A Review of Literature on Employee Intention to Stay with the Project

Author(s): Neerupa Chauhan(Research Scholar), Dr. Leena James (Associate Professor)
e-mail ID: neerupa.chauhan@res.christuniversity.in , leena.james@christuniversity.in

ABSTRACT:

"Employee Intention to Stay" as a term is widely used in business circles. Although several studies have been conducted on this topic, most of the researchers focus on the causes of employee turnover due to organisational strategies but little has been done on the examining the sources of employee Intention to stay in a project- which has been the most crucial parameter in defining his stay in the organisation, advising various strategies and its effect on employee project commitment, which can be used by Project managers to ensure continuity of employee in project to enhance timely project delivery and project success. HR guidelines till now have tried to address problems related with overall work culture of the company, long term growth plans, overlooking the issues arising from even smaller day to day projects. This paper examines the foremost factors of employee intention to stay with project, its effects and forwards some strategies on how to maximize employee commitment in projects, identifying and analysing the changes and challenges which the paradigm shift of employees association with their project has caused.

KeyWords: *Employee intention to stay, strategies, project commitment, project*

I.INTRODUCTION

Numerous studies have been conducted on employee intention to stay in an organization considering factors like job security, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. However, in the recent times, it's a project and not just the company brand which place a significant role in employee engagement. Employee behaviour and commitment varies with the projects he is involved during his tenure in the company. An employee might be happy with organization and it's policies but unhappy with project he is working for. Big salaries, golden handcuffs and golden hellos are no longer enough in themselves to secure the retention of valuable staff. Latest trends show that employee wants to avoid sole people management ladder and stick with project execution which offers him 'self-fulfilment', 'sense of accomplishment' and 'fun and enjoyment'. Now an employee doesn't work only for monetary gains, but for his personal accomplishment, to gain knowledge, for credibility and recognition.

Project is a planned work intended to achieve a particular purpose or a product. Projects are temporary rather than permanent work systems that are constituted by teams within or across organizations to accomplish particular tasks under time constraints.

As said by Bredin (2006), many firms are going through something that could be referred to as 'projectification'; a general development process in which firms to a greater extent focus their operations on projects, project management and various types of project-like structures.

While Packendorff (2002), claims that projects influence individuals in the modern society, not only at work, but also in their every-day life. According to him, working with projects expose individuals to time limits and requirements of "self-marketing". The work situation depends on the individuals' own priorities, which usually ends up affecting their personal life outside work.

Since the project considerably changes the relation between the organisation and the people working in it, the human resources need to understand and improvise the strategies related to employee retention in projects.

II. EMPLOYEE INTENTION TO STAY IN A PROJECT

Intent to stay is the perception of the "estimated likelihood of continued membership in an organization" (Price & Mueller, 1981, p. 546).

As Investigated by Mian (2008), the decision for employees to stay or leave might depend on whether the work is challenging, whether they gain support at work and personal growth. This requires employers to provide resources, tools, and the appropriate environment to ensure continued self-development. While individual effort is emphasized, career literature has shown a convergence between individual career planning and institutional career management processes. This involves an organized, formalized, planned effort to achieve a balance between an individual's career needs and the organization's workforce requirements. The intention of an employee to stay with an organization is highly dependent not only on the monetary benefit that the organization is offering but If he is involved in a high-profile project which is offering him more interesting work with more flexibility.

2.1 FACTORS AFFECTING INTENTION TO STAY IN PROJECT

One of the most important trends in modern organisations is that of temporary, project-based structures becoming the every-day work environment for an increasing amount of individuals. The underlying factors which causes employee retention and why employees are preferred to staying in the project can be broadly classified into two parts:-

2.1.1 Project Culture

According to Stare (2011), Project culture is the general attitude to projects within the business. Most projects do not operate in isolation; they have to operate within a business environment that should be complementary to the requirements of good project management. The culture affects strategic planning and implementation, project management, and everything else. Project

culture is an influential factor of successful project implementation in enterprises and is part of the overall organizational culture.

As said by Pinto (2010), there are four ways organizational culture that can affect project management.

