



Designing A Talent Management Strategy to Enhance Talent Retention for High Performers in Non-Government Organization: A Case Study of Save the Children Organization, Myanmar

Naw Zar Eh Wah¹ and Maria Socorro (Marrisa) Fernando²

¹ Graduate School of Business, Assumption University, Bangkok, Thailand, nawzarehwah@gmail.com

² Corresponding author, mariafernando@au.edu

ABSTRACT

This study examined the current situation and the relationship between four independent variables of talent management; succession planning, supervisory support, employee reward and job training, and dependent variable; talent retention in Save the Children Organization, Myanmar. The study was mixed- methodology research that used structured questionnaires and interviews to collect data from only high performers in the organization. Fifty-two (52) high performers responded to the questionnaire and 6 high performers participated in focus group discussion. The results of hypothesis testing indicated that among four independent factors, job training and succession planning have a significance influence on talent retention while the other two factors have not significantly influenced. In addition, based on the perceptions of high performers, internal communication is one of the factors which can promote high performing talents' retention in the organization. The overall result highlights that participants understand the current situation and recognize the need to develop talent management. Therefore, recommendations are provided based on high performers' feedback and suggestions. In conclusion, a talent management strategy was designed to enhance talent retention based on the research findings in Save the Children. The strategy can be applied to other organizations as an intervention tool to highlight some initial impact and bring about positive change in the organization, especially in the area of human resource management and development. In this study, four factors of talent management were explored through only high performers at head office in Save the Children Organization. Therefore, further studies are recommended to apply other factors that effect talent retention through different target groups.

Keywords: Talent Management, Talent Retention, High Performers, Organization Assessment, Strategy Design

1. Introduction

In today's business, one of the primary concerns of many organizations is employee retention. According to Frank and Taylor (2004), a talent shortage has emerged in the workplace since the last decade. Due to the challenges of finding talented workers, organization leaders struggle to retain knowledgeable workers and replace the 70 million Baby Boomers who will be retiring from the workforce. (as cited in Oladopo, 2014). Moreover, McKinsey's research reveals that 75 percent of corporate officers were concerned about talent shortages and



Deloitte reports that retaining the best talent is a top priority for 87 percent of surveyed HR directors. (Ashton and Morton, 2005). Therefore, retaining talent has always been, and will continue to be, essential for organizations to survive and thrive in every organization all around the world.

As Myanmar is a developing country, it needs more support from NGOs to assist county development. Today, there are approximately more than 600 civil society organizations and 59 international non-government organizations working in the country. In Myanmar, non-government organizations are facing the challenges of retaining their high performers for a long time due to the working nature of non-government organizations and the skill-shortage of talented employees in the external labor market. According to a 2014 business survey conducted with over 3000 firms in Myanmar, nearly 60 percent of respondents perceive skill shortages as one of the major problems in managing the business. (Masato & Molnar as cited in Kohlhaas, 2015). In the context of the non-profit sector, where projects need to be proceeded by the funding from external donors, project length, and where employees are working on a humanitarian and voluntarily minded, retaining talent pool becomes one of the main challenges for non-government organizations. Therefore, understanding the problem of employee retention and putting in place influence factors of talent management would benefit the NGOs in coming up with employee retention strategies for effective and efficient human resource management.

This research was carried in Save the Children Organization in Myanmar which is helping children to access essential services like healthcare and education, it works to improve the lives of children, helping them to attain the right to survival, protection, development, and participation. Currently, there are around 34 offices and 8 main major areas are operating with around 1000 employees in Myanmar and around 200 employees are working in head office, Yangon. Developing future leaders and implementing the nationalization process is one of the long-term objectives of the organization. Therefore, this study was applied in the organization in order to retain talented people to support the organization's objective. When many NGOs are operating in Myanmar, it is very competitive in the labor market. Every organization is trying to attract talented people due to scare resources of skilled employees. Moreover, most of the projects of NGOs in Myanmar are leading by international staff who have been paid more than national staff. Due to the limited resource of funding, national leaders are required to replace international staff and lead projects. In this case, talent development and management paly as an important role for the organization sustainability in order to fill the talent gap. (Sr. HR Coordinator (SCI), personal communication, August, 2019)

