DOES TRAINING LEAD TO TALENT RETENTION ?: INDICATIONS FROM LITERATURE

Shefali Nandan

Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce & Business Administration, University of Allahabad, (India)

Parvati Agrahari

Research Scholar, Department of Commerce & Business Administration, University of Allahabad, (India), email: pakhiagrahari@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Dynamic business environment has necessitated continuous learning in employees. Training is important for skill updation and growth of employees in any organization. Talent can be developed through strategic use of appropriately designed training programs. Employees today have lot of expectations from organisation, and may exit a job for better growth opportunities outside. Through a comprehensive review of literature, this paper seeks to explore the role of training in talent retention. The paper has been divided into three themes: talent retention, training, and training outcomes that lead to retention. Literature indicates that training is a part of retention strategies followed by organizations because employee training results into those outcomes that fulfill needs of employees and motivate employees to stay with the organization.

Keywords : Training, Talent Retention, Trainging Outcomes

INTRODUCTION

Maintaining a stable workforce is an important concern for any organization. Talented workforce plays a significant role in enhancing the competitiveness of an organization, but it remains a challenge for the multinational enterprises to retain and develop the managerial talent for their global operations (Scullion, Collings & Caligiuri 2010). Various strategies are adopted by organizations for the retention of talented staff.

Tarique and Schuler (2010) found in their survey of nearly 33000 employers in 23 countries, that 40 percent employers are struggling to locate qualified candidates. The report of the Manpower Group Talent Shortage Survey (2015) shows that the problem of talent shortage is truly global as it affects various positions in many regions and countries worldwide. The Manpower Group Talent Shortage Survey (2015) reported that 38 percent of employers globally considered it difficult to find the right talent to fill positions and this problem is major in countries like Japan (83%), Peru (68%) and Hong-Kong (65%), Greece (59%) and India (58%). Therefore, after hiring the talent efforts must be made to retain them. Area of talent retention has attracted a lot of research and research into this is ongoing. It is estimated that in the western countries the three most important human resource issues are retaining and developing key employees, employee engagement, and leadership training and development (HR Focus, 2006). Training is useful not just for organizations as it affects job performance and organization performance (Uma, 2013), it is considered important by employees also.

Today, employees' expectations from organization are changing very rapidly. Mere fulfillment of basic needs is not enough to retain the talent, as employees also expect the opportunities for their development and competency enhancement. Some practices adopted by employers to address the talent shortage include fostering learning culture, encouraging employees to own their careers, and additional training and development to existing employees, which takes the form of new skill development and also enhancing existing skill (Manpower Group Talent Shortage Survey, 2015).

This article examines the body of research to identify the role of training in talent retention. There are three key themes to the current research. Firstly, the article examines the literature to understand the meaning of talent retention. The second theme addresses the understanding of the term training. The third theme emerging from the literature examines the outcomes of training that lead to talent retention. On the basis of the literature review a conceptual model is proposed that shows relationship between training and talent retention.

Theme 1 : Talent Retention

War for talent in the competitive global business environment has increased the focus on retention as an increasingly critical HR issue (Tornow, 1988). Talented workforce is significant for organizations due to their expertise over knowledge, ability, skills and experience (Ejiofor & Mbachu, 2001; Hausknecht, Rodda, & Howard, 2009). Ability of an organization to retain desired employees indicates the strength of an organisation (Kennedy & Daim, 2010). So, it has become the first and foremost priority for organization to find and retain the talented personnel (Fegley, 2006). Various researchers have defined the retention. Frank, Finnegan and Taylor

(2004, p.13) defined retention as "…..the effort by an employer to keep desirable workers in order to meet business objectives". Chaminade (2007) opined that a voluntary move by an organization which will help to create an environment which engages employees for a longer period is called retention. Chiboiwa, Samuel and Chipunza (2010) described retention as a process in which employers take steps to prevent job-switching of their key employees. Lockwood (2006, p.2) viewed retention as "…the implementation of integrated strategies or systems designed to increase workplace productivity by developing improved processes for attracting, developing, retaining, and utilizing people with the required skills and aptitude to meet current and future business needs". Tephillah and Swamalatha (2015) defined retention is a systematic technique which is applied by the management to help employees so that they can stay longer in an organization. These definitions indicate that employee retention is concerned designing strategies with the objective of holding back the employees that matter most to the organization using certain well-planned strategies.