⌡ First, it affects how departments are expected to interact and support each other in the pursuit of project goals.

⌡ Second, the culture influences the level of employee commitment to the goals of the project in the context of balancing them with other, potentially competing goals.

⌡ Third, the organisational culture influences project planning processes such as the way work is estimated or how resources are assigned to projects.

⌡ Finally, the culture affects how managers evaluate the performance of project teams and how they view projects' outcomes.

As per Stare (2011), the project organisational culture includes-top and line management supporting/attitude, monitoring, prioritization and project staffing, organizational policies, procedures, rules, formal and informal roles; support of departments in the pursuit of project goals, employee commitment to the project goals in the context of Project organizational culture. Further he also states about support of departments in the pursuit of project goals, employee commitment to the project goals in the context of balancing them with other, potentially competing goals, project planning(the way work is estimated or how resources are assigned to projects) performance of project teams (how managers evaluate it and how they view the outcomes of projects) and the "subculture" of the project team(effective communications, co-operation, trust and teamwork, willingness to share ideas and problems among team members), social activities of the team, calling team members by their first names or nicknames, level of formality within the team influence on efficient project execution.

The project culture becomes more challenging as it varies with the projects. Even if the gross factors remain same across all the projects, the project culture highly depends on the complexities associated with the project, the timelines of the tasks, the team members and their experiences and inter-personal respect.

2.1.2 Employee Project Satisfaction

Number of research has been conducted on Job satisfaction saying that "any combination of psychological, physiological, and environmental circumstances that causes a person to say, "I am satisfied with my job" (Hoppock ,1935). Ivancevich et al. (1997) state that job satisfaction is something due to which a worker feels that how well he/she is in an organization. Researchers link job satisfaction with many factors e.g. fairness of rewards, growth opportunities, participation in decision making, supervisory support and compensation etc.

Project Satisfaction goes deeper into the individual tasks that the employee executes and has an expectation from it. Project Satisfaction is dwelled through Career Growth and Development, Challenges, Technology and

Innovation, Recognition and Credibility that an employee seeks from a project in which he is involved. Depending on which type of project an employee is currently involved, the things that give him satisfaction will vary. Some projects would offer better career opportunity where overall satisfaction is typically linked with his status, power, or position. Some projects would offer challenging environment in terms of technology and innovation where the work itself is the factor that determines his satisfaction.

III. STRATEGIES FOR EMPLOYEE ENGAGAEMENT

With the equations of employee engagement moving down to micro level of projects instead of the brand name of the company, all the existing reckonings of people management have become outmoded. The HR guidelines till now have tried to address problems related with overall work culture of the company, long term growth plans, overlooking the issues arising from even smaller day to day projects.

This requires newer strategies to be included along with the traditional methodologies. The strategies should look into the aspects of projects and its attributes and formalized to answer the following requirements:-

⌡ Technical knowledge/ new learnings from the project

⌡ Enabling growth in management/technical ladder

⌡ Freedom to execute the project within the timeline

⌡ Work from home for balance work-life

⌡ Challenges of the projects and circumstances of the employee

⌡ Project meetings to cut off potential problems before they manifest themselves

⌡ Clear understanding of the assigned work

⌡ Proper infrastructure in terms of resources and tools /trainings

⌡ Recognition of the project and the individuals

⌡ Quality of the assigned work

Successfully using a strategy for engagement almost automatically utilizes affinity and affiliation. Organizations, whose employees strongly believe, firmly belong and creatively contribute to improvement efforts have an operational advantage that cannot be easily offset by any other competitive element. An employee seeks personal growth along with the company's success which can be achieved with strategies designed to suit both project execution and employee engagement.

IV. MOVING FROM EMPLOYEE PROJECT COMMITMENT TO PROJECT SUCCESS

An aligned vision of both employee and company leads to project success. The strengths and capabilities of all employees directed towards successful project completion gives advantage to both company and the individual. As investigated by Camilleri (2011), Employee work commitment is viewed as being a key prerequisite for the effective execution of projects, operational processes and the successful implementation of organizational change programmes. It has particular significance for the successful accomplishment of all types of projects. In other words, committed employees are loyal and devoted to the project team and organization they work for.