Talent management is the process of attracting, developing and retaining talent and strategies toward managing talent try to ensure that worthy, high-performing, committed people are retained in the organization. Effective talent management can also lead not only to increase productivity, efficiency, and flexibility of the organization but also a strong commitment of employees to the organization. (William, 2015)

For this study, the research will assess the four factors of talent management; succession planning, supervisory support, employee reward, and job training that affect talent retention. Krauss (2007) stated that

succession planning is effective for not only employee retention but also employee engagement that increases the organization's overall profitability. Effective leadership integrated with talent management positively influenced the organizational outcome of employee satisfaction, inclusion, ethics, and retention (Doh et al., as cited in Harris, 2018) The study of Terera & Ngirande (2014) proved that the more employee is rewarded, the more likely they are to remain in the same organization. The most specific benefit of training and development is that it is best seen as an incentive to enhance employee retention, especially to keep those who have the ambition to seek career advancement in their work (Chen, 2014).

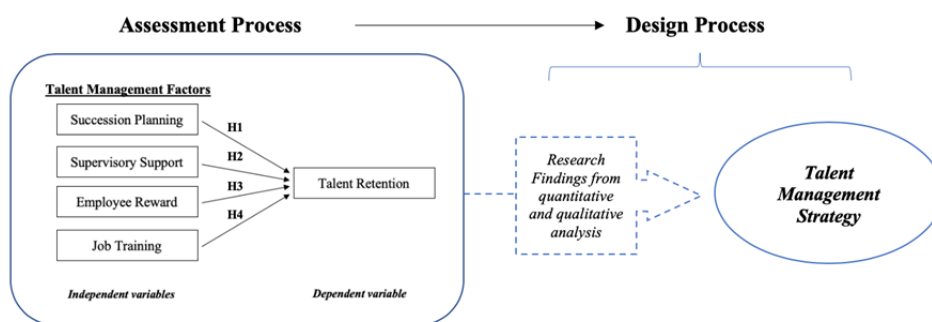


Figure 1 The Conceptual Framework (Developed for this research by the researcher, 2020)

Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework of this research study. The conceptual framework of this study is adopted from three theoretical frameworks Ndinya et al. (2017), Tetteh (2015), and Hassan et al. (2013). This research study is combined with two processes; assessment and design process. The researcher approach begins with “assessment” and then “design” talent management strategy. In the assessment process, the current situation, the influence of the talent management factors, and perceptions of high performers on talent retention were assessed. In the design process, research findings from quantitative and qualitative were used to design a talent management strategy that enhances talent retention in Save the Children organization.

The Hypotheses in this research shown in table 1.

Table 1 Defined Hypothesis

H	Hypotheses
H1o, H2o, H3o, H4o	Succession planning (H1o), supervisory support (H2o), employee reward (H3o) and job training (H4o) has no significant influence on talent retention in Save the Children organization.
H1a, H2a, H3a, H4a	Succession planning (H1a), supervisory support (H2a), employee reward (H3a) and job training (H4a) has a significant influence on talent retention in Save the Children organization.



2. Objectives of the study

1. To assess the current situation, the most influential factors and high performers' perceptions of talent management that effect talent retention in Save the Children organization.
2. To design a talent management strategy that enhances talent retention based on the research findings from quantitative and qualitative.

3. Materials and methods

Research Methodology

In this study, a mixed-method approach was used; quantitative and qualitative methods complement each other and allow for a more complete analysis of the research problem. In a quantitative approach, the researcher tests the theories about reality, looks for cause and effect, and uses quantitative measures to gather data to test the hypotheses. The goal of quantitative research is to describe the trends or explain the relationships between the dependent and independent variables. In a qualitative approach, the researcher tests reality from a constructive position, which allows for multiple meanings of individual experiences. It seeks to understand the participant's experiences with the central phenomenon. (Migiro and Magangi, 2010) In this research, a quantitative approach was conducted first to know "the most effective factor of talent management to talent retention" then a qualitative approach was conducted to understand in-depth of "how to make better talent retention plan through participants' experiences and perceptions".

