

Assessment of mentoring on retention of workers and Human Resource Management in the construction sector: A Literature review

Morena William Nkomo and Wellington Didibhuku Thwala
Department of Construction Management and Quantity Surveying
University of Johannesburg
Johannesburg. RSA
mnkomo@uj.ac.za, didibhukut@uj.ac.za

Clinton Ohis Aigbavboa
Department of Construction Management and Quantity Surveying
University of Johannesburg
Johannesburg. RSA
caigbavboa@uj.ac.za

Abstract (12 font)

Mentoring is experiencing renaissance because business leaders not only identify the benefits of transferring knowledge among workers. Although mentoring theory, research and practice have begun to be developed, quite few articles on mentoring, retention have appeared in the Human Resource Development literature. The purpose of this paper is to look at research and practice on mentoring through the lens of Human Resource Development in the construction industry, to discover gaps in what is known about mentoring that are significant to Human Resource Development specialists and furthermore the study describes better practices that organizations can use to resolve the threat of lost knowledge caused by changing workforce demographics. The data used in the study was mainly qualitative, based on the historical data. The review enabled the road map to source out information related to human resource management and mentoring on retention of graduate's workers in South Africa. After reviewing core aspect of mentoring, central to all domains of Human resource development, the authors summarize the key issues that had been studied regarding mentoring and career development, organization development, and training and development, proposing new direction for future research. The study also, indicated knowledge transfer assist workers in cultivating their skill sets which increases their marketability. Individuals who had been mentored reported high levels of knowledge transfer.

Keywords

Mentoring, Retention, Human Resource Management, Construction, Workers.

1. Introduction

Organizations today face a dilemma regarding the retention of key knowledge workers. Knowledge transfer amongst employees is crucial for organizational productivity. Retaining key employees is dynamic to the health and profitability of the organizations and that effective talent management will pay off in the long run for the organizations. The fundamental feature of today's competitive climate in business concerning people issues is to find a method of attracting, developing, retaining, and motivating competent people. To employ the appropriate people in the company, the team of candidates to select from must be up to prescribed standard. This means that HR should source and seek out such talented staff and must not expect that an advertisement in the media will yield desired results. Retention of talent employees is critical to preserving skills of such employees. By so doing, a business can circumvent losing customers so that they maintain high quality products that are marked by high sales. Employees who work together for a long time will enjoy a healthy working atmosphere, good relations with managers, effective succession planning and deeply embedded organisational knowledge and learning. Failing to retain key employees especially new graduates is costly for any business. Mendez and Stander (2011) further more emphasises that a company needs to invest in employee retention in order to be successful.

Various programs within organizations are always competing for scarce resources and management must always seek to find the right balance between cost and benefit and in the opinion of the HR personnel, the benefits outweigh the costs when it comes to talent management. Although there seems to be unanimity regarding the theoretical usefulness of these programs, there appears to be some room for improvement for the implementation of talent management programs as organizations are equally divided among those who understand how to measure talent performance and those who don't.

Turnover is a critical human resource issue in all sectors of the economy. Turnover affects productivity, product and service quality, and profitability. The cost of replacing workers is high, finding skilled employees can be difficult, and investments in training are less secure. Unexpected workforce attrition may place employers at a serious disadvantage. And this turnover could occur when slimmed-down companies have little redundancy in job roles, exposing them to greater risk of losing important organizational knowledge. According to (Oladapo, 2014) One of the primary concerns of many organizations today is employee retention. Retention is viewed as a strategic opportunity for many organizations to maintain a competitive workforce. Attracting and retaining a talented workforce keeps many vice presidents of HR thinking of prospects and opportunities. Retention is improved when employees are offered compensation and benefits, have a supportive work culture, can develop and advance and balance work and life activities.

