Relationship between Types of Benefit (leave, loan and retirement plan) and Employees' Retention.

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to determine relationship between the types of benefit (leave, loan and retirement plan) and employees' retention. A total of 70 respondents are selected from one public university in East Malaysia and become the respondent for this study. Questionnaire method was used for data collection. Parametric test was conducted for checking the goodness of the data. The hypotheses test showed that there was a positive relationship between leave, loan and retirement plan with employees' retention. In addition, leave was the dominant types of benefit in retaining the employees among the public university employees. The implication of this research indicates that the combination of non-monetary and monetary types of benefit do affect the employees' retention. In future study, researcher should expand the types of benefit such as allowances, insurances which aimed to retain the employees.

Keywords: benefit, employees retention, leave, loan, retirement plan

Introduction

Human resource management (HRM) has been recognised as an important part of running any organisation. One critical area in HRM is salary and benefit management. Employee benefits are necessary to be concerned as it can be a tool to lure and retain capable, focused and productive employees in the organization. According to Milkovich and Newman (2008), employee benefits are that part of the total compensation package, other than pay for the time worked, provided by the employers payments to employees in whole or in part. Employee benefits can be divided into monetary and non-monetary compensation. Monetary compensation is any benefit that involves tangible value while non monetary compensation includes career and social rewards such as job security, flexible hours, and opportunity for growth, praise and recognition, task enjoyment, and friendships, which does not involve the tangible value. Benefits are meant to provide security to employees.

Background

Normally, benefits offered to the employees can be classified into leave, insurance, loans, retirement and termination, employee services and other benefits (How, 2001). Besides, employee benefits typically include retirement plans, health life insurance, life insurance, disability insurance, vacation, employee stock ownership plans and others. These benefits help to attract and retain capable, focused and productive and better qualified employees in the organization. Also, benefits provide high risk coverage at low costs easing the company's financial burden. For employees, they will have the peace of mind which will lead to better productivity as their needs and that of their families are covered should they be involved in any mishap.

On the other hand, employees' retention is the action of keeping the employees rather than losing them. It refers to policies and practices companies use to prevent valuable and productive employees from leaving their jobs. The companies have to spend a great deal of money and time to recruit and train the employees. Also, it is a great cost of replacing staff members lost through turnover. Generally, the monetary cost of replacing one employee is estimated to range from 50% to 200% of the annual salary for the position, and may even be higher in very specialized fields (Kaupla, 2008). In addition, poor employee retention may affect the workplace productivity, job satisfaction, and overall morale. The types of benefits companies offer can have a significant impact on their ability to recruit and retain qualified employees. Benefits contribute to attracting, retaining, and motivating employees.

Statement of the problem

Theoretically, fringe benefits constitute an important part of the "total income" of every company employee. Many companies are seeking ways of increasing company loyalty and of providing competitive advantage to attract and retain the employees. Employee benefit packages increase worker commitment to the organization and reduce the tendency to think about other job opportunities. Most managers believe that money is the prime retention factor and many employees cite better pay or higher compensation for leaving one employer for another. Compensation is heavily influence recruitment, turnover and employees' productivity. According to Milkovich and Newman (2008), employee benefits are widely claimed to help in the retention of workers. Benefits might help to attract and retain the employees if there were well-designed employee benefits, especially in a competitive labor market (Losey, 1998).

Empirically, research findings proposed that there are very strong correlations between compensation, benefits plans and employee commitment ("State of Employee Satisfaction", 2004). According to Milkovich and Newman (2008) a recent survey proposes that 89% of executives think employee benefits are extremely important factors to attract and retain good employees. Besides that, they also stated that some researchers support this common assumption that good benefits increase retention.

Today, pay and benefits are very important to both new applicants and existing employees. It becomes a major reason that most people seek employment. It is not only provides a means of sustenance and allows people to satisfy their materialistic and recreational needs, but also serves their ego or self-esteem needs. Therefore, if a firm's compensation system is inadequate, top

applicants may reject that company's employment offers, and current employees may choose to leave the organization.

