

# THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STAFF RETENTION AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE AMONG COSMOPPOINT COLLEGES IN PENINSULAR MALAYSIA

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**Abstract:** *The retention of employees has been a crucial part of the development and accomplishment of the organization's goals and objective. Loss of talented employees results to a drop in performance therefore force the organization to improve their retention strategies. Thus, this study focuses on the relationship between retention and employee performance at Cosmopoint Colleges in Peninsular Malaysia. The objective of the study is to examine the relationship between employee's retention factors with employee performance. Primary data were collected from 127 employees of Cosmopoint Colleges and questionnaire have been distributed to all 9 branches of Cosmopoint Colleges throughout Peninsular Malaysia. Stratified sampling method was utilized for data collection. Factor analysis and multiple regression analysis were used to analyze the data. The findings reveal that employee empowerment and commitment have a significant impact on employee performance respectively. However, training and development, employee compensation and performance appraisal indicate insignificant relationship with employee performance. In terms of managerial implications, the findings help management of Cosmopoint College as emphasize the area of workplace that they should look into, in order to maintain and attract effective and efficient academician and non-academician staff. Therefore, it can reduce the unsatisfied employees which lead to work-related stress and can cause their mental health problem to their job. The findings also may help the management to stay focus in planning their strategies and approaches to generate and sustain an excellent state of employee performance among academic and non-academic in higher education institutions.*

**Keywords:** *retention, empowerment, training, compensation, performance appraisal, commitment*

## 1.0 Introduction

The employees are the vital asset to a firm, hence retaining staff in their jobs is crucial for every firms. Previous researcher like Akala (2012) mentioned that employee retention can be defined as the ability to hold onto those employees that you want to retain, much longer than your competitors. Researcher like Chew, (2004) predicts that employees in an organization are said to have high job retention when all or most of the established posts are filled, they have low or no plans to leave, have had a stability in job status, have had a career development or when employees do keep their job for a considerably long period. However, Akhtar et al., (2015) claimed that retention is a voluntary move to any firms to create an environment that engages employees in the long duration. Thus, retaining employees is become more challenging for managers since this category of employees frequently move from one work to another as they are being fascinated by more than one organization at a time. Higher Education Institutions (HEI's) have permitted the situation of high turnover among employees to become a cultural norm within business practices. The institutions are deferring to the state of the economy as the blame for downsizing or budgetary cuts (Figueroa, 2015).

There are several theories concerning organizations such as job embeddedness theory. This theory is allowed employees embedded in their work and once they are embedded they are less likely to leave their jobs as they end up being committed to their work (Mitchel & Lee, 2001). Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs propose that organizations should guarantee that employees' basic needs such as, rewards and benefits and job security are met and that will motivate employees to remain loyal to the company. Another related theory is Herzberg's two-factor theory which focus on finding what factors contribute to employees dissatisfied with the job and what factors motivate them to retain in the organization (Nguyen, 2013). All theories mentioned above are essential for organizations in understanding the employees' needs and wants and can come up with the necessary strategies to retain employees yet to improve performance.

Staff retention has been a major issue in most corporations and is believing to be worsening too. Organizations tend to suffer in retaining talented employees due to high employee's turnover rates. Employee turnover results in the performance of the organization to drop due to skilled employees leave the organization. Therefore, organization should find out the reasons as to why employees leave the organization and find the appropriate strategies to adopt and retain the employees. Malaysian Employers Federation 2003, 2004 and 2005 reported that the annual turnover rates over the past three years have been high and above 15 percent. According to San (2010), claimed that in education line, the turnover rates for academicians in private institutions of higher learning in Malaysia have been in alarming rate each year as well. This is not only happening in Malaysia but also in United Kingdom (UCEA, 2005). According to San (2010), claims that many people in United Kingdom are facing mental health problems due to poor workplace environment. Malaysian National Health has conducted a survey on adult's health condition and they found out that 10.7% of the population had mental illness whereas 10.5% from the population has minor forms of mental illness such as stress, excessive worry and so on. It is believed that this stress is developed from the workplace as most of the adults who work in the workplace spend 1/3 of their time working.

