

EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES AND RETENTION OF SENIOR STAFF OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

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ABSTRACT

Retention of staff in organisations has been regarded as important to the survival and growth of organisations. The study assessed the degree to which employee development programmes influence retention of senior staff at the University of Cape Coast. The study used the mixed methods research design. Through stratified sampling technique, 311 respondents' data were collected for the quantitative analysis, whereas 16 participants were purposively selected for qualitative responses. Quantitative data analysis was done using simultaneous multiple linear regression whereas qualitative data was analysed using content analysis. The study revealed that, the main predictors of retention of senior staff of the University were workshops/seminars/conferences, coaching/mentoring and role play. The quantitative statistics also showed that employee development programmes accounted for 36.8% of employee retention of senior staff. The remainder was not accounted for in the quantitative data however, the responses from the qualitative further revealed certain factors of retention such as; job security/stability, good relationships at the workplace and career advancement opportunities supported senior staff retention intentions.

Keywords: Employee Development Programmes, Retention, Senior Staff, University of Cape Coast

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Retention of senior staff in higher education institutions has become a critical issue (Cherep et al., 2020), particularly as institutions strive to maintain a competitive edge in a rapidly evolving global knowledge economy. High turnover rates are increasingly prevalent, leading to significant disruptions in institutional performance and knowledge continuity. For example, Rawat, Patel, and Manry (2013) argue that turnover leads to a loss of skilled employees, which impacts the overall performance of the institution. In higher education, senior staff play essential roles not only in teaching but also in research and administration, making their retention critical for institutional success. The University of Cape Coast (UCC) has experienced challenges, with turnover rates reaching 33.3% between 2000 and 2011, as noted in the 2011

annual report of the Division of Human Resources (Kosi, Opoku-Danso & Sarpong Ofori, 2015). This demonstrates that staff retention is an ongoing concern in educational settings and is tied directly to organisational stability and long-term success.

Employee development programmes are intrinsically linked to staff retention. Numerous studies in human resource literature, such as Collins and Holton (2004), Aseidu-Appiah, Kontor, and Asamoah (2013), Azeez (2017), and Papa et al. (2020) have established that structured development initiatives increase employee satisfaction and loyalty, reducing turnover rates. Organisations that offer continuous professional development incentives assist staffs to enhance their skills, knowledge, and abilities, which strengthens their sense of belonging and commitment to the organisation (Armstrong, 2009). Employee development initiatives not only build internal capabilities but also signal to staff that their personal and professional growth is a priority (Nguyen, 2020; Saks, 2022). In the context of UCC, this connection has been observed through the increase in senior staff applying for training and development programmes, contributing to the significant reduction in turnover rates from 406 to 35 between 2012 and 2019 (Aseidu-Appiah, Kontor, and Asamoah 2013; Ashmond, Opoku-Danso, & Owusu, 2022).

The Human Capital Theory provides a basis for understanding the connection between employee development and retention. This theory opined by Becker (1993), suggests that employees' skills and knowledge are valuable assets that organisations must invest in to enhance productivity and ensure long-term retention. By offering development programmes, organisations increase the value of their human capital, making employees more capable and efficient. Armstrong (2009) and Kim and Jung (2022) similarly emphasise that developing employees' competencies helps them feel more secure in their roles, reducing their desire to seek external opportunities. In higher education, where intellectual capital is paramount, employee development directly influences the retention of key staff members, as they recognise the alignment between their career growth and the institution's objectives (Hatcher, 2023; Ashmond, Opoku-Danso, & Owusu, 2022).

The role of employee development in attaining sustainable institutional growth conform with broader global initiatives such as the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Specifically, SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) emphasise the need for lifelong learning and sustainable employment practices. Nguyen (2020) asserts that employee development is a shared effort between the employer and employee aimed at enhancing attitudes, knowledge, and skills, which is vital for organisational stability. The development programmes implemented by higher educational institutions play a pivotal role in enhancing employee satisfaction, while simultaneously advancing the broader objectives of sustainability within the higher education sector. These initiatives ensure that staff members are equipped with the essential skills and competencies to drive institutional growth and maintain academic excellence. Consequently, the aims of this research was to critically determine the impact of these employee development programmes on the ability to retain senior staff of UCC. The centrality of this study posits that continuous and well-structured development initiatives are essential for fostering a constant and effective staff, which is critical for the long-term success and sustainability of the institution.

Despite the University of Cape Coast's efforts to address staff turnover, the institution faced significant challenge between 2000 and 2011, with 406 senior staff members (33.3%) leaving the University (Kosi et al., 2015). This high turnover raised concerns about the sustainability of its human resources. The University continued its effort aimed at improving staff skills, which led to a reduction in turnover rates to 2.48%, with only 35 senior staff leaving between 2012 and 2019 (Directorate of Human Resource, UCC). The increase in participation in these programmes suggests a positive impact on retention. However, there is limited empirical understanding of the specific mechanisms by which these programmes influence retention and whether they are sufficient to sustain long-term retention in a competitive academic environment. This study seeks to examine these gaps and identify areas for improvement.