As the organizations grow they need new people, but it also necessary to retain the key talent to overcome the effect of turnover (Tansley, Harris, Stewart, & Turner, 2006). Employee retention is very important as employee turnover increases the cost of productivity and the performance also goes down. As put by Woods, Sciarini and Heck (1998, p.7), "unwanted turnover curtails company expansion possibilities as it eats away at profits". Samuel and Chipunza (2009) also reported that loss of competent employees could have an adverse impact on productivity and profitability. Retention is the primary concern for those organizations that want to improve the operational and financial performance (Hughes & Rog, 2008). Kontoghiorghes and Frangou (2009) have stated in their study that there is a positive correlation between talent retention and organization performance where performance is measured in terms of quality, productivity, innovation, customer value, adaptation and response to environment. Thus, the importance of employees who stay with the organisation is well defined (Brayfield & Crockett, 1955; Cho, Woods, Jang & Erdem, 2006).

Nwokocha and Iherirohanma (2012) reported that many of the previous studies have agreed that good retention strategies lead to employees spending greater time span in the organization and also motivates them to do their job with dedication. Selection process can also influence talent retention but in a survey of HR professionals, it was found that only 13 percent considered selection to be an effective way to improve retention (Jones, 2001).

To adopt a proper retention strategy, HR professionals need to point out the critical points which results in employee exit (Ongori, 2007). Nazia and Begum (2013) suggested three Rs, namely, reward, recognition and respect to retain the employees in an organization, which are eventually responsible for higher earning,

improved efficiency, reduced absenteeism and pleasurable work environment. Shekshnia (1994) observed that to attract and keep employment of the best available talents, organizations need to formulate suitable human resource policies and strategies.

Different researchers have referred to different retention practices, which include enhancing job enrichment, job satisfaction, commitment; focus on financial rewards and employee benefits; training and development opportunities; and offering better work environment and work–life balance (Allen et al., 2003; Pfeffer, 1994; Ahmad, 2014; Kundu & Lata, 2017; Deery, 2008; Irshad, 2007). Other retention strategies include career development (Agarwala, 2003; Irshad, 2007), employee engagement (Palmer & Gignac, 2012) and learning behaviour (Kyndt, Dochy, Michielsen & Moeyaert, 2009).

Irshad (2007) has recognized organization culture, family and flexible time option, compensation and recognition including career development and promotion opportunity as important factors for talent retention. Talented employees have certain expectations from their employers and want employers to develop their special skills, knowledge, and abilities.

Organizations that focus on developing talent will able to retain key employees (Boxall & Purcell, 2003; Capelli, 2008). The provision of challenging work, opportunities to learn, performance contributions are among the seven factors identified for encouraging retention (Walker, 2001). Baer, Fagin and Gordon (1996) assume employee retention as a result of policies and processes that satisfies the employees' needs and work environment to stay with the organization.

Table 1: Meaning of 'talent retention'

S. N.	Author	Dimensions identified
1.	Baer, Fagin and Gordon (1996)	Result of policies and processes that satisfy the employees' needs and work environment to stay with the organization.
2.	Chaminade (2007)	A voluntary move by an organization which will help to create an environment to engage employees for a longer period.
3.	Frank, Finnegan and Taylor (2004)	Keep desirable workers
4.	Chiboiwa, Samuel and Chipunza (2010)	Prevent job-switching of the key employees
5.	Lockwood (2006)	Integrated strategies for attracting, developing, retaining, and utilizing people with the required skills and aptitude
6.	Tephillah and Swamalatha (2015)	A systematic technique to help employee stay longer in an organization

Theme 2: Employee Training

The rapid changes in technology make skills acquired by employees obsolete very soon. Organizations need to develop their employees' skills (Anis, Rehman, Nasir & Safwan, 2011) for gaining competitive advantage. Talented workforce plays a very crucial role in the performance of organization. Some scholars view talent as a potential that can be nurtured through training and development (Myers & van Woerkom, 2014) hence it becomes a necessity for an organization to train employees.