Wong and Szu (2012), claimed that the economic standings, quantum of clinical work, numeration, retirement age, facilities for research, criteria for promotion health care delivery system, the financial system and the outlook of the universities, which operate differently in South-East Asian countries, can determine the recruitment and retention of academic staff. Previous researchers like Khan et al., (2013) predicts on issue of turnover intention among academic staffs that prove detrimental to smooth running of higher learning institutions activities. Turnover intention remains an important phenomenon of “brain drain” where academic staffs leave to other job sectors from higher learning institutions. According to Figueroa (2015), the study capitalizes on organizational commitment, academic job performance and turnover issues. However, according to Rageb et al., (2013) administration role in academic institutions lead to higher turnover in the presence of organization commitment and job performance. Based on the findings of the above research, it indicates that multiple influences on staff turnover within employees in Higher Education and those that are affected.

According to Jo (2008), on her study about the volunteer turnover among women in Higher Education Institutions (HEI's). Her findings suggest that women change jobs more frequently than men and for different reasons. The study found that these women experienced the following challenges within HEI which, difficulty negotiating, not feeling valued, disrespected, being looked down upon, no growth opportunity and no flexible schedule (Jo, 2008). Another study also suggests that younger women who have children have different committal interests. Such as, interests in a flexible work schedule in order to spend more time with family. The study as obtained data from the Social Security Administration (SSA) and the analysis suggested that there was a higher percentage of turnover for women than men (Jo, 2008). This difference was attributed to women experiencing the challenges of managing work life versus family. Women and minority faculty within the universities were found to encounter more barriers when they attempted to advance up the academic ladder. Ward (2000) also found disparities in salaries across the disciplines between men and women. Peterson et al. (2004) also found that minority faculty within medicine in particular experience ethnic bias resulting in a lower overall job satisfaction when compared to others. Sabharwal & Corley's research also found in a UCLA study, Antonio et al. (1997) that faculty of color typically were less satisfied when compared to Caucasians faculty. Another identified area of significance was for the faculties that were married with children. Carr et al. (1998) found mixed results between men and women (Sabharwal & Corley, 2009).

Most of the married faculties were found to have a higher percentage of job satisfaction. However, the women with children experienced a lower rate in publications and career progression. A study conducted by Olsen et al. (1995) found that faculties were less satisfied when teaching dominated their career verses research. In addition to this conflict within education it was also identified that there were higher rewards granted for those that participated in research activities. Most University systems link research to ranking and tenure tracks. As a result of this link job satisfaction and security can be tied to research. Job satisfaction has history of being linked to workplace productivity. This study provides the evidence for high rates in satisfaction when faculties were engaged in research (Sabharwal & Corley, 2009).

A study conducted by Balakrishnan (2007) found that the turnover of the principals, management staff and lecturers are high. This is due to poor leadership and lack of

commitment and motivation from top management is one of the main reasons which creates a barrier to the growth and effectiveness of many private institutions and management school. He claimed that a number of institutions employ retired academicians to occupy prime and decision-making positions and many of these retired academics lack vision, motivation and commitment with no interest in promoting the institutions and management education. Generally, the purpose of this study is to find and determine the extent of employee retention affect the level of employee performances among employees in Cosmopoint College.

## **2.0 Literature Review**

There are several theories in relation to this study such as job embeddedness theory (Mitchell & Lee, 2001), Abraham Maslow's theory and Herzberg's two factor theory (Nguyen, 2012).

### **2.1 Abraham Maslow's Theory**

Maslow (1943) proposed a theory on hierarchy of needs that theorizes on human motivation. According to Maslow's theory, needs were categorized as five levels of lower to higher order. This theory theorizes that individuals must satisfy lower-order needs before they can satisfy the higher-order needs. The five levels in Maslow's Hierarchy of needs are physiological needs, safety needs, social needs, esteem needs and the need for self-actualization. The physiological need is the lowest level of basic needs, its related to the basic need of a person such as shelter, food, and drink. In an organization, it relates to the amount of salary, working hours and physical comfort when doing a job (Salim, 2013). Safety needs is the second level of basic needs. This is where employees have a need for job security and protection from physical harm as well as assurance that physical needs will continue to meet. The third level of the hierarchy is the belonging need where workers want to feel part of the organization and have a good relationship with their co-workers. The fourth level of the hierarchy is the self-esteem need where workers want to feel recognized and appreciated for their efforts and hard work. The last level is the self-actualization need. It's the highest human needs where employees want to have reached their potential in the organization and these can be achieved through promotions or creative and challenging jobs. Having an understanding of what employees need will enable the organization to come up with effective retention strategies that will meet the needs of the employees and organizations will be able to retain them (Nguyen, 2012).