This study explores the relationship between employee development programmes and the retention of senior staff at UCC. The Introduction outlines the research problem and objectives. The Literature Review examines relevant studies scholarly journals. The Methodology detail a mixed-methods approach, using quantitative turnover data and qualitative insights from interviews. The results and discussion analyse the impact of development programmes on staff retention. The Conclusion summarises key findings, while the Practical and Theoretical Implications highlight how these findings can inform human resource practices in higher education.

1.1 Objective of the Study

The main objective of this study was to examine the effects of employee development programmes on the retention of senior staff of UCC.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

The theory that underpinned the study was the Human Capital Theory proposed by Schultz (1961). The theory aims to expound the benefits of education and training as a form of investment in human resource and that individuals are considered as a form of capital for development (Aliaga, 2001). He further explained that investment in employees was seen as a form of development which is expected to bring some positive impact into the organisation. Porter (2011) as well as Khalifa and Truong (2010) also strongly assert that employee development drives of organisation serve as indications to the employees that the organisations cherish their contributions and care about their career needs which the employees reciprocate in positive attitudes. The theory holds the assert that when employees are given the needed training and developmental needs, they would stay and grow in the organisation without leaving to other institution.

In light of this research, the Human Capital Concept provides a strong foundation for understanding the correlation between employee development programmes and the retention of senior staff at UCC. Abubakar, Oluwade and Ibrahim (2022) revealed that investment in human capital, through educational and developmental programmes, significantly influences employee retention by enhancing their skills and competencies. When universities provide tailored training programmes, employees perceive these efforts as a commitment to their professional growth, making them less likely to seek opportunities elsewhere. Similarly, Ogundele (2019) posits that human capital development is an important issue in employee retention, emphasizing that institutions that invest in continuous training and career

development establish an atmosphere where workers feel recognized and supported. This aligns with Khalifa and Truong's (2010) assertion that such investments signal organizational commitment, which is reciprocated through employee loyalty. Furthermore, Alal and Florah (2021) noted that training not only improves employee performance but also enhances retention by increasing job satisfaction and career advancement opportunities. In the case of UCC, these principles of Human Capital Theory suggest that continuous investment in employee development programmes will likely foster long-term retention, as staff members recognize the value placed on their professional growth and are motivated to remain within the institution.

2.1 Concept of Employee Development

Rahman and Nas (2013) explain employee development as the collective and continual effort of employee and employer to work together with the intention to improve employees' attitudes, knowledge, experiences, skills, and abilities in order to be efficient. Employee development refers to a process where the employee with the assistance of his/her employer undertakes various training programmes to enhance his/her skills and acquire new knowledge (Cosack, Guthridge, & Lawson, 2010). In a related definition, Daly and Bierly (2006) sees development as an act of providing training, workshops, coaching, mentoring or other learning opportunities to staffs in order to challenge and motivate them to execute their position to the best of their ability within standards set by local, state, federal and licensing organisation guidelines.

Gaiduk and Gaiduk (2009) were of the view that an effective employee development programme is one that pleases a person's job desires and aims at organisation's wants. Employee development is an indication to workers that the institutions cherish their contributions and care about their employability, and as a result they return in positive ways by demonstrating attitudes that correspond with the amount of commitment they feel the organisation has for them (Wayne, Shore & Liden, 1997). Employee development has taken a necessary shift from focusing on promotion to employees focusing on skill development of employees to help them perform current and future responds (Feldman, 2000). Employee Development programmes refer to the various policies an organisation adopts, to upgrade the knowledge, skills and abilities of employees in order to equip them for current and future roles while staying on the job.

2.2 Concept of Retention

Retention is a multifaceted concept and as a result there is no single method for retaining employees within a company. In literature, retention has been seen as an obligation to stay to do business or exchange with a particular company on an ongoing basis (Zineldin, 2000, p.19). In another definition, employee retention has been considered as programmes and strategies organisation adopt to avoid talented employees from exiting their jobs (Glen, 2006). A more detailed explanation for the concept of retention is client liking, identification, commitment, trust, readiness to commend, and repurchase intentions, with the first four being emotional-cognitive retention constructs, and the last two being behavioural intentions (Stauss, Chojnacki, Decker & Hoffman, 2001).

Schuler and Jackson (2006) defined retention as all the important things an employer undertake to urge qualified and productive staffs to stay working for the organisation. The goal of

retention is to reduce unwanted intended turnover by valuable people in the organisation. Putting together a strong recruitment and retention policies to attract individuals to the organisation and increasing the possibility of retaining the individuals once they are employed. Nair (2009) sees employee retention as the capacity of management to maintain employees evolving around strategies that are put in place by employers to attract employees to remain in the organisation. Research has also revealed that numerous reasons are driven by retention which should be managed consistently. In fact, organisations that offer employee development programmes are having result with retaining employees (Logan, 2000).

2.3 Effects of Employee Development Programmes on Retention

Employee development programmes have consistently been shown to play a significant role in employee retention across various sectors. Meyer et al. (2003) highlighted that development of staff enhances retention by building staff commitment through organizational support, helping employees