To minimize the impact of workforce turnover, companies need a proactive strategy for knowledge retention and transfer. The [Society for Human Resource Management found](#) that direct replacement costs can reach as high as 50% to 60% of an employee's annual salary. The total costs of replacement, including training and the loss of productivity, can range from 90% to 200% of an employee's annual salary (Society for Human Resource Management, 2008). The role of mentoring in fostering the development of employees is discussed as a component of a number of employee development theories and is noted to be an important means of facilitating learning in our society and in organizations. It is not surprising that mentoring has been recommended as an essential tool for human resource development. The recent publication of several reviews of research on mentoring (Wanberg, Welsh, & Hezlett, 2003) highlight that our knowledge of mentoring is maturing many questions about mentoring remain poorly answered or have yet to be thoroughly investigated, within the construction industry. Mentoring is measured to be the oldest form of knowledge transfer. According to (Chikumbi, 2011) Management development should include mentoring which is essentially involves an experienced knowledgeable person coaching a new entry employee. The coach is called a mentor while the inferior is called a protégé or mentee. The mentor uses different methods in transferring knowledge such as guidance, tutoring, coaching and emotional support. Through this interaction, a bond is made between the mentor and the mentee. Mentoring should be linked to competences that are identified and prioritised for a particular job. Once a talented employee is identified to take up a new role, a mentoring program should be arranged that will help transform them into a capable manager and develop more leadership skills. In order to develop talent at the organizations, there is a need to implement formal mentoring to ensure that knowledge is transferred from the baby boomers before they retire. On the other hand, informal relationships occur where mentoring is done. This encompasses knowledgeable staff imparting knowledge to their team members as operations are implemented. The following are some of the methods in which knowledge can be transferred: Coaching is increasingly becoming an important managerial instrument of support in management. Coaching is different from training and mentoring in that in coaching practices, the recipient, - coachee, needs to put forward (request) to the giver – the coach what areas he needs help in. The relationship between the two is of mutual respect, patience and whereby the coach respects his coachee (Evers,

Brouwers and Tomic 2006). However, research is silent on how effective this method can be in staff development although it helps the transition and implementation of succession planning.

Mentoring and coaching has become popular HRD methods and over the past few years, a literal plethora of publications have been produced on coaching and mentoring, from a strategic human resource management perspective, the term used or the relationship between coaching and mentoring does not appear as important as how to manage mentoring and coaching process. The management key is not to spend too much time differentiating between them, but rather to regard them as dimensions of an interrelated process and to apply them strategically (Van der Bijl, 2007). Mentoring and coaching are HRD processes often used to induct and introduce staff into places of employment. Mentored employees value collaboration and sharing of information, which can lead to a stronger organization. Mentored workers are also apt to become involved in professional organizations that further both their careers and the profession itself (Tingum, 2016).

2. Literature Review

Human resource (HR) can create values for an organization by finding ways to improve workforce managements that have a positive impact on performance. Since HR has a significant influence on the overall management system, it is well positioned to create substantial benefits, both for the employee and the organization. Nowadays, it is a common belief in both the business and the academic world that the HRs of an organization can be a source of competitive advantage and one of the hidden forces behind growth, profits and lasting value of the organization. The importance of involving HR in development, planning, and implementation of competency strategies has been emphasized by researchers (Beatty and Schneier, 1997). A number of researchers have studied how gender and race affect mentoring, within organizations. From the protégé's perspective, key questions that have been investigated include (1) are women (or minorities) less likely than men (or Caucasians) to have a mentor? (2) Do women (or minorities) receive the same kind and amount of mentoring functions as others? And (3) do women (or minorities) gain the same favorable outcomes from mentoring as men (or Caucasians) (Wanberg et al., 2003)? A mentoring relationship can sometimes develop into a negative situation with a mentor possibly sabotaging a mentee or not providing the necessary career support (Piasecki, 2011). Mentoring as a form of strategic human resource management is an interesting addition to the HRD literature because it provides a mechanism of change for individual employees, within construction organizations. Having a powerful human resource development (HRD) organization is a worthwhile asset of companies, and an enterprise's efficiency is closely connected to human capital's managerial and developmental systems (Latagana, Dinu & Stoica, 2010).