### **2.2 Herzberg Two Factor Theory**

This theory provides an understanding for managers on what motivates and dissatisfies employees. He proposed the behaviour factors into two categories which is hygiene factors and motivator factors. Hygiene factors are those factors that create employees dissatisfied such as company policies, job security, employment relations and working conditions. Motivator factors are associated with job satisfaction such as achievement, growth opportunities, sense of recognition and job responsibility. (Salim, 2013). Therefore, hygiene factors are used to prevent dissatisfaction while motivator factors are used to motivate employees and increase productivity. The presence of hygiene factors, for example, unfair company policies and poor supervision and the absence of motivators like sense of achievement and recognition of achievement will cause employees

to leave the organization. Therefore, it is vital that in order to retain employee's companies find ways of motivating employees to remain with the organization (Njuguna, 2009).

### **2.3 Employee Retention**

According to Holzer et al. (2001) to retain talented employees, employers must seek strategies aimed at reducing both involuntary and voluntary separations. Involuntary separations result from poor performance or from unreliability due to work-family conflicts or other personal issues. According to Mobley (1977) stated that an employee's decision to leave his job occurs in multiple stages and involves a very complex cognitive decision based on the employee's experience in the organization. Meeusan et al. (2011) defined turnover intention as a mindset employee will develop prior to the decision of turnover. In other words, turnover intention can be defined as the intention of employees to quit the organization (Kaur, Mohindru & Pankaj, 2013). According to Akhtar et al., (2015) claimed that the challenge of retaining employees for longer period of time require organizations to create an environment, where employees are not only engaged but have the sense of job and career security. This is in line with previous researchers, Samuel (2008), Nwokocho and Therirohanma (2012), state that the successful organizations share a fundamental philosophy of appreciating and investing in their employees.

Akhtar et al., (2015) highlighted factors that help retain employees. He suggested several measures that ensures retention. These includes availability of skill development and career progression opportunities for individual employees; ensuring that the work is as interesting as possible; making line managers responsible for turnover within their teams; ensuring that new workers have realistic expectations of their job and sufficient training during their induction programs; wherever possible, putting consultative bodies in place to ensure that employees have a voice; maximizing job security; and evaluating commitment based on results achieved rather than hours worked. According to Scott et al., (2007), Zingheim and Schuster (2008), considered it is vital to get an estimate about the expenses of employee turnover prior to the preparation of effective staff retention practices, similarly the attainment of these programs should be checked repeatedly to ensure that they are contributing to the organizational success. Besides, employee retention is the result of the implementation of policies and processes that influences employees to remain with the organization because of the provision of work environment that satisfy their needs (Akhtar et al., 2015). However, according to Allen (2008) there is no easy way to the solution to the problem of establishing employee commitment, and successfully managing retention.

### **2.4 Employee Empowerment**

Empowerment has been used to represent the act of empowering others particularly in management practices and also to delineate the internal processes of individual being empowered (Min, 2015). They further added that employee empowerment root from two aspects, the psychological and behavioural empowerment. Psychological aspect was widely studied and is derived from Spreitzer's (1995) whereas behavioural aspect that has been neglected by many scholars was derived from Boundrias and Sovoie (2006) conceptual framework. Min (2015), linked the psychological and behavioural aspect together as they believed that psychologically empowered workers see themselves as competent and able to influence their jobs and work environment in a meaningful way, thus, they are more likely to proactively execute their job responsibilities and innovate in

their jobs. Lee and Koh (2001) also stated that psychological and behavioural aspects are tied together as employee empowerment is the result of combination between employees' psychological states which is influenced by empowering behaviour of management.