Practically, there were only 32% of workers are satisfied with their benefits today. This is down from 83% in the early 1980s (Milkovich and Newman, 2008). Standard benefits plan always fail to be meaningful to the employees who have varying ages, needs and lifestyles. Young employees who are just starting out are likely to have direct pay (e.g., for a house purchase) than a generous pension program while older workers may desire the reverse. Unionized workers may prefer a uniform benefits package, while single parents, older workers, or workers with disabilities may place heavy emphasis on flexible work schedules. Therefore, it is important to have well-designed employee benefits in order to retain more capable and productive employees in the organization.

Today, employee loyalty needs to be earned, rather than assumed and must be specific, rather than general. Employees are looking at their employment as a means of achieving personal goals rather than simply being the "good corporate soldier" of the past. The companies need to express and act on a commitment to develop employees' career objectives by introducing initiatives that make employees believe that their current job is the best path to achieving their career goals. So, what type of benefits that should provide to earn the employees' loyalty as to increase employees' retention in the organization?

Research objectives and hypotheses

In general, this study is to determine the relationship between types of benefits (leave, loan and retirement plan) and employees' retention. Specifically, the objectives of this study are:

- 1. To determine the relationship between leave and employees' retention.
- 2. To determine the relationship between loan and employees' retention.
- 3. To determine the relationship between retirement plan and employees' retention.
- 4. To determine the employees' perception towards the dominant types of benefit in retaining the employees.

The hypotheses of this study are:

 H_1 = There is a positive relationship between leave and employees' retention.

The above hypotheses is supported by a study has shown that there was 76% of U.S. firms offered paid sick leave benefits in year 2001 (Cascio, 2003). People enjoy well-deserved vacation every year (Milkovich and Newman, 2005).

H₂= There is a positive relationship between loan and employees' retention.

The above hypotheses is supported by low-interest mortgage loan will have a strong impact on "retaining" employees for Hong Kong employees. Many organizations provide some form of loans or advances to employees as a benefit (How, 2001).

H₃= There is a positive relationship between retirement plan and employees' retention.

The above hypotheses is supported by Diversified Investment Advisors' Report on Retirement Plans, the majority of U.S. companies (84%) that currently offer a defined benefit plan such as a traditional pension plan, cash balance plan, or a pension-equity plan believe their plan may directly impact employees' retention (Bobbie, 2006).

H₄= There is a dominant factor among three types of benefits in influencing the employees' retention.

The above hypotheses is supported by Smith and Bachu (1999) demonstrate that the amount of leave, the ability to avoid overtime hours, and having supervisor and co-worker support are significant employer based variables in job retention.

Significance of the study

This study utilized cross-sectional design which provides to have more validity and reliability data for future researchers about the relationship between types of benefit and employees' retention. Data collection procedure has increased the validity and reliability of measurement scales in order to produce accurate and reliable findings. In this study, there are three benefits components, leave loan and retirement plan. It is required to identify the most influenced types of benefit that affected the employees' retention in an organization. Throughout the study on relationship between types of benefit and employees' retention, it may help the company to have further insight into the perception their employees' attitudes towards benefits. Thus, level of satisfaction of the employees can be seen through the research. Besides, it may help the company to have a research on individual's needs for the benefits in order to fulfil their needs and decrease their intention to leave the organization. Benefits that are greatly influenced the employees' retention can be clearly identified through the research. Apart from that, it contributes to future theory building by having the discussion and public affair.

This study provides guidelines to practitioners on how to improve their benefits plans in order to retain capable and productive employees in the organization. The organization should try to understand their employees' needs to help top level management to provide a well-designed benefit plans to fulfil their needs and retain them. When the employees are satisfied with their benefits, they will be motivated and thus increase their productivity.

Review of the phenomena being studied

Employee benefits were not an important part of most employees' compensation packages until the mid-twentieth century. Benefits comprised only about three percent of total payroll costs for United States (U.S.) companies in 1929. However, employee benefits in the U.S. now comprise approximately 42 percent of total payroll costs which reported by U.S Chamber of Commerce. Besides, Wagner Act significantly increased the ability of labor unions to organize workers and bargain for better wages, benefits, and working conditions in the 1930s. A recent study by the Society of Human Resource Management indicates both employees and Human Resource professionals see benefits as the top factor driving job satisfaction (Milkovich and Newman, 2008). Therefore, it is necessary to provide well-designed benefits for the employees in the organization in

order to attract and retain more capable and productive employees. As according to Losey (1998), it might help to attract and retain the employees if there were well-designed employee benefits, especially in a competitive labor market. Employee benefits are widely claimed to help in the retention of workers. A recent survey proposes that 89% of executives think employee benefits are extremely important factors to attract and retain good employees (Milkovich and Newman, 2008).