3. Research Methodology

The study is primarily a literature review with a distinct emphasis on retention of workers and human resource management and leadership, the data used in the report is mainly qualitative, based on the content analysis, case studies and historical data.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 HRD in The Construction Industry Organization Numerical Results

The construction industry has been one of the most dynamic and complex industrial environments (Druker, White, Hegewisch, & Mayne, 1996). It is a project-based industry within which individual projects are usually custom built to client specifications (Loosemore, Dainty, & Lingard, 2003). The dynamic environment and changing demands of construction activities required the formation of the teams each time a new project is commenced with a new client. This is particularly appeared in larger contractor companies, which are focused on managing the construction phases and the processes with a few directly employed construction managers, site agents and professional staff in order to lead the outsource teams. Most importantly, however, the external sources of workforces are very common in the industry (Loosemore, Dainty, & Lingard, 2003). Whilst the increasing use of external sources of labour has allowed the managing contractors to pass on risk and achieve greater flexibility, it has also made employee development and project coordination more complex, with a requirement for more highly skilled and experienced management (Loosemore, Dainty, & Lingard, 2003).

These parameters, by maintaining employee commitment, contribute to the employee resourcing strategies and achievement of project goals at a minimum risk. In addition to the internal factors, several parameters are external to the organization and affecting the way HRD practices are organized. The challenges comprise those that apply to the construction industry, specifically, and those, which apply to all other business sectors.

4.2 The Role of Mentoring in HRD

Mentoring should also not be taken as a panacea for all HRD ailments. It is not appropriate in all circumstances in an organization, nor is it necessarily superior to other forms of management personal development (Clutterbuck, 1991). Mentoring as a form of strategic human resource management is an interesting addition to the HRD literature because it provides a contrivance of change for distinct employees. Gregson (1994) says that mentoring is an endeavor to transmit proficiency and expertise from practiced members in an organization to the less experienced to achieve this purpose, mentoring needs the activities like sponsorship, coaching, protection, exposure, counselling, friendship (Kram, 1985) and performance appraisals to undertake. Ragins and Kram (2007) take a more comprehensive view of the concept of mentoring and say that the mentors are supposed to contribute to the protégé on two dimensions; career building and psychosocial richness. Career building functions include promoting job related skills and behaviours of the mentees, patronizing their growth and advancement, and enhancing their outlook as a way to help them grow intrinsically as well as extrinsically along the hierarchy of the organization. Psychosocial richness functions include building behaviors, such as offering acceptance and providing friendship, that enhance the protégé's personal growth, identity and selfworth. Efficacy of mentoring has been divulged upon the organizations and a growing number of them have implemented formal mentoring programs within organizations, other construction companies do not have formal mentoring programs.

4.3 Best Practices in Retention and Knowledge Transfer

In order to address the threat of lost knowledge caused by changing workforce demographics. The heart of any knowledge-retention strategy is its knowledge-sharing practices. There are many sorts of methods that contribute to knowledge capture, sharing and re-application: after-action Sections, reviews, communities of practice, face-to-face meetings, mentoring programs, expert referral services, training, video conferencing, interviews, written reports, etc. Based on the review of the literature, the list of retention practices that captures the main types of interventions discussed in the HR literature. They are as follows (Lochhead & Stephens, 2004): **Knowledge Transfer – cross-training, coaching and mentoring, phased in retirement.** While employee retention practices seek to retain *workers*, knowledge transfer practices seek to retain *skills*, through both formal and informal exercises in information sharing and the building of collective knowledge. **Adequate and Flexible Benefits** can demonstrate to employees that a company is supportive and fair, and there is evidence to suggest that benefits are at the top of the list of reasons why employees choose to stay with their employer or to join the company in the first place. **Training, Professional Development, and Career Planning** are effective ways to enhance employee retention.

Training constitutes a visible investment that the company makes in the worker, providing him or her with new skills, and greater competencies and confidence. Training often leads to work that is more intrinsically rewarding. According to (Oladapo, 2014) effective retention practices start with good hiring practices--qualified and motivated people will stay longer. Poor hiring practices increase turnover in two ways: new staff members that are mismatched and disoriented will leave quickly; experienced staff, on the other hand, can become highly exasperated at the revolving door of newcomers that places a continual burden on their time and performance. Employee orientation is a critical success factor in hiring, and a large proportion of orientation is related to communication and enrolment in benefits. Never again will an organization have a clear-cut opportunity to communicate the quality and value of benefits provided, or to demonstrate concern for employee well-being.

