaining adequate scores in the cognitive field and performing a set of skills that requires physical fitness. This category has the following sub-categories, each of which is described below.

Expertise and commitment to work

The meaning of the expertise is the level of knowledge and mastery of the applicant in the field or profession in which he / she is graduated or is studying. In the era of modern communication and technology, expertise and skill are among the most important characteristics of employees in the various organizational positions. As much as the degree of skill and experience of employees is higher in the implementation of various occupational responsibilities, to the same extent, the various managers attest to their competencies. According to Richard Steers, commitment can be attributed to personal factors such as age and work experience in the organization, as well as organizational characteristics such as freedom of staff in decision making and having job security. Employees who are committed have a higher order of work, stay longer in organization and work more. Managers should maintain and develop this commitment of employees to the organization (17). Interviewees also pointed out that one of the criteria by which employee competencies are evaluated is their commitment and expertise to their profession. Interviewee No. 8 states:

The first or, in other words, the most important characteristic of experienced employees is the profession, expertise and skill level that affects their acceptance or rejection before the manager. If employees do not have the expertise, they will not have the opportunity to progress, and will always remain a simple employee, because the first criterion for measurement is expertise. The managers of the organization, in the same way, evaluate the staff with different interviews and tests, and provide the opportunity to attract and retain them.

Creativity

With the increasing development of knowledge and technology and the current extensive flow of information of our society, we need to cultivate people who can face and resolve problems creatively. In this approach, the need to educate and enhance creativity and create new ideas for having a happy society is particularly important. Increasing creativity in

organizations can lead to improving the quality and quantity of services, reducing costs, preventing loss of resources, reducing bureaucracy and, consequently, increasing productivity, and creating incentives and job satisfaction among employees (10). The opinion of the interviewee No.5 should be considered in this regard. In order to achieve this goal, managers and employees of organizations can, by knowing the creativity level and strengthening it, use their maximum mental and intellectual abilities to activate the organization, and through the creation, development and application of creativity, the morale of scientific courage, criticism and acceptance of criticism, strengthen the scientific morale and research in each employee. On the other hand, the organization's management also should provide a mechanism for creating the ground for this affair in organization. This affair can turn the organization into a creative organization so that reviewing the past processes and generating new thoughts, ideas, and goods and services through employees' intellectual leakage be the basis of their work, and modernization as an institutional value is one of the common beliefs of the organization.

Having a very good educational, research and work resume

Most interviewees believed that they should have a very good educational, research and work resume in order to be employed in the organization.

Teamwork morale

One of the most important duties of managers is to provide the necessary and sufficient conditions and facilities to raise the staff work morale. Creating a good human relationship and creating morale among the people of the organization is a major task that should be taken seriously by the managers because recognizing the healthy human relationships and creating it is an effective factor in meeting the goals and success of each organization. Attention to organizational behavior in all organizations forms the basis for the organization's progress. The

complexity of human relationships in each organization is so much that human resources are the largest and most effective phenomenon to be addressed to resolve many of the difficulties. To motivate employees, we must correctly and timely apply the factors that have a positive effect on their morales. Morale and motivation are two qualitative combined factors of human existence. It is impossible to separate the morale from human motives; that is, motivation stimulates a person from inside to show interactions, and the mood determines intense or weakness of these interactions. The result of morale is the degree of satisfaction of the individual or organizational groups of their work. If there is complete satisfaction, they say that the morale of a person or group is strong. Interviewee No. 2 states:

Important factors affecting employees' morale are: the merits of the head of the organization, because he is the point of contact between the organization and the employees and has decisive influence on their activities. Satisfaction with the work; most people do their interested job well and feel that their job gives them the opportunity to make their talents to be appeared and developed. Compatibility with colleagues; when one finds that he is accepted by the colleagues, he considers his work more satisfactory. Usefulness of the organization's purpose; Employees like to be members of an organization that pursues useful and valuable goals. Sufficient satisfaction from economic rewards and its related things; Employees like to receive a reward equivalent to other employees of the organization and, to a lesser extent, with employees outside the organization. General, physical and mental health; general health and job satisfaction are dependent on each other and consist of factors outside the job and mood and general emotions of the individual. Other social factors have a significant impact on enhancing employee morale: job position, job attractiveness, and job progression; that is, a person chooses a job on a satisfactory basis, and if the same opinions that he has had at the beginning of choosing are realized, such a person will have a strong morale.