In the quantitative approach, the Likert scale was used with a range mentioning from 1 as "Strongly Disagree" to 5 as "Strongly Agree" to test the hypotheses. In the qualitative approach, "Appreciative Inquiry" framework was used to seek participants' experiences and perceptions. Google survey link was used to collect quantitative data and focus-group interview was used to collect qualitative data. The questionnaire and interview questions were translated into the local language of Myanmar; it's aim was that every respondent understands each question clearly.

Research Sample – (Target group)

Based on the research objectives of the study, only high performers in head office of the organization were selected to participate in this research regardless of gender, position, and marital status. Due to the consideration of the nationalization program which is one of the objectives of talent retention, only Myanmar citizens were designated to participate in this research. The HR leader from the learning and development team was requested to choose the high performers as the following three criteria and only 60 employees were selected out of around 200 employees to participate in quantitative research by reviewing performance management assessment, star performers list and leaders' recommendation of the organization. Theoretically, at least 52 respondents are required for representing 60 high performers with 95% confidence level. (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). Among 52



participants, 6 high performers were selected to join a focus group interview based on different positions, service years, gender, and department.

- 1) Employee who perform their work more than the targeted objective consistently for more than a year.
- 2) Employee who keep learning continuously and show a good attitude in the workplace.
- 3) Employee who organization cannot afford to lose or hardest to replace and most critical to the success of an organization's strategy.

Data Analysis

In order to analyze the quantitative data, Statistic Package for Social Science (SPSS) software was used by using Cronbach's Alpha, descriptive analysis, and inferential analysis. Descriptive analysis was used to analyze frequency and percentage of demographic data and to find Mean and Standard deviation for each variable. In inferential analysis, Pearson Correlation was used in order to see the relationship between independent variables and dependent variable, Multiple Linear Regression was used aims to determine the influence significant variables and to test the significant hypothesis that effect on dependent variable, and Cronbach's Alpha was used aims to test the reliability scores from pilot test.

Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) from three specialists was used to test for clarification and understanding of questions. To analyze qualitative data, Inter Coding Analysis from interview was used to find out the common theme by 3 coders for making a recommendation.

The following table shows the measurement of each variable in this research.

Table 2 Measurement scale of each variable

Variables	Measurement
Succession Planning	Internal future career opportunities for high performers
Supervisor Support	Abilities and relationship of leadership
Employee Reward	Employee satisfaction of receiving rewards based on performance
Job Training	The effectiveness of training for development
Talent Retention	The engagement level of employee

Research ethical consideration

The necessary steps were applied to meet ethical standard concerns in the interview process. The participants were notified in advance of the purpose of the study, interview questions and asked for their consent. The participants were assured their information would be kept confidential. To make the interviewees feel safe and



comfortable, the interviews were conducted at Save the Children’s head office, Yangon. The interviews were conducted according to interview guidelines such as introduction, a brief explanation about research purpose and confidentiality, and appreciation for their participation.

4. Results and Discussion

The results of the study are discussed based on the findings from the survey questionnaire and the interviews. The results are utilized to propose a talent management strategy to enhance talent retention of the organization. The following results are presented according to the research objectives.

Reliability Test by using Cronbach’s Alpha Results

For Cronbach’s Alpha test, 30 employees form organization who were not actual respondents were participated in this pilot testing. According to the previous study of Tavakol and Dennick (2011), the acceptable value of alpha is ranging from 0.7 to 0.95. A maximum alpha value of 0.90 has been recommended. The overall result from Cronbach’s Alpha test shown that 0.953 as follow. According to the result, all are suggesting that every questions of each item in questionnaire are reliable.

Table 3 Cronbach Alpha Results on Pilot Testing

Variables	No. item	Cronbach’s Alpha	Reliability
Succession Planning	6	0.868	Reliable
Supervisor Support	7	0.902	Reliable
Employee Reward	6	0.768	Reliable
Job Training	6	0.872	Reliable
Employee Retention	4	0.735	Reliable
Overall Result	29	0.953	Reliable