A shocking number of companies do not take advantage of this easy opportunity. Rich benefit plans are a significant competitive disadvantage if employees do not understand or appreciate what they receive. A rival organization could place a much higher proportion of total labor money into base pay, potentially drawing employees from other companies. Hausknect, Howard and Rodda (2009:269) define Employee Retention as denoting to policies and practices companies use to prevent valuable employees from leaving their jobs. Achieving retention success begins by instilling in the organisation's culture that people are the top priority. The example should begin from the chief executive and stem down through the organisation to line managers. The organisation should inter relate department by department. The departments should be well co-ordinated in activities such as recruitment, training and performance management as well as be integrated. This results in the demonstration of a dedication and empowerment of employees to the company and will frequently contribute to retention efforts. The challenge to maintain skilled employees is one of the greatest problems that plague companies in the competitive marketplace. Organisations need

to map up strategies for retention of employees in the organisation for a long time. Organisations are facing a lot of problems in employee retention nowadays. He adds that although employing knowledgeable employees is valuable, however, retaining them is even more important. Iles, Chuai and Preece (2007) define employee retention as a methodical effort by employers to build a conducive working atmosphere that fosters a culture of retention. This is achieved by the organisation implementing policies and procedures that concentrate on various needs. It also addresses the cost associated with employee replacement, turnover, loss of productivity, etc. Retention begins with building a preservation culture. The ultimate is to create a friendly setting where employees enjoy work and each other's company. In such an environment, employees will enjoy the work and relate well with their co-workers, resulting in increased performance and productivity (Manion 2004).

4.4 Past Theory, Research and Practice on Mentoring Through the Lens of (HRD)

Four core issues relevant to research and practice on mentoring, regard less of which aspect of HRD one is contemplating, are (1) the definition and measurement of mentoring, (2) the dynamics involved in mentoring relationships, (3) understanding different types of mentoring relationships (e.g., formal vs. informal), and (d) the differentiation of mentoring from other workplace relationships. In a qualitative research of Kram, (1985), she identified two kinds of assistance, mentors provide to their protégés. Career functions directly aid protégés' career advancement and include challenging assignments, coaching, exposure, protection, and sponsorship. Psychosocial functions which include acceptance and confirmation, counseling, friendship, and role modeling, enhance protégés' sense of competence and identity. These mentoring functions have been a prominent method used by many researchers to define and assess mentoring. Three well known measures of multiple mentoring functions (Ragins, 1999) have been used in a number of studies and have well established psychometric properties, the Mentoring Functions Scale (Noe, 1988). To explain the glass ceiling, a number of researchers have studied how gender and race affect mentoring. From the protégé's perspective, key questions that have been investigated include (1) are women (or minorities) less likely than men to have a mentor? (2) Do women (or minorities) receive the same kind and amount of mentoring functions as others? And (3) do women (or minorities) gain the same favorable outcomes from mentoring as men (Wanberg et al., 2003). The majority of research suggests that women and minorities are as likely as men and Caucasians to have mentors (Ragins, 1999; Wanberg et al., 2003). According to Poulsen, (2006) the construction market conditions are changing, the economy is also changing and the needs for competencies are also changing. in addition he further stated that mentoring programs are the only solution in making sure that new graduates are able to be competent in the industry. Many mentoring programs don't produce the main objectives that were set when they were implemented. This is mainly caused by not following procedures of implementing mentoring programs and some don't produce the required objectives because the principles of assessing the effectivity of mentoring programs is not followed. According to McCormick, (2014) also stated that mentoring programs fail because the people who implement the programs fail to match the correct Mentor with the correct graduate, mentoring programs are dysfunctional because they are not being implemented to suite the set objectives. The relationship between the mentor and the graduate is very vital for mentoring programs. This is the core point of mentoring programs as both the parties needs to share the same interest on the programs.

