International Journal of Engineering & Technology, 7 (3.35) (2018) 90-93

International Journal of Engineering & Technology

Website: www.sciencepubco.com/index.php/IJET

Research paper



Strategies of quantity surveying firms to reduce turnover intention

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Abstract

Quantity Surveyors are among the key players involved in a construction project. A Quantity Surveyor involves in the financial and contractual matters starting from the initiation stage until to the completion of handling a construction. Thus, a Quantity Surveyor is the key player who has the responsibility in handling financial, contract management and others. This study is concerned on the issue of job satisfaction and turnover intention among Quantity Surveyors. The objective of this research is to explore strategies of Quantity Surveying firms in Malaysia to increase job satisfaction and reduce turnover intention among their technical employees. The interview is the methods used to collect data for this study. The interview was conducted with five (5) technical employees and five (5) employees from Human Resources department of Quantity Surveying firms. The respondents are technical employees and employees from Human Resources department of any Quantity Surveying firms in Kuala Lumpur. The findings conclude that the items of strategy suggested to reduce turnover intention by increasing job satisfaction can be grouped according to the constructs of opportunities and rewards, nature of work, working relationship with immediate superior, organizational factors and social interaction.

Keywords: *Turnover Intention; Job Satisfaction; Strategies; Quantity Surveyor.*

1. Introduction

The issue of employee turnover is widely discussed in the literatures of the organizational behavior. According to Kuo (2011), employee turnover is a degree of individuals quitting the membership of an organization. Tanvir and Shahi (2012) explained that turnover among employees occurs when they decide to leave their jobs. It comes after an employee has a turnover intention which is referred to as having a feeling to leave an organization. According to Tett and Meyer (1993), turnover intention is the willingness of an employee to leave an organization. Nazim (2008) mentioned that turnover intention occurs when an employee has intention to quit from his or her current organization. It is also known as one's behavioral intention to quit from an organization.

Turnover intention leads to actual turnover. Several factors have been identified as the factors causing turnover intention. Martin (2010) listed the availability of promotion and career development, the prospect of higher pay, interpersonal conflicts with colleagues, the existence of poor human resources policies and personal reasons are the factors causing turnover intention. Nankervis et al. (2005) found that the reason of a turnover is because of dissatisfaction with the job itself. Most of the studies conducted found that job satisfaction is a factor for an employee to leave an organization. Sarminah (2006); Nazim (2008); Tanvir and Shahi (2012); Chatzoglou et al. (2011) have identified that job satisfaction affects the employees intention to leave an organization. According to Chatzoglou et al. (2011), job satisfaction is defined as a feeling of an employee towards his or her job. Besides, Tanvir and Shahi (2012) explained that, job satisfaction is an employee's emotion towards their job and how they evaluate their job. Puvada and Gudivada (2012) on the other hand referred job satisfaction as a set of emotional feelings of an employee about the work and organization. Habib et al. (2010) described job satisfaction as a positive feeling based on an individual's job and experiences. In other words, job satisfaction describes an individual feeling towards their jobs.

Quantity Surveyors are among the key players involved in a construction project. Rabie and Riad (2011) mentioned that a Quantity Surveyor has an important role in the construction process. This study is concerned on the issue of job satisfaction and turnover intention among Quantity Surveyors.

2. Objective

The objectives of this research is to explore the strategies of Quantity Surveying firms in Malaysia order to increase job satisfaction and reduce turnover intention among their technical employees.

3. Literature review

Nazim (2008) mentioned that, employee turnover is defined to leave an organization voluntarily. Stone (2008) has defined turnover as the process of employees quitting from their current jobs and it requires the replacement for new employees. Martin (2010) stated that turnover is describing the percentage of employees leaving an organization. Mathis and Jackson (2002) also described that turnover happens when employees leave an organization. According to Nankervis et al. (2005), the term turnover involves

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the movement of human resources in an organization. It concludes that turnover occurs when an employee leaves an organization voluntarily. Besides, turnover requires an organization to do the replacement for a new employee.

Employee turnover happens when an employee has intention to leave the current organization. The intention of leaving the organization shows that the employee has found other organization. According to Glissmeyer et al. (2008), turnover intention refers to the attitude that is affecting an individual's feeling to leave an organization. Nazim (2008) defined turnover intention as an employee who has intention to leave an organization. According to Muhammad and Waseef (2012), turnover is a volunteer intention of an employee to quit from an organization whereas Aydogdu and Asikgil (2011) defined turnover intention as one's behavioral attitude to withdraw from an organization. According to Muhammad Masroor and Jamilha Fakir (2010), turnover intention happens when the employees plan to quit from their current job.