## **2.5 Training and Development**

According to Bidisha and Mukulesh (2013) found that investment on employee training and career development is one of the most important factors in employee retention. Organization always invests in the form of training and development on those workers from whom they expect to return and give output on its investment. A research conducted by Tomlinson (2002) stated the view about how organizations can keep the leading edge in this competitive world is by having their employees well trained in the last technologies. Garg and Rastogi (2006), claimed that in today's competitive environment feedback is very essential for organizations from employees and the more knowledge the employee learn, the more he or she will perform and meet the global challenges of the market place. A study conducted by Handy (2008) mentioned that proper innovation, and assimilation of new technology is essential for survival in any work environment. Thus knowledge is the most expensive asset of any firm. Meanwhile, Mutiria, Rukangu, and Kubaison (2015) in their study, recommended that the employees have to be placed and promoted suitable with the skills and experience gained during their coaching and mentorship sessions. This will guarantee that they do not feel too qualified for the current job they are doing or feeling misplaced in the organization and the level of retention among them will be increased.

## **2.6 Employee Compensation**

According to study conducted by Davies, Taylor, and Savery (2001) forwarded the view of compensation to top workers is given by every organization but very few organizations uses it strategically. They claimed that salary and benefits policies are not being used strategically within the organization to improve morale, reduce turnover, and achieve targets within an establishment. Gardner et al., (2004) were claimed that pay is considered as a motivator as well as employee retention technique. This is in line with Das and Baruah (2013) that all types of reward, monetary pay is considered one of the most important and significant factor in retention. They further added that compensation was the only one factors influencing non-management turnover but compensation can act as a critical factor in reducing managerial turnover and increasing commitment. Researcher like Nyanjom (2013) in her study shows that the employee's position and duration of employment determine wages in most organizations, the non-financial compensation or the quality of the work environment also played an important part on employee turnover.

## **2.7 Performance Appraisal**

Performance appraisal is a system used by the organization to evaluate an employee's performance (Mutiria et al., 2015). Performance appraisal evaluates employees periodically against set standards or organizational expectations. Through the performance appraisal exercise, employees may be aware of their level of performance and realize their areas of weaknesses from their supervisors. Results of performance appraisal may facilitate organizational decisions in compensation allocation, promotions, termination, transfers, recognition awards and training opportunities that can influence an employee's career satisfaction (Lau & Sholihin, 2005). However, performance appraisal can also be a source

of frustration for employees due to the unfairness and subjectivity by the administrators as stated by Lau and Sholihin (2005).

## **2.8 Employee Commitment**

Employee commitment seems to be an important factor in developing a successful organization. According to Ongori (2007) claimed that the employees are committed or loyal to their organization depends on job enrichment, employee empowerment and compensation. Camilleri (2002) through a research study of the major factors that contribute in employee's commitment are education level, personality and position that determine the individual's level of employee commitment. Furthermore, the main importance of organizational commitment is on psychological state that exhibits a high sense of belonging, acceptance, identity, loyalty, support, and passion and pride feelings towards the institution. (Awang et al., 2015)

## **2.9 Employee Performance**

Employee performance is being the most important contribution an employee can make to an organisation as it contributes to an organization achieving its strategic goals (Arvery & Murphy, 1998). They further claimed that, variety of technique used by the researcher such as critical incident and job analysis to develop models of employee performance in order to help them define what is meant by the employee performance. However, the range of techniques used has led to confusion in what is meant by this term as each technique provides a different perspective of employee performance (Arvery & Murphy, 1998; Viswevaran & Ones, 2000). According to Koopmans et al., (2011) the results show that there are two factors which are common to most models of employee performance: task performance and contextual performance. The terms for task and contextual performance were originally developed by Borman and Motowildo (1997). Task performance refers to employee behaviours which they need to perform in order to carry out the tasks which are part of their job description. For example, closing a sale. While the term contextual performance is based on the concept of organisational citizenship behaviour and refers to the behaviours which employers carry out in order to help an organisation, but which are not part of the employee's formal job description, for example volunteering to help new employee.