In terms of leave, there are different types of leave that are provided by the organization for the employees. For example, there are annual leave, medical leave, sick leave, compassionate leave and maternity leave and others. There was more than 80 percent of social housing professionals consider a minimum of 25 days annual leave is the most important benefit offered by an employer. Besides, a study has shown that there was 76 percent of United State firms offered paid sick leave benefits in year 2001 (Cascio, 2003). It is so common that the potential employees offered paid sick days or a part time off bank of days as part of a comprehensive benefits package. 57 percent of the employers voluntarily offering paid sick days in March, 2007. For the managerial employees, the percentage ranged up to 80 percent (Heathfield, 2008). People enjoy well-deserved vacation every year (Milkovich and Newman, 2005).

Then there is the loan, a popular form of benefit given by employers'. Many organizations provide some form of loans or advances to employees as a benefit (How, 2001). Loan is a type of debt. Loan is money that an organization such as bank lends and somebody borrows. There are different types of loan that are provided by the employers for their employees. For example, housing loan, car loan and computer loan are the most common types of loan that are provided in an organization. For example, certain groups such as those in the plantation sector are provided minimum housing and medical benefits under the Workers' Minimum Standards of Housing and Amenities Act, 1990. For car loan, it is provided by the organization to the employees as to help them to have their own vehicles to go to and back from work. Low-interest mortgage loan will have a strong impact on "retaining" employees for Hong Kong employees. As the organization differentiate itself with provided these low-interest or interest-free loan, it can be an effective tool to retain capable, talented, and productive employees.

A study of 1154 workers by the National Association of Pension Funds found that three-quarters of employees said it was important to have an occupational pension ("Workplace Pension is Most Important", 2008). Besides, the survey showed that those employers who do not offer a workplace pension are missing out on a loyalty bonus from their employees. Half of the employees in these companies would feel greater loyalty if they are provided workplace pension. In Malaysia, employees are provided Employees Provident Fund. "The Employees Provident Fund (EPF) Act, 1951 provides a compulsory savings scheme that seeks to protect the rights of employees to retirement savings and to enhance the value of their savings for post-employment financial security and well-being" (Seng, n.d.). The statutory rate of contribution for the employer is 12% of the employee's monthly wage while employee's contribution is 11% of monthly pay.

Generous pension plan may help to retain the employees, it probably does little to motivate them to perform on a day-to-day basis (Cascio, 2003). In theory, a retirement plan is a better long-term employee retention tool. According to a Diversified Investment Advisors' Report on

Retirement Plans, the majority of U.S. companies (84%) that currently offer a defined benefit plan such as a traditional pension plan, cash balance plan, or a pension-equity plan believe their plan may directly impact employees' retention (Bobbie, 2006).

Turnover can be a real problem in many organizations. Companies spend a great deal of time and money to recruit and train their employees. The cost of replacing staff members who are lost through turnover is high. The cost of replacing an employee is generally estimated to range from 50 percent to 200 percent of the annual salary for the position, and may even be higher in very specialized fields (Kaupla, 2008). In addition, poor employee retention has a negative impact on workplace productivity, job satisfaction, and overall morale.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section will discuss the research design and the data collection method. Research design can provide the glue that holds the research project and is used to structure the research as to show how all of the major parts of the research project (Trochim, 2006). Survey is a non-experimental, descriptive research method (Babbie, 1973). It is used when a researcher wants to collect the data on phenomena that cannot be directly observed. Commonly, survey research is used to access people's beliefs, attitudes, and self-reported behavior. In addition, it is less expense and less effort compare to other data collection technique. According to Dallal (1998), it aims to examine a sample of individuals as to make statements about the population from which the sample was drawn. Survey research design will be used to investigate the relationship and difference between leave, loan and retirement plan and employees' retention among the employees by age, length of services, education background and faculty.