4.5 Gaps in what is known about mentoring that are relevant to HRD Professionals.

Core aspects of mentoring

The kinds of assistance mentors provide (i.e., mentoring functions) are widely used to define and assess mentoring relationships. There are at least two distinct major mentoring functions:

Career, psychosocial

A small body of research suggests negative mentoring experiences can be described by. Several promising studies suggest additional research on mentor protégé interactions and the evolution of mentoring relationships would be valuable. Limited research on formal mentoring suggests: It can, but does not always, lead to the same protégé outcomes as informal mentoring. Mentoring has not yet been thoroughly distinguished from other supportive workplace relationships in the construction industry.

Career development

More research on mentoring has focused on career development than on other areas of HRD. For protégés, mentoring is associated with small objective career outcomes and small to moderate subjective outcomes.

Organization development

There has been little attention paid to mentoring outcomes at the organizational level of analysis. Three organizational outcomes of mentoring have been suggested: Developing human resources, managing organizational culture. Improving organizational communication

5. Conclusions

As changing demographics have inexorably rehabilitated the business landscape, it is generally accepted that organizations are currently dealing with the daunting task of replacing knowledgeable and talented workers. Furthermore, the consensus is that there has become a shortage of talent in the workforce and that companies will have to actively wage war for talent in order to get the right people with the right skills into their organizations. Retaining organizational knowledge in the face of changing workforce demographics is a complex challenge that requires simultaneously confronting the problems created by an aging workforce, the threats posed by changing demographics were not created in a year and will not be solved overnight.

The most effective knowledge retention strategies will require a multifaceted approach and a long-term commitment on both the leadership of an organization and the employees. In this paper, the authors have reviewed current perspectives on mentoring and HRD and identified directions, gaps for future research, theory, and practice from the perspective of the HRD domains of career development, organization development, and training and development within construction organizations. Noteworthy strides have been made on mentoring research, theory, and practice providing a solid foundation on which to build the additional work that is needed to fully understand and maximize the effective use of mentoring. It seems that the issue of mentoring and human resource development in construction organizations can generally be considered as a good field of research and vast topics of research can be defined in this regard.

Further research is suggested to inspect what, if any programs or practices help improve the present factors that HR personnel perceive to be fundamental to employee retention. Our study focused on our ideas on what may help improve employee retention, but it did not address their ideas. In particular, research is recommended to determine how best organizations (those with the lowest turnover) can facilitate the meeting of employee needs and improve retention. Additionally, the current study does not directly assess all of the potential factors relevant to employee retention, but uses the preconceived ideas of the researcher. In too many cases the answer “other” was used indicating that perhaps a wider number of potential factors should be included in the analysis.

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Biography

Morena William Nkomo is a PhD Candidate in the Department of Construction Management and Quantity Surveying in the University of Johannesburg South Africa. He earned N.Dip Building, B. Tech Construction Management and M. Tech in Construction Management. He has published conference papers and book chapter's. Morena has completed research projects with South African construction industry in Human Resource Management and Retention of employees, human capital and Mentoring of employees in the construction industry.

Wellington Didibhuku Thwala is full Professor of Construction Project Management and Masters Programme Coordinator at the department of Construction Management and Quantity Surveying, University of Johannesburg. Professor Thwala is a founding director of Insika Project Management Services (IPMS) a consulting firm of professional project managers. He has Bachelor's degree from UNISWA, Post Graduate Certificate from (UNISWA) Management Development Board, Masters of Science Development Planning, Masters of Science in Engineering and PhD specializing in Civil Engineering, currently registered for MBA. Former Vice Chancellor of CIOB in Africa, Member of CIOB (MCIOB), Member of South African Planning Institute (SAPI), Member of the Council for Research and Innovation in Building and Construction TG65. Professor Thwala has more than 130 published and peer reviewed journals, chapters in books and conference proceedings locally and internationally. He is an Editor of the Journal of Construction Project Management and Innovation. He is serving on a number of Senior and Leadership Management Boards.