From the above literature review, turnover happens when employees leave their organization. Turnover intention is therefore describes internal feeling of employees to quit the present job and looking forward to find another job in the future.

Job satisfaction is identified as one of the factors that affect turnover intention. Wolf (1970) agreed that, job satisfaction gives impact on the behavioural intention of quitting a job. Wolf (1970) also found that dissatisfaction with a job may cause employees to search for other alternatives. When employees do not feel satisfied with their job, they might have the intention to quit causing them to find jobs in other organizations.

Having a greater job satisfaction reduces the intention to leave an organization. According to Mbah and Ikemefuna (2012), job satisfaction determines an employee to stay or leave an organization. Employees who have a high level of job satisfaction will have a positive attitude towards their work. It means that the employees who are satisfied with their jobs will stay longer and not quit. Therefore, an increase in job satisfaction reduces employees turnover. Nazim (2008) also found that, dissatisfaction with the job on the salary increases the rate of turnover intention.

Many studies have been conducted in different backgrounds in order to identify the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention. From the construction industry, Kuo (2011) found that job satisfaction significantly has an impact on the construction engineers' turnover intentions on the promotion and pay. According to Mbah and Ikemefuna (2012), job satisfaction is negatively related to turnover intention on the nature of the job, supervision and pay. It means that, the higher satisfaction with the nature of the work the lower in chances the employees to choose turnover intention. In other words, if an employee feels satisfied then he or she will stay longer in an organization. Chatzoglou et al. (2011) claimed that, there is a significant negative relation between job satisfaction and turnover on the collaboration with colleagues, work itself, promotion, quality supervision and salary. A high level of job satisfaction reduces the rate of employees leaving an organization. When the employees feel satisfied, it will create positive feelings to be loyal to their organization. Therefore, they will stay longer in their organization.

All organizations must be concerned of their employees in order to make them work happily (Romle et al., 2015). This is important to avoid the issue of having intention to leave the organization. Therefore, all organizations need to find the best way to retain their employees. However, there are several problems that could obstruct in retaining them. This section will discuss on the strategies that can be used to reduce turnover intention among the employees.

Hee and Ling (2011) did a study on strategy to reduce turnover of Quantity Surveyors found that give attention to pay, enrich Quantity Surveyor's job and improving the job environment can be used to reduce employee turnover. Hee and Ling (2011) listed several ways on the strategy of giving attention to pay. The strategies are reviews the salary periodically based on the employee's work and his or her performance, bonuses should be given based on employee's performance and not based on seniority. In relation to the strategy of improving job environment, Hee and Ling (2011) stated by providing training to the Quantity Surveyors would enable them to develop new skills. Other than that, the organization should design efficient office layouts, use low partitions, provide meeting rooms and recreational area which will increase the level of motivation and job satisfaction thus reducing turnover intention. Hee and ling (2011) also found that the organization should give regular feedback on the employee's performances. The feedback should highlight several areas for instance, focusing on what has been done correctly, areas for employees should continue doing, and areas for improvement.

Meanwhile, the other studies from various industry found that provide proper motivation or training, give rewards, quality supervision, promotion and provide incentive programs are useful to reduce turnover intention. The previous studies are Nazim (2008), Rohani et al. (2012), Sarminah (2006), Jin et al. (2015), Johanim et al. (2012), Benjamin et al. (2010), Tanvir and Shahi (2012), Chatzoglou et al. (2011).

4. Methodology

Semi-structured interview is the method used to collect data for this study. According to Berg (2009) interview is referred simply as conservation with a purpose to gather information. Berg (2009) mentioned that, there are several types of interviews which include structured, unstructured and semi- structured interview. For this research, semi- structured interview is employed to obtain respondents' view on job satisfaction, relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention and suggestions on strategies to reduce turnover intention in an organization. The questions are prepared earlier before having an interview session take place. According to Berg (2009), the questions asked for semi - structured interview may be reordered during interview session.

The interview was conducted with five (5) technical employees and five (5) employees from Human Resources department of Quantity Surveying firms. The respondents are technical employees and employees from Human Resources department of any Quantity Surveying firms in Kuala Lumpur.

The researcher used content analysis as a technique of analyzing the semi structured interview. According to Berg (2009), in content analysis, the researcher examines artifacts of social communication based on written documents or transcription of recorded verbal communications during conducting the interview session. Babbie (2004) mentioned that content analysis is the study of recording human communications.