The survey was carried out by using the questionnaire. According to Leung (2001), a well-designed questionnaire is highly structured to allow the same types of information to be collected from a large number of people in the same way and for data to be analyzed quantitatively and systematically. The question used in the questionnaires is a closed-ended question. Besides that, rating questions such as Likert Scales were used as the medium where employees choose their responses opinion about the statement organization by five point response scale.

This survey was conducted in a public higher educational institutions (HEI) located in Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia. The simple random sampling method was used in this research and each member of the population has an equal and independent chance of being selected. The required sample size was derived by using the formula for Luck et al (1987). Pilot test was used in this study to identify the problems that might arise with regards to the analysis of the questionnaire. To avoid ambiguous, unclear or misleading questions, the reliability of the designed questionnaire was tested to make sure the survey questions were clearly phrased and easily to be answered.

The goodness of data

The questionnaires were tested using Cronbach's alpha, which can be analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences Cronbach's alpha was based on the average correlation of items within a test if the items are standardized or not (Coakes and Steed, 2007). The validity of the

questionnaires and instrument can be shown based on the results of the pilot test by using factor analysis to test the validity of the items. If the total average Alpha value produces a value that is more than 0.4, it means that the instrument used is reliable. The overall results of goodness of the data in this study are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Goodness of Data

Measure	Item	Factor	KMO	Bartlett's	Eigen	Variance	Cronbach
		Loading		Test	Value	Explained	Alpha
Leave	5	0.807-	0.830	105.437	3.809	76.185	0.917
		0.934					
Loan	2	0.533-	0.500	28.911	1.807	90.328	0.890
		0.675					
Retiremen	2	0.656-	0.500	12.025	1.595	79.758	0.743
t Plan		0.745					
Employees	11	0.453-	0.801	284.298	7.013	46.753	0.926
' Retention		0.948					

Respondents' demographic characteristics

The distribution of the respondents is based on age group, length of service, and level of education as in Table 2.

Table 2: Respondent characteristics

Aspects	Frequency	Percent
Age		
18-25	17	24.3
26-35	36	51.4
36-45	16	22.9
46-55	1	1.4
Length of service		
0-5	31	44.3
6-10	25	35.7
11-15	12	17.1
16-20	2	2.9
Highest Education level		
Malaysian Higher	16	22.9
Certificate	27	38.6
Diploma	27	38.6
Degree		

From Table 2, it is clear that majority (74.3%) of the respondents is the age of 26-45 years old. 80.0 % of them served less than 10 years in their service. Majority (77.2 %) of them have tertiary education.

Findings and discussion

The Pearson Correlation technique was used to determine the relationship between independent variables and dependent variable relationship while Multiple Regression technique was used to identify the dominant type of benefit that affects the employees' retention and was reported base on the research objectives.

a. Relationship between Leave and Employees' Retention

As to test the correlation between leave and employees' retention, it was analyzed by using Pearson Correlation Coefficient 'r' as to determine the relationship between the two variables. The results of the test as in Table 3:

		Leave	Retention
Leave	Pearson	1	240(**)
	Correlation	1	.349(**)
	Sig. (1-tailed)		.002
	N	70	70
Retention	Pearson	.349(**)	1
	Correlation	.547()	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.002	
	N	70	70

Table2: Relationship between Leave and Employees' Retention

Table 3 shows the result of the correlation between leave and employees' retention. Results shows that the value of r = 0.349 and the value of p = 0.002 by which p < 0.01. It indicates that there is a positive relationship between leave and employees' retention. Therefore, leave may positively impact on the employees' retention. R value indicates the hypothesis that stated has weak relation with the employees' retention. Every employee may have different types of leave such as annual leave, sick leave, public holidays, rest days, compassionate leave, maternity leave, paternity leave study leave and other leaves in the organization. According to Cascio (2003), a study has shown that there was 76% of U.S. firms offered paid sick leave benefits in year 2001. People enjoy well-deserved vacation every year (Milkovich and Newman, 2005).