Commitment is generally viewed as the employees' emotional attachment and identification with the organization, and their strong desire to maintain membership with the organization. Research suggests that employee commitment has a favourable impact on job performance by lowering absenteeism, lateness and turnover. Hence, having committed employees assigned to a project team has potentially positive consequences for project and organizational performance. Intention is a psychological precursor to the actual behaviour act. Organizations usually tend to prefer to have stable employees, therefore, it is paramount importance to determine the variables that are involved in the intention to remain or leave with an organization. Many organizations are challenged with tasks of retaining their employees at the same time; the employers need to make sure employees have loyal and commitment organization. Dissatisfaction factors are significantly related to organizational stress and depression, productivity loss and employees intention to leave. Employee turnover is proven to have a general negative impact on organizational effectiveness and profitability.

Bredin (2006), says that the increasing ill-health in work life can be explained by the increased demands and responsibilities placed on employees and the lack of management and support systems to aid the employees in handling the projects. According to him, regardless of the organization size, the activities it undertakes, the business environment in which the organization operates, its success depends on the decision of its employees make and the behaviour in which they are doing.

As employees enjoy working in a project-based structure, it is important for project management practitioners to understand employee's expectations, his strength and weakness, behavior, attitude towards the project that will facilitate in efficient project execution and well-timed delivery. Furthermore, issues concerning relationship of employee with the project must be readdressed in this new corporate context design. Employees are the backbone for success and therefore, they need to be motivated and maintained in project.

For an employee to stay with the project, his personal values, career goals and plans for the future must counterpart with project culture and the demands of his immediate job (e.g., job knowledge, skills and abilities). This is also speculated that the better the complement, higher will be employee's possibility to feel professionally and personally tied to the project.

V. CONCLUSION

Therefore, if the above strategies are taken into account and employees be treated as one of their assets working at the projects most suited to them and the company, the projects will be delivered successfully even in dynamic environment. Employees are the pillar of any project success and therefore, they need to be inspired and preserved in a project at all cost to aid the project to be delivered within stipulated time frame and high quality.

Project Managers should reassure resource allocation, task individuality, and job redesign in such a way that it leads to employee engagement in the project. Project Managers should understand that the resources in the project are the liquid assets, who make a difference in terms of quality

and timely delivery of the project. This asset needs to be scrutinized with due caution, otherwise their project would terminate to happen. Employees should be given challenging work through which they can show their competency and interest.

The prerequisite for a successful project is to create a great project strategy based on careful evaluation of the employees involved in it. Then, develop a strategy statement that captures the strategy's essence in a way that makes sense to everyone in the project and leads to development of the project and the individual.

VI. REFERENCES:

[1] Bredin (2006), " Human Resource Management in Project-Based Organisations", LiU-Tryck, Linköping.

[2] Camilleri (2011), "Project Success: Critical Factors and Behaviours", Gower Publishing Company.

[3] Hoppock, R. (1935). Job Satisfaction. New York: Harper Brothers.

[4] Ivancevich J. Olelans M. and Matterson M (1997), Organizational Behavior and Management. Sydney: Irwin.
[5] Mian (2008), "Knowledge Activities and Learning in Project-based Industry: Relation to Organizational Culture", Communications of the IBIMA Volume 2.

[6] Packendorff, J. (2002) "The Temporary Society and its Enemies: Projects from an Individual Perspective". In: K. Sahlin-Andersson & A. Söderholm (eds.) Beyond Project Management: New Perspectives on the Temporary-Permanent Dilemma: pp. 39-58. Malmö: Liber.

[7] Pinto (2010), "Project Management: Achieving Competitive Advantage", Pearson Education, Inc.Prentice Hall, Second Edition.

[8] Price J. L. and Mueller C. W. (1981) A causal model for turnover for nurses. Academy of Management Journal 24 (3), 543–565.

[9] Stare (2011), "The impact of the organisational structure and project organisational culture on project performance in Slovenian Enterprises", June, pp. 1-22