5. Results and discussion

5.1. Opportunities and rewards

Based on the interviews conducted, all of the technical employee from five (5) Quantity Surveying firms suggested that review salary based on employee's performance. The technical employee (organization A) suggested reviewing the salary based on the performance of employees. The respondent opined that, reviewing the salary based on performance increases the determination of an employee to perform well in an organization. The respondent suggested that salary paid must be equivalent with the volume of tasks assigned. For example, the respondent was assigned with two different projects which are housing and school. According to her, all the works related to the projects starting from pre contact until post contract are needed to be done by her. She felt that the salary paid to her is not sufficient enough compared to the amount of tasks assigned. Due to that, she is looking for another organization that can offer better salary.

5.2. Nature of work

All the interviewees suggested that provide a clear job description to employees in order to reduce turnover intention under the construct of nature of work.
Both of technical and Human Resources employee from organization B and C suggested introducing less repetitive task arrangement to make jobs more interesting.
Working Relationship with Immediate Superior
Both of technical and Human Resources employee from organization A, C and E suggested that a superior should give strong support to employees on work related matters and maintain good communication with employees to create close working relationship.

5.3. Organizational factors

From the interviews, both of technical and Human Resources employee of organization A, B, C and E have suggested the same strategy which is provide sufficient facilities to employees.

5.4. Social interaction

From the interviews conducted, all the technical and Human Resources employee of five (5) organizations suggested to organize company trips and organize social activities to reduce turnover intention. The technical employee of organization D said that these activities may strengthen the relationship between colleagues and as an appreciation for their effort in accomplishing the goals of the organization. She added that, the company trips are annual activities in her organization.

5.5. Motivation strategies

The technical employees of organization C and E suggested that an organization should provide counselling session to motivate employees. One of them said that the counselling session is useful as employees can share their work related problems. For instance, the employees might suffer from stress due to excessive workload. The Human Resources employees of organization B, C and E have the same idea to reduce turnover intention which is provide training programs for employees' skills and enhancement. One of them highlighted the benefit for having training programs. The employees will be motivated when they are given chances to learn new skills. She added that there was one technical employee quit because she not able to perform the tasks due to the non-availability of training session for her in the early employment.

5.6. Quality supervision

From the interviews conducted, the technical and Human Resources employees of organization A and B suggested that give regular feedback to employees on their performance can be used to reduce turnover intention. The technical employees of organization B, D and Human Resources employees of organization C and E suggested to have a discussion on work- related matters with employees regularly can be used to reduce turnover intention.
The findings indicated that from the five (5) organizations, there are five items of strategy to reduce turnover intention in an organization as suggested by all interviewees. The items are conduct performance based salary reviews, give bonus based on employee's performance, provide a clear job description to employees, organize company trips and team building programs.
The findings also indicated that more than half of the interviewees of the five (5) organizations suggested other items of strategy to reduce turnover intention. The items are provide various benefit packages to employees, introduce less repetitive task arrangement to make jobs more interesting, strong support from superior to employees on work-related matters, maintain good communication with employees to create close working relationship, provide sufficient facilities to employees, provide sufficient working space to employees, organize social activities such as family day, games, and others.
The findings that provide various benefit packages to employees on the construct of opportunities and rewards is consistent with the findings of other studies conducted by Tanvir and Shahi (2012), Nazim (2008) and Johanim et al. (2012).
The findings that provide sufficient working space on the construct of organizational factors is similar with the findings on the research conducted by Hee and Ling (2011).
The findings that conduct performance based salary review on the construct of opportunities and rewards is similar with the findings on the research of other studies conducted by Hee and Ling (2011) and Nazim (2008).
The findings that give bonus based on employee's performance on the construct of opportunities and rewards also consistent to the findings of other study conducted by Hee and Ling (2011).
The findings that provide sufficient facilities to employees on the construct of organizational factors also consistent with the findings of other study conducted by Hee and Ling (2011).
The findings that strong support from superior to employees on works related matters on the construct of working relationship with immediate superior is consistent with the findings of other study conducted by Cheng and Wei (2008).
The findings that provide clear job description about the works to employees on the construct of nature of work is consistent with the findings of other study conducted by Rohani et al. (2012).
The findings that maintain good communication with employees to create close relationship on the construct of working relationship with immediate superior is consistent with the findings of other study conducted by Cheng and Wei (2008).
The findings that organize company trips on the construct of social interaction is similar with the findings of other study conducted by Benjamin et al. (2010).

6. Conclusion

The items of strategy suggested to reduce turnover intention by increasing job satisfaction can be grouped according to the constructs are opportunities and rewards, nature of work, working relationship with immediate superior, organizational factors and social interaction.

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