B. Faith, ethical and religious issues

In addition to this that employees must have the personal competencies that have previously been addressed, they must also have a set of ethical and religious qualifications and a commitment to specific standards.

Good behavior

Development of ethics at the level of the community and administrative agencies is a thing that neglecting it makes ineffective planning in order to attain the transcendental perspectives of organizations and society and causes administrative, moral and financial corruption at the level of the organization and society. The activities of organizations are the responsibility of the human resources that are addressed by ethical orders and values so that by implementing these principles the growth of the organization is promoted. Ethical behavior plays an important role in the progress and achievement of the organization in achieving its goals. Neglecting it may cause unpleasant outcomes such as group effects including the strengthening of negative informal relationships in working groups, organizational effects such as reduced effectiveness, organizational culture and structural variables that cannot be corrected (6). Interviewee No. 7 believes that:

Good behavior in dealing with others, job knowledge, creative morale, patience and fairness, speed of operation and accuracy in carrying out affairs, giving information to customer about the activities of the organization, accountability, and the morale of accepting critiques, being active, serving the community, being good-tempered are of the most important moral values for attracting and retaining human resources.

Political and social conditions

Some of the most important factors that can affect it are told by the interviewee No. 1:

The influence of government policies on the profession is high. The government's support for the profession depends on the degree of adherence of the profession to the professional principles and the government to the law-orientation, corruption reduction, meritocracy,

transparency, discipline, and accountability. Creating a healthy and fair competition ground in the profession for all officials by the government executives is a factor affecting profession.

C. Special privileges

Patent

One of the most important indicators in assessing the development of countries is how to register and support scientific, technical and artistic innovations and structures of doing it in countries. Many foreign investments and the attraction of international research funds are recommended in countries that have a reliable structure to preserve the knowledge generated globally and internally. Therefore, inventions and other scientific, technical and artistic innovations can be considered as a suitable measure for the evaluation of universities and scientific centers. The opinion of interviewee No. 6 confirms the importance of this issue. Patents, discoveries of scientific, technical and artistic innovations can provide a framework for mutual trust between innovators and related organizations, and will encourage individuals to innovate and ultimately attract them to the organization.

Work efficiency

Successful people are always seeking effective solutions to increase their productivity and efficiency, and in this regard they will take advantage of all possible facilities. In today's modern world, the Internet of social networks and modern communication tools have all come to serve human beings to create positive effects on personal and professional life. One of the factors that can play an effective role in increasing work efficiency is to identify the goals and reasons for occupational activity. Now how much the work is boring, identifying specific goals can increase the work motivation; therefore, determining the goal and success after achieving it, has an important role in increasing the quality and efficiency of work. Interviewer No. 4 stated the following strategies to increase the efficiency of work:

The preparation of a list of daily tasks is one of the best ways that can increase the focus for tasks, although this seems simple at first glance, but its importance has always been emphasized. The consequences of not doing the work should be noted: neglecting job tasks can lead to unpleasant results. Initially, it begins with verbal and written reprimands, and if it continues, it will end with expulsion from the workplace. When there are a lot of things to do, it's really hard to find out which one should be done first, and that's why we spend a lot of time thinking about what to do first and we will not do any of them; therefore, we must try to prioritize the main work to improve efficiency. Then we should do the other works that are less important. Just focus on your work: many responsibilities create stress and increase the number of mistakes in the work, resulting in lower efficiency. Another way to increase work efficiency is to plan for our work. Therefore, according to the findings of the research, in the quantitative and qualitative section, the research pattern is set out in Fig. 1
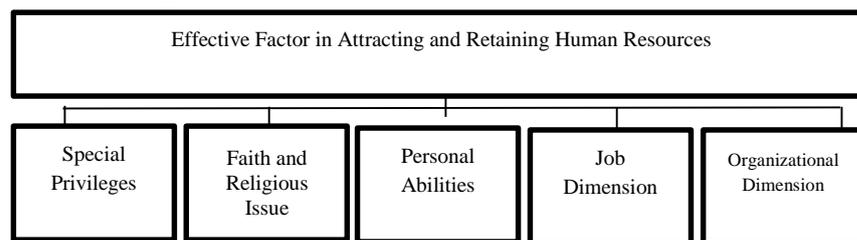