## **3.0 Research Methodology**

The population of this study is comprising of non-academic and academic staff particularly permanent and contract staff at Cosmopoint Colleges in Peninsular Malaysia. The total population of the staff is about 190. The staff involved consist of academic staff, operation, and marketing. The list of respondents is come from all employees who work for Cosmopoint Colleges in Peninsular Malaysia both permanent and contract staff. In determining the sampling technique for this research, the researcher uses probability sampling design. In this technique, the researcher uses the stratified random sampling where the population has been stratified, a sample of members of each stratum is been drawn. The population is determine using stratified data formula:

The procedures for data collection is using an online questionnaire set which include closed ended questions for ease of administration. The researcher used Likert type questions to enhance the quality of data. The respondents are need to indicate the extent

to which the statements of the variables applied to their organization. A five point Likert Scale is used. The five point of Likert scales are comprising of (1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Neutral, (4) Agree and (5) Strongly Agree.

*Sample Size and Population*

No.	Branch	Population	Sample Size
1.	Cosmopoint College Kuala Terengganu	26	17
2.	Cosmopoint College Kota Bharu	22	15
3.	Cosmopoint College Kuantan	21	14
4.	Cosmopoint College Johor Bharu	20	13
5.	Cosmopoint College Melaka	21	14
6.	Cosmopoint College Seremban	19	13
7.	Cosmopoint College Ipoh	25	17
8.	Cosmopoint College Sungai Petani	20	13
9.	Cosmopoint College Penang	16	11
<b>Total</b>		<b>190</b>	<b>127</b>

Source: *Cosmopoint College Personnel Record, (2017)*

#### 4.0 Findings and Analysis

##### 4.1 Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive analysis consists of the element such as maximum, minimum, means and standard deviation which provide descriptive information about a set of data (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). The analysis as presented in table below.

**Table 4.1: Descriptive Analysis**

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Employee Performance	4.23	.498
Performance Appraisal	4.16	.757
Employee Empowerment	4.00	.712
Employee Commitment	4.01	.805
Employee Training and Development	4.15	.724
Employee Compensation	3.98	.841

Table 4.1 shows descriptive analysis result of means and standard deviations were obtained for dependent and independent variables of Cosmopoint Colleges. As evident from the summarized findings in Table 4.1, indicated that the respondents agreed to large extent that employee performance ranked first by a total mean of 4.23, followed by performance appraisal by an average mean of 4.16, employee empowerment 4.00 while employee commitment as indicated by a moderate mean of 4.01, employee training and development shown by an average of 4.15 and lastly employee compensation as shown by an average total mean of 3.98. Based on overall result, it indicates that the mean and standard deviation of all variables are good.

##### 4.2 Reliability Analysis

Table 4.2 shows the reliability analysis for the six variables in this study. The highest value of Cronbach's Alpha is 0.912 represented by Performance Appraisal, followed by



0.903 represented by Training and Development, next 0.900 represented by Employee Commitment while .863 represented by Employee Performance and the lowest value of Cronbach's Alpha is .839 represented by Employee Empowerment. This indicates that higher the Cronbach's Alpha the more positive relationship of variables for this study.

**Table 4.2: Reliability Analysis**

Variables	Number of items (N)	Cronbach's Alpha	Result
Empowerment	6	.839	Good
Training & Development	7	.903	Excellent
Compensation	7	.881	Good
Performance Appraisal	7	.912	Excellent
Commitment	6	.900	Excellent
Employee Performance	10	.863	Good

### 4.3 Pearson Correlation

In this section, Pearson Correlation Coefficient is being used by researcher to measure the relationship between independent variable and dependant variable. Table 4.3 explained the results of all the variables i.e. Employee Empowerment, Training and Development, Employee Compensation, Performance Appraisal, Employee Commitment and Performance Appraisal by using the Pearson Correlation. The analysis can be understood as high, moderate and low correlation based on result core. Overall, the result showed that all the independent variables and dependent variables are positive and significant.