Current Situation of Talent Management in Save the Children Organization

Table 4 Summary result of Descriptive analysis of each variable

Variable	Number of respondents	Average Mean	Std. Deviation	Likert Scale interpretation
Talent Retention (TR)	52	3.87	0.823	<i>Between neutral to agree</i>
Succession Planning (SP)	52	3.47	0.802	<i>Between neutral to agree</i>
Supervisory Support (SS)	52	3.53	0.894	<i>Between neutral to agree</i>
Employee Reward (ER)	52	3.12	0.910	<i>Between neutral to agree</i>
Job Training (JT)	52	3.45	0.820	<i>Between neutral to agree</i>



According to the result of descriptive analysis, the mean value of each variable is between neutral to agree which means the satisfaction level of high performers are moderate level in talent management factors of organization to retain them and there is space for further improvement. Therefore, focus group interview was conducted to know the current situation of talent management; things they like and things they want the organization to develop in order to design a better retention plan in Save the Children organization. “Discovery questions” of appreciative inquiry were asked and six high performers were participated and discussed their perceptions. The interview transcripts analyzed by three coders resulted in the following themes.

Table 5 Conclusion from the quantitative and qualitative result of the current situation

Independent variable	Highest Mean (Quantitative)	What they like (Qualitative)	What they want to develop (Qualitative)
Succession Planning (SP)	I have the opportunity for future development within my current job. (Mean = 3.83, S.D.= 0.706)	Have career opportunity (internal promotion, internal recruitment, new project)	Need more career opportunities to get international experiences-secondment.
Supervisor Support (SS)	My supervisor always supports me and is willing to assist me anytime I seek guidance. (Mean = 3.87, S.D. = 0.929) My supervisor and I have open communication to discuss any challenges that I have. (Mean = 3.87, S.D.= 0.841)	Receive leadership support (coaching, delegation, trust- building, appreciation, encouragement, empowerment)	Need more leadership support to identified talent, to be role model, to guide goal direction.
Employee Reward (ER)	My work provides flexible working hours, working place, and schedule arrangement options when my personal situation demands change. (Mean = 3.75, S.D.= 0.883)	Get employee reward (non-financial reward: flexible working hour)	Need to provide appropriate financial reward; salary based on workload and performance.
Job Training (JT)	In my organization, there are training and development opportunities for employees to continuously improve their skills.	Have learning and development opportunities (training, job rotation, learning from changes, new challenges,	Need more learning and development opportunities to learn from international offices and to exchange learning program.



Independent variable	Highest Mean (Quantitative)	What they like (Qualitative)	What they want to develop (Qualitative)
	(Mean = 3.79, S.D.= 0.848)	opportunity to express abilities)	
Bonus fact		Organization culture (working environment, helping each other, freedom to speak up, flexibility)	

Table 5 shows the quantitative results from the highest mean value and qualitative results statement from the individual interviews on each variable. The left side explains (what high performers like) mentioned the reason why high performers are satisfied with this current situation and the right side explains (what high performers want to improve) mentioned the areas that they would like the organization to develop from the current situation.

In summary, the current situation of talent management in Save the Children organization is well implemented when measuring with four independent variables succession planning, supervisory support, employee reward, and job training. At the same time, there is some space for further improvement. Therefore, if Save the Children organization keeps practicing the current practices and improves some areas which are suggested by high performers, it will be an effective talent management strategy that enhances talent retention.

Factors Influencing of Talent Management on Talent Retention in Save the Children Organization

Multiple Linear Regression (MLR) Analysis

Table 6 Summary result of coefficients and R square

Variable	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	Sig. (P value)	VIF	Hypothesis Result
Succession Planning (SP)	.465	.003	2.521	0.003<0.05 “significant influence”
Supervisory Support (SS)	-.070	.655	2.730	0.655>0.05 “no significant influence”
Employee Reward (ER)	-.050	.700	1.854	0.700>0.05 “no significant influence”
Job Training (JT)	.472	.001	1.881	0.001<0.05 “significant influence”
R Square = .577		Adjusted R Square = .541		Std. Error of the Estimate = .44431

Remark: Based on the level of p-value <0.05



The result in table 6 shows adjusted R square (R^2) at 0.541, which can be interpreted that independent variables can explain 54% of talent retention and in part of 46% can be explained by other factors. The P-values of succession planning and job training are less than 0.05 except supervisory support and employee reward, which confirm that the hypotheses, namely H1a and H4a reject H1o and H4o whereas H2a and H3a failed to rejected H2o and H3o. In summary, succession planning and job training have a significant influence on talent retention because the level of significant values is less than 0.05. The other variables that have not significant influence on talent retention are supervisor support and employee reward due to the P-value which is more than > 0.05 .