Figure 1, The effective factors in attracting and retaining Human Resource

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to identify the criteria for attracting and retaining resources in the staff of Mazandaran University. In the first step, we examined the status of the criteria for attracting and retaining human resources based on a quantitative method using the questionnaire. And the results of the t-test and standard test showed that the status of job dimension of attracting and retaining of human resources was significantly higher than the hypothesized mean of research and is

desirable, but the organizational dimension of attracting and retaining of human resources has a significant difference with the hypothesized mean of the research that is not desirable, and in general, it can be said that the status of the criteria for attracting and retaining human resources is below the average. The results of this study are consistent with the results of Esfandiari's research in 2012 in faculty members of Kerman University of Medical Sciences and Zare'e's research (2005) in staff of General and Training Hospital Affiliated to University of Medical Sciences and Health Services of Hamedan. The average of the low organizational dimension of attracting and retaining with regard to the subset of these factors indicates that the colleges have not worked properly for staff in areas such as the possibility of progress, the amount of facilities and amenities, the executive policy and work process, the process of information, salary, benefits and side benefits, and appreciation and reward. Considering the importance and the place of employees in the technical campus of the colleges of Tehran University, neglecting the above issues can have an adverse effect which can have a negative effect that in addition to the work of the staff it can have negative impact on the whole system of education and the units related to the university, and it requires the attention of the authorities and policymakers of the university. Motivating factors are critical to attracting and retaining employees, and raising the annual salary is a very strong incentive; because economic factors are one of the main reasons for leaving the university by the staff to carry out private activities. In the second step, to determine what other criteria can be taken into consideration in attracting and retaining human resources in the staff of Mazandaran University, an interview was conducted with 10 employees that the finding showed that one of the criteria that should be taken into consideration by the relevant authorities in attracting and retaining human resources in the staff of the University of Mazandaran is personal competencies and abilities that are shown in the issues including expertise and commitment to work, creativity, resume, and teamwork

morale; Therefore, officials should focus on the personal competencies and personal abilities of employees for attracting and retaining human resources, and avoid taste and relationship selections so that they can provide the areas for growth of the organization. Another criterion that can affect the attraction and retaining of human resources is the faith and religious issues that appear in issues such as good behavior and political and social conditions. The development of morality and attention to political and social conditions at the society level and administrative agencies is a matter that neglecting it makes ineffective planning for achieving the transcendental perspectives of organizations and society, and causes administrative, moral and financial corruption at the level of the organization and society; Therefore, attention to the good behavior of employees and the social and political conditions during attraction and retaining can provide the ground for the growth of the organization.

The findings of this research also showed that besides personal competency and personal factors, as well as religious and ethical criteria, there are special privileges by which an applicant can ensure his success in attracting and retaining to a great extent. These privileges include patents and good work efficiency. In fact, these privileges can also play a key role in attracting and retaining employees. Certainly, we know that HRM is generally in the process of recruiting, training, and retaining human resources in the organization; therefore, if all the necessary measures are taken to attract workforce, its retaining and development will have a particular importance; Therefore, the superior art of executives and officials is to retain effective human resources in organizations in order to increase productivity. The result of the attention to human resources and retaining of this important source is job satisfaction, which results in efficiency and effectiveness; therefore, retaining human resources is manifested as a satisfaction in work in organizations.

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