Employers should provide their employees leave as to attract and retain them. According to Tracy and Fromson (2008), loss of employment results when there is no leave available or paid leave options are exhausted. Every employee must have to take a break after they have been working for a long period in order to release their pressures and refresh their mind. Glass and Riley demonstrate that the amount of leave, the ability to avoid overtime hours, and having supervisor and co-worker support are significant employer based variables in job retention (Smith and Bachu, 1999). According to Ormond (2002), he stated that "while (paid maternity leave) is a substantial investment in our people, we have done sufficient cost-analysis to know that we reap the dividends in terms of employee productivity, job satisfaction and retention."

^{**} Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

b. Relationship between Loan and Employees' Retention

As to test the correlation between loan and employees' retention, it was analyzed by using Pearson Correlation Coefficient 'r' as to determine the relationship between the two variables. The results are as below:

		Loan	Retention
Loan	Pearson	1	.345(**)
	Correlation	1	.545()
	Sig. (1-tailed)		.002
	N	70	70
Retention	Pearson	.345(**)	1
	Correlation	.545()	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.002	
	N	70	70

Table 4: Relationship between Loan and Employees' Retention

Table 4 shows the result of the correlation between loan and employees' retention. Results shows that the value of r = 0.345 and the value of p = 0.002 by which p < 0.01. It indicates that there is a positive relationship between loan and employees' retention. Loan is positively affecting the employees' retention. R value indicates the hypothesis that stated has weak relation with the employees' retention. According to How (2001), many organizations provide some form of loans or advances to employees as a benefit. An organization may provide loan such as housing and car loans to the employees which provide the lowest interest rates in order to help the employees in their financial especially for those who have financial problems. Low-interest mortgage loan will have a strong impact on "retaining" employees. Besides, according to Cordery (2006), focus groups cited the practice of offering 'casual' employment as a contributing factor to turnover and the appointment to 'casual' meant that a person was frequently not able to get a mortgage or personal loan, and sometimes not even a rental agreement.

c. Relationship between Retirement Plan and Employees' Retention

As to test the correlation between retirement plan and employees' retention, it was analyzed by using Pearson Correlation Coefficient 'r' as to determine the relationship between the two variables and as below;

^{**} Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

		Item	
Retirement	Pearson	1	2/1(**)
Plan	Correlation	1	.341(**)
	Sig. (1-tailed)		.002
	N	70	70
Retention	Pearson	.341(**)	1
	Correlation	.341(**)	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.002	
	N	70	70

Table 5: Relationship between Retirement Plan and Employees' Retention

Table 5 shows the result of the correlation between retirement plan and employees' retention. It was analyzed by using Pearson Correlation Coefficient 'r' as to determine the relationship between the two variables. Results shows that the value of r = 0.341 and the value of p = 0.002 by which p < 0.01. It indicates that there is a positive relationship between retirement plan and employees' retention. Therefore, retirement plan is positively affecting the employees' retention. Retirement benefits are provided for employees with a sense of security. According to Cascio (2003), generous pension plan may help to retain the employees, it probably does little to motivate them to perform on a day-to-day basis. According to a Diversified Investment Advisors' Report on Retirement Plans, the majority of U.S. companies (84%) that currently offer a defined benefit plan such as a traditional pension plan, cash balance plan, or a pension-equity plan believe their plan may directly impact employees' retention (Bobbie, 2006). In addition, fifty-eight percent of plan sponsors with 25,000 or more employees indicate that their defined benefit plan had a major impact on employees' retention as compared with 23% of companies with 1,000 to 2,499 employees (Bobbie, 2006).

According to Maimunah (2006), many employers provide higher levels of contribution as to attract and retain employees. The Small Employer Retirement Survey finds that companies with plans feel offering a retirement plan results in significant benefits both for employees and the companies themselves (Salisbury, Hicks and Yakoboski, 1998). There are more than three out of four survey respondents cite employees' need for retirement income as a major reason they offer a plan (78 percent) and two-thirds cite a positive effect on employee attitude and performance as a major reason. A majority cite a competitive advantage in employee recruitment and retention as a major reason (Salisbury, Hicks and Yakoboski, 1998).

d. The Dominant Types of Benefit Influencing the Employees' Retention

As to test the dominant types of benefit influencing the employees' retention, it was analyzed by using Multiple Regression Analysis as to determine the dominant type of benefit and as below.