Table 7 Summary of MLR results of significant influence factors on Talent Retention

Independent Variables	Beta	P-Value	Results
1. Job Training (JT)	0.437	0.001	Job Training is the <i>highest effects</i> on talent retention
2. Succession Planning (SP)	0.406	0.001	Succession Planning is <i>the second effects</i> on talent retention

Table 7 shows the talent management factors that effects talent retention in Save the Children organization. According to the result, job training is the highest effects on talent retention which has the beta at 0.437 and P-value at 0.001. Succession planning is the second effect on talent retention which has the beta at 0.406 and P-value at 0.001.

Perceptions of High Performers on Talent Retention in Save the Children Organization

Dream question of appreciative inquiry was asked to know the perceptions of high performers.



Describe your (3) concrete wishes for the future of your organization that should include or improve to retain its high performers for a long period of time?

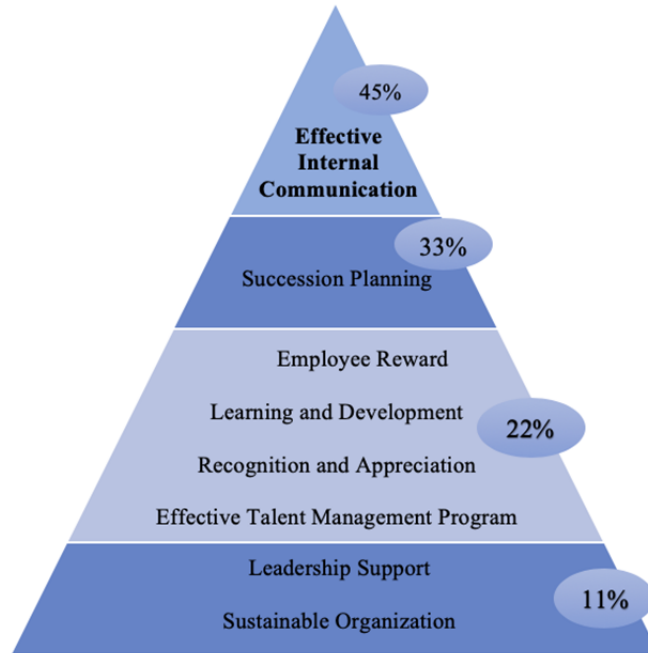


Figure 2 Calculating the percentage of each wish from lowest to highest

Source: Developed by researcher, 2020

This diagram shows the results from qualitative (individual interview answer) for future concrete wishes of what employees' perception of talent management and talent retention in the future. According to this chart, there are 8 wishes from high performers which can contribute an effective talent management strategy that enhances talent retention in Save the Children. Among these 8 wishes, effective internal communication is the most wishes, and succession planning is the second most wishes by high performers in order to develop effective talent retention in Save the Children organization.

Major Findings and Recommendations for A Talent Management Strategy to Enhance Talent Retention

The following three major findings can be concluded according to the data analysis results of quantitative and qualitative.

- 1) Job training is the highest effect on talent retention which has the beta at 0.437 and P-value at 0.001.
- 2) Succession planning is the second effect on talent retention which has the beta at 0.406 and P-value at 0.001.
- 3) Effective internal communication is the most wish to improve effective retention in Save the Children organization.

According to the three major findings, the action plans that need to be developed are provided in the recommendation part. To provide effective recommendations, "design question" of appreciative inquiry was asked



to focus group. Therefore, the recommendation part is provided by combining the suggestions of the researcher and the feedbacks from high performers in Save the Children as follow;