Training is a planned and systematic activity that may result in enhanced level of skill, knowledge, competency and behaviors that are necessary to perform work effectively, to accomplish a specific task and to meet the future HR quality requirement (Gordon, 1992; Cagri & Osman, 2010). Garavan (1997) has defined training as a practical education to develop knowledge and skills and overcome inefficiencies, through which experience and closer approximation can be achieved. Training is viewed "as the planned intervention that is designed to enhance the determinants of individual job performance" (Chiaburu & Tekleab, 2005, p.29). Goldstein (1993) views training as a tool to improve performance in another environment through systematic acquisition of skills, rules, concepts or attitudes. Training facilitates employees' learning of job-related competencies such as knowledge, skill or behaviors that are important for successful job performance by the company's planned effort (Noe, 2009).

To improve the effectiveness of an individual, team and organization, training referred as a systematic approach for learning and development (Goldstein & Ford, 2002). From the point of view of management, training is associated with higher organizational productivity (Strober, 1990).

Montgomery (2006) found that training and development activities are considered important by good knowledge based organizations. It has been concluded in several studies that organizations which offer effective training and opportunity for learning and development to their employees, have better employee retention (Hiltrop, 1999; Arnold, 2005; Herman, 2005). Certain studies have related training to employee retention (Anis, Rehman, Nasir & Safwan, 2011; Ahmad, 2014; Basterretxea & Albizu, 2015).

Training is also associated with organizational growth. Sundarajan, (2007) refers to training as the area where human resource and organisation growth get blended together. Soltani and Liao (2010) concluded that employee training facilitate sustainable competitive advantage as it has long-term implications for employees

and is considered to be integral to the core organisational performance. Studies have linked training with employer branding and employee engagement (Brewster Sparrow & Harris 2005; Glen, 2006). Organizations consider training as an investment on employees and expect a return in the form of commitment and retention (Kadir et al 2012).

Table 3: Meaning of 'training'

S. N.	Author	Dimensions identified
1.	Myers and van Woerkom, 2014	Activity to nurture talent
2.	Garavan, 1997	Practical education to develop knowledge and skills and overcome inefficiencies.
3.	Chiaburu and Tekleab, 2005, p. 29	Planned intervention to enhance the determinants of individual job performance.
4.	Cagri and Osman, 2010	Planned, systematic activity to enhance level of skill, knowledge and competency and behaviors for good performance and to meet the future HR quality requirement.
5.	Goldstein, 1993	A systematic acquisition of skills, rules, concepts or attitudes that results in improved performance in another environment.
6.	Goldstein and Ford, 2002	Systematic approach for learning and development.
7.	Sundarajan, 2007	Process where human resource and organisation growth get blended together and organisational, industrial, and individual development can match.

Theme 3: Training Outcomes Leading to Retention

Several studies have dealt with the influence of training and development on a firm's capacity to retain valuable employees (Fey, Bjo¨rkman, & Pavlovskaya , 2000; Hay, 2002; Hughes, 2009, Deery, 2008; Samganakkan, 2010). Hiltrop (1999) analyzed the impact of HR policies and practices on firms' capability to attract and retain employees. Training ranked second in importance out of eleven factors while explaining the difference between companies with a superior ability to attract and retain valuable employees and those with an average or poor ability.

There are other studies that have analyzed the impact of HR system on talent retention by linking the employee training with other HR policies. These studies (Hocquet, 1999; Renger, 2002; Batt, 2002; Gelade & Ivery, 2003; Guest, Michie, Conway, & Sheenan, 2003; Huselid, 1995; Krueger & Rouse, 1998; U´ beda, 2005; Chew, 2004; Saleem & Affandi, 2014) also point to the existence of a positive relation between training policy and lower turnover. Various types of trainings are given to develop talent, such as off-the-job training, vocational training, general and specific training, etc. (Hocquet, 1999; Renger, 2002).