^{**} Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

Table 6: Model Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis

				Std. Error
Mode			Adjusted	of the
1	R	R Square	R Square	Estimate
1	.422(a)	.178	.141	.45153

a. Predictors: (Constant), Retirement Plan, Leave, Loan

b. Dependent Variable: Retention

Multiple regression analysis was used to predict which types of benefit affect the most on employees' retention. Model Summary box shows the correlation coefficient (designed as R), the coefficient of determination (designated as R Square), the adjusted coefficient of determination (designated as Adjusted R Square) and the standard error estimate (Hong, 2005). Table 6 showed the r² value is 0.178. R² indicates the contribution of the independent variables to the employees' retention. Therefore, it means that types of benefit contributed approximately 17.8% to the respondents' retention.

Table 7: ANOVA of Multiple Regression Analysis

		Sum of		Mean		
Model		Squares	Df	Square	F	Sig.
1	Regressi on	2.917	3	.972	4.770	.005(a)
	Residual	13.456	66	.204		
	Total	16.373	69			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Retirement Plan, Leave, Loan

b. Dependent Variable: Retention

Multiple regression analysis was used to predict which types of benefit affect the most on employees' retention. Table 7 shows the ANOVA of Multiple Regression Analysis. According to Hong (2005), the ANOVA box gives the computed F statistic and its p-value.

Table 8: Coefficients of Multiple Regression Analysis

		Unstandardized		Standardized		
Model		Coefficients		Coefficients	T	Sig.
		Std.				
		В	Error	Beta		
1	(Constan t)	2.182	.414		5.268	.000
	Leave	.148	.100	.198	1.481	.143
	Loan	.150	.112	.185	1.345	.183
	Retireme nt Plan	.108	.119	.133	.913	.365

a Dependent Variable: Retention

According to Hong (2005), the coefficients bow gives the estimated coefficient of the regression, and their respective t statistics as well as their significance levels (or p-values). Table 8 above showed the beta values which represent the standardized coefficient of the independent variables. From the table, the beta value is 0.198, which means that the coefficient of the independent variable (leave) is strongly related to employees' retention as compared to other 2 types of benefit (loan and retirement plan) which have the beta value of 0.185 and 0.133. Therefore, leave is the most strongly type of benefit that affect the employees' retention.

Recommendation and implication of study

There are some recommendations on the benefit strategies for the organization in order to retain and attract the capable and productive employees. In order to increase employees' job satisfaction and decrease the turnover rate of the employees, the organization was recommended to develop a comprehensive benefits strategy that takes into account both monetary and non-monetary benefits elements. The employers are not only having the commitment on their core business but also the commitment of their employees. Employers should take into consideration on their employees' needs when they develop the benefit strategy. For example, the benefits such as leave, loan and retirement plan are also considered as important factor to attract and retain capable and productive employees.

Apart from that, employers are recommended to provide non-traditional benefits plan as to fulfill their employees' needs today. Trends have shown that employees have strong, emotional appeal toward these non-traditional benefits and perhaps even have come to expect them (Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart and Wright, 2004). For example, they may have cafeteria plan in this organization cafe as there is a quite long distance to town to have their meal. Therefore, it can help to retain and attract the employees. For future study, there are some recommendations for future researcher as to improve this study. This research was only done in a single organization. Therefore, additional research should be conducted in other organization as to increase the accuracy of the study. Also, future researcher may have bigger population in his or her study to increase the accuracy of the study. Besides, it was limited in its scope by only concentrating on the relationship between the types of benefits and employees' retention. In future study, researcher should expand the types of benefit such as allowances, insurances which aimed to retain the employees. The future researcher is recommended to expand this study to other company, enlarge the population of the study and the scope of types of benefit, such as allowances, insurances and health care.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was found that the employees would remain with the employers longer because of the leave, loan and retirement benefit plans as these three benefits positively influenced the employees' retention. Leave was the dominant factor among three types of benefits in influencing the employees' retention. These benefits affect the employees' decision to stay or leave the organization. Therefore, the organization must concern on employee benefits base on their needs in order to retain capable and productive employees. Apart from that, the organization should also concern on other benefits like allowances, insurances, healthcare and others which may affect the employees' retention.

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