Table 8 Summary of Major Findings and Recommendations

Major Research Finding	Areas to Develop		Recommendations	Expected Outcomes
	Quantitative Finding (Lowest mean)	Qualitative Finding		
1. Job Training is the highest significance influence factor on talent retention	Fewer opportunities for job rotation or internship to assist advance careers	Organization needs to provide more learning opportunities	<u>Focus on various learning style</u> The organization is recommended to provide more international learning opportunities to high performers by connecting with Save the Children offices from other countries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop talent pool effectively • Promote employee motivation
2. Succession Planning is the second significance influence factor on talent retention	Less strict consideration of succession planning for top-level management.	Organization needs to offer more career opportunities	<u>Emphasize on Poly-centric approach (deploy talented individual to key positions)</u> The organization is recommended to identify the critical position and internal talent pool and align high performers to the critical position by developing, engaging, and supporting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring talented individuals to key positions. • Nature future leaders



Major Research Finding	Areas to Develop		Recommendations	Expected Outcomes
	Quantitative Finding (Lowest mean)	Qualitative Finding		
3. Effective Internal Communication is the most wishes to improve effective retention in Save the Children	Organization needs to have internal good communication in goal direction and reduce rumors that drive low motivation, engagement, and high turnover.		<u>Focus on internal change communication</u> The organization is recommended to form a strategic communication team and develop a better communication plan by reviewing employee feedback based on current communication plan assessment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective internal communication which reduce rumors and promote engagement

6. Conclusion

This research was conducted to address the main problem of managing high performers for retention in Save the Children organization, Myanmar. The main expectation of this study highlights the correlation between four factors of talent management; succession planning, supervisory support, employee reward, and job training and talent retention in Save the Children organization. Mix-method of the research instrument was used in this research. Totally, 52 high performers participated in the survey and 6 high performers participated in the focus-group interview.

The study shows that in the current situation, talent management is well implemented but still needs to be developed in some areas. For the relationship between independent variables and dependent variable, succession planning and job training has significant influences on talent retention except for supervisory support and employee reward. Among them, job training has the highest influence on talent retention. Moreover, High performers perceived that internal communication is one of the important factors to retain them in Save the Children organization.

The last but not least, appropriate OD intervention is developed that can improve talent retention in terms of talent management variables to change for the better improvement process. Based on the research findings, the recommendation of ODI is developed by using “organization as an open system” framework to design a talent management strategy that enhances talent retention in Save the Children as follow,

Designing talent management strategy in Save the Children Organization by using the model of “Organization as An Open System”

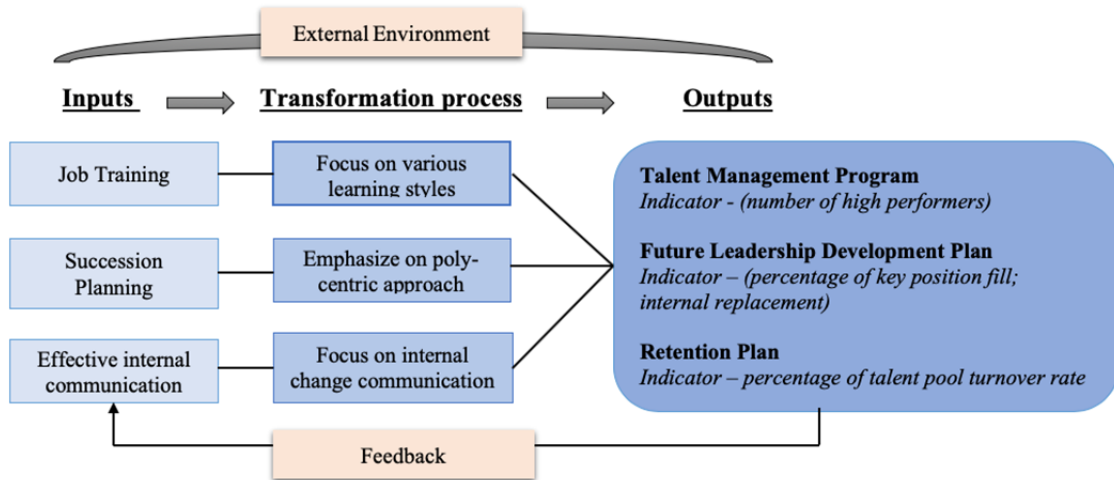


Figure 3 Designing Talent Management Strategy that Enhances Talent Retention in Save the Children Organization by Using the Model of “Organization as an Open System”

Source: Developed by the researcher, 2020

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