Training results into many advantages to the employees as well as for organization, which has been summarized by Cole (2001) as: increase in employee's confidence, morale and motivation; help in reducing the cost of production as trained personnel learn to reduce risk and waste by better and economic use of material and equipment; secure workplace which helps in reducing the labor turnover and absenteeism; enhancement in employee skills and ability to adjust in new situation; increase in understanding of and participation in change process; increased skill results in increased responsibility, pay, promotion and recognition; and improvement in the overall capabilities of the workforce.

Mostly organizations are finding ways to make the employees specialists rather than generalists (Fheili, 2007). Training educates workers about the effective use of technology, promotes safety and health among employees, creates opportunities for career development and personal growth, and thus is an important factor in retaining workers (Uma 2013). Some studies have reported that retention can be achieved through job satisfaction, motivation, commitment etc (Chiang, Back, & Canter, 2005; Ahmad, 2014; Kundu & Lata, 2017). These studies point towards the fact that certain psychological outcomes like job satisfaction, commitment, and motivation are important to achieve talent retention. It has been reported that the employees who received job training were more satisfied and committed than those who had no training opportunities (Gazioglu & Tansel, 2006; Brum, 2007). This is consistent with the assumption that job satisfaction is an increasing function of training opportunities (Hamermesh, 1977). It may be concluded that training leads to retention because it enhances job satisfaction and other important psychological outcomes of employees essential for retaining them. Reasons for job satisfaction include achievement, recognition, responsibility, growth, and other matters associated with the motivation of the individual in his job (Flowers & Hughes, 1973).

Some authors have focused on other psychological outcomes of training that lead to retention. Denby (2010) mentioned that training helps in enhancing the capabilities of the workforce due to which the staff feels empowered and invested in, and better equipped to deal with their daily activities.

Several studies of the decade of 1990s have shown that training activities are associated with productivity and retention (Terpstra & Rozell, 1993; US Department of Labor, 1993; Kallenberg & Moody, 1994; Huselid, 1995; MacDuffie, 1995; Delery & Doty, 1996; Youndt et al., 1996; Shaw et al., 1998). The later studies have also identified that training is a key factor in employee retention and improvement in employee loyalty (Messmer, 2000; Deery, 2008; Leidner, 2013) and the organization where employees receive proper training to take up higher responsibilities, turnover rate is normally low (Paul & Anantharaman 2003; Miller

2006; Gazioglu & Tansel 2006; Moncarz, Zhao & Kay, 2009). Kyndt, Dochy, Michielsen and Moeyaert (2009) revealed that training has a potential to change the intentions to leave and is also an important factor that results into the origination of the intentions of turnover. Chiang, Back, and Canter (2005) examined the relationship between training, job satisfaction and the intention to stay in the hospitality industry. The findings suggest that training quality was positively related to training satisfaction, job satisfaction and intention to stay.

Several authors have emphasized the importance of learning that results from training and development activities as influencing employees' decision to stay in the organization. Rodriguez (2008) found that as long as the feeling of learning and growing is present in employees, they will be less inclined to leave, on another side, once employees feel that there is no scope of growing, they begin to search for a new job opportunity.

That is why learning and development is very important for attracting and retaining employees, especially in case of talented employees as ". . . talented people are inclined to leave if they feel they are not growing and stretching" (Michaels, Jones & Axelrod 2001, p. 14). Kyndt, Dochy, Michielsen, and Moeyaert (2009) have mentioned that to foster the talented workforce the learning and working climate should be maintained. Govaerts, Kyndt, Dochy & Baert (2011) also emphasized the importance of paying attention to the learning of employees for retaining employees as employees who experience an appreciative learning climate in their organisation are more inclined to continue working for their organization.

Montgomery (2006) identified that for increasing the retention rate, good training and development activities play very important role as it helps in achieving employees' as well as organizational goal and hence may result into **reward**. Another outcome of training activity is enhancement of commitment with organization because employees get an idea that they are an important asset for organization and hence want to stay back, as discovered in Chinese service sector (Newman et al., 2012)

A study by Hytter (2007) found training and development of skills as one of the factors that influence retention indirectly, followed by some other workplace factors such as rewards, leadership style, physical working condition, career opportunities, and work-life balance.