**Table 4.3: Pearson Correlation**

		EE	TD	EC	AP	ECM	EP
<b>Employee Empowerment (EE)</b>	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	1					
<b>Training &amp; Development (TD)</b>	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	.767** .000	1 .000				
<b>Employee Compensation (EC)</b>	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	.759** .000	.701** .000	1 .000			
<b>Performance Appraisal (AP)</b>	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	.691** .000	.646** .000	.824** .000	1		
<b>Employee Commitment (ECM)</b>	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	.742** .000	.606** .000	.791** .000	.811** .000	1	
<b>Employee Performance (EP)</b>	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	.619** .000	.529** .000	.473** .000	.432** .000	.587** .000	1

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

EE: Employee Empowerment, TD: Training and Development, EC: Employee Compensation, PA: Performance Appraisal, ECM: Employee Commitment, EP: Employee Performance.

#### 4.4 Multiple Regression

**Table 4.4: Regression**

Model		Standardized	t	Sig.
		Coefficients		
		Beta		
1	(Constant)		11.003	.000
	Employee Empowerment	.376	2.959	<b>.004</b>
	Training and Development	.195	1.768	.080
	Employee Compensation	-.152	-1.094	.276
	Performance Appraisal	-.233	-1.732	.086
	Commitment	.499	3.810	<b>.000</b>

The above table shows that, the regression coefficients for five predictor variables that affect employee performance. In table 4.4, the Beta represents the regression coefficients for all five variables, indicates that employee empowerment and commitment have a significant impact on employee performance ( $\beta = .379$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and ( $\beta = .499$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) respectively. Nevertheless, training and development ( $\beta = .195$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ), employee compensation ( $\beta = -.152$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) and performance appraisal ( $\beta = -.233$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) have no significant impact on employee performance respectively. Therefore, the hypothesis for employee empowerment and commitment are supported while training and development, employee compensation and performance appraisal are rejected.

#### 5.0 Conclusion and Recommendation

There are three theoretical contributions in this study. First, the study provides main demographic factors that influence employee performance among employees in Cosmopoint College. The demographic factors that being analyze in this study are gender, age, years of employment, department, highest education background, marital status, races, and location. Based on the outcome being analyze in frequency analysis the highest percentage is gender where female is higher than male. Secondly, the outcome of the research provides information on relationship between independent and dependent variable among Cosmopoint College employees. The independent variable in this study are employee empowerment, training and development, employee compensation, performance appraisal and employee commitment. The dependent variable is employee performance. From the result of Pearson correlation analysis, it was found that all independent variables were related to dependent variable. Thirdly, the result of the finding provides the information of the main retention factors that influence to employee performance among employees of Cosmopoint College. From the data found in multiple regression analysis, employee commitment is the main factor influences to employee performance.

From the concluded study it was found that employee empowerment and employee commitment are the factors that related to employee performance. Therefore, the management has to sustain these situations in Cosmopoint College. Nevertheless, the management will be able to identify the factors negatively related to employee performance. From the outcome of the study, it was found that employee compensation,

training and development and performance appraisal are the factors that not influence to employee performance. Hence, the management needs to improve the compensation system such as rewards and benefits, incentives, salary and bonus to help employees increase their performance and retain them as longer as they can. This finding is in line with Herzberg two factors theory. Herzberg claimed that pay is one of the factors that motivates employees and increases satisfaction. Therefore, the management who provide compensation to their employees motivate them to remain with the organization (Nwabuzor, 2018). Regarding the training and development, the management should put more effort by having an extensive training program in the organization. This is because through training program employees can build up their skills and increase their knowledge which makes them committed to the organization and can improve performance. Similar with performance appraisal, the management of Cosmopoint College should take great care in managing the employee appraisal because an effective appraisal would result in enhanced employee performance and able to retain employees.

Any organization aims to increase profit but to attain the maximum profit, the organization should focus more on employees and ways to retain them for their long run. This study was conducted with the purpose of determining the influence of the retention factors on employee performance among Cosmopoint staff in Peninsular Malaysia. The finding showed that retention factors consist of employee empowerment, training, and development, employee compensation, performance appraisal, and employee commitment are significant correlates with employee performance. However, 45.6% of the retention factors were influenced by employee performance, another 54.4% may be influenced by the factors that may not include in this study. Therefore, the researcher offered a suggestion for future researches to explore other variables that may enhance employee retention.

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