Studies have also linked learning, training and employee engagement. Lockwood (2006) related employee engagement and retention and found that where there are effective talent management policies and practices (that also include training); higher employee commitment is present which results in employee engagement

and lower turnover. Bhatnagar (2007) states that engaged employees are more passionate toward learning. Thus studies suggest two way relationships between learning and employee engagement, which ultimately leads to talent retention.

Abdullah, Musa, Zahari, Rahman & Khalid (2011) state that many organizations develop their training programs and other HR policies which are aimed at developing loyal employees because this leads to a longer tenure. Training and development efforts by organization give a feeling of empowerment, better equipped to deal with their daily activities, and being invested in (Denby, 2010; Abdullah, Musa, Zahari, Rahman & Khalid, 2011).

Feeling of belongingness among employees is very important aspect of increasing commitment, which can be accomplish through training programs (Anvari & Seliman, 2010). Through training program skills of employees can be developed as it not only enhances the current skills but also prepare them for future competition, and that feeling boosts the commitment and finally results in increasing retention (Sahinidis & Bouris, 2007). Training and development efforts help in attaining competitive advantage as high growth of an organization depends on the ability of its employees (Barringer, Jones, Neubaum, 2005) but after training the skills of employee are enhanced so they must be properly compensated else the chances of job switching may increase as now the person is better equipped with skills (Anis, Rehman, Nasir, & Safwan, 2011).
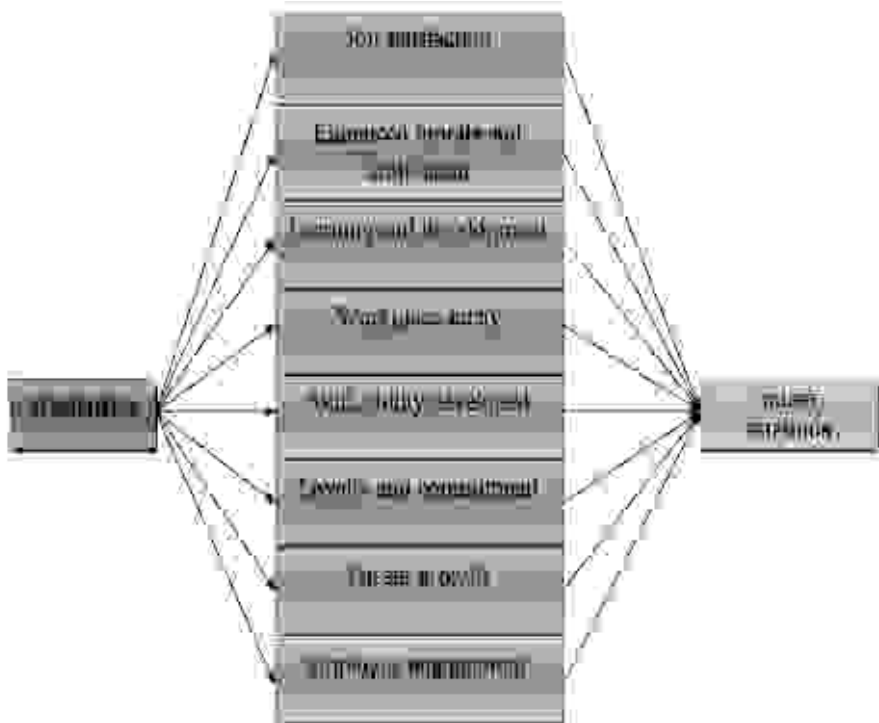
Figure 1: Relationship between Training outcomes and Retention

training and talent retention (Figure 1). Training results into certain tangible and intangible outcomes that may lead to talent retention.

DISCUSSION

Talent retention has attracted a lot of research and considerable work has been done to identify the meaning of talent retention. Studies have focused on the need for talent retention and have attempted to identify the strategies adopted by firms to retain talent. Studies have also explored the meaning and importance of employee training.

Training activities are considered important for organizations because these result into processes that have a positive result on organizational growth as well as talent retention.

Substantial body of research has focused on the significance of training for organizations as well as that for employees and have also identified the outcomes of

training that are instrumental in talent retention. These outcomes may be intangible or psychological like job satisfaction, employee commitment, loyalty, employee engagement.

The outcomes may even be non-psychological like rewards, salary enhancement, improved skills, career growth etc. A number of studies have concluded that training leads to retention as it results into job satisfaction, which itself is an outcome of fulfillment of various needs.

Literature indicates that there is substantial role of training in retaining the employees, provided the organization is able to win the employee confidence that it is attentive towards their growth and career advancement.

Studies have established that training may result in favorable working environment. Through training of employees, employers may achieve their goals, enhanced employee performance and productivity. Thus, advantages of training for the organization as well as for the employees could be the reason behind talent retention.

Many researchers believe that training leads to retention as it helps in fulfilling some higher order needs. For employees, training leads to skill refinement, job satisfaction, growth and development, career advancement, chance to get increased pay etc.

Studies show that training will lead to retention when there is an opportunity of being promoted or pay increment. In general, different studies have concluded that that training will lead to employee retention due to its various positive outcomes for employees.

Maslow's need hierarchy theory (1943) proposed five levels of needs, namely, physiological, safety, social, esteem, self-actualization. An analysis of preceding sections shows that employee training, in one way or the other, fulfills various needs of employees and therefore motivates employees to stay in the organization.

Table 4 summarizes the various needs of employees fulfilled through training.

Table 5: Showing relationship between Maslow's hierarchy needs and employee needs which are fulfilled through training which leads to retention

Need hierarchy level of "Maslow's hierarchy of needs"	Needs that satisfied through training	
	Author (Year)	Outcomes of training
Basic needs- Safety needs (security, safety)	Uma (2013)	Promote health and safety among
	Cole (2001)	Training lead to secure workplace which helps in reducing the labor turnover and absenteeism
Belongingness and love needs (intimate relationship, friends, family, work)	Anvari and Seliman, 2010	Feeling of belongingness
	Walker (2000)	Fairness, care and concern of employees and trust
	Sahinidis and John Bouris (2007)	Commitment boosts
Esteem needs (prestige and feeling of accomplishment)	Abdullah, Musa, Zahari, Rahman, and Khalid, (2011), Denby (2010)	Employees feels empowered and invested in
	Cole(2001)	Training increases employees skill and ability to adjust in new situation it also increases understanding and participation in change process, increased skill results in increased responsibility, pay, promotion and recognition
Self- fulfillment needs- Self actualization (achieving one's full potential, including creative activities)	Rodriguez (2008); Bhatnagar (2007); Arnold (2005); Herman, (2005); Hiltrop (1999)	Inner feeling of growth, got satisfied
	Montgomery, (2006)	Employees achieve their as well as organizational goal
	Hytter (2007)	Development of skill
	Cole (2001)	Provide recognition, enhanced responsibility and the possibility of increased pay and promotion; and training also provides the skills and abilities needed to adjust to new situations
	Sahinidis and John Bouris (2007)	Training polishes current skills of employees also it prepare employees for future impacts from competitive forces
	Gravan (1997)	Training is a practical education to develop knowledge and skills
	Flippo (1984)	To do a particular job, skill of an employee can be increases through training
	Gordon, 1992; Cagri and Osman, 2010; Goldstein (1993)	Training as a type of activity which is planned, systematic and results in enhanced level of skill, knowledge and competency
	Goldstein and Ford (2002)	Training to a systematic approach for learning and development to improve the effectiveness of an individual

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

This research gives an in-depth analysis of literature into the role of training in retaining the talent. The discussion of literature on training outcomes may help academicians and managers and policy makers to understand the possible positive outcomes of training for the organization as well as for the employees. The insights provided in the study that may help in formulating appropriate strategies and developing training policies for retaining talent. A theoretical model linking training and talent retention has also been proposed. The model may be tested with the help of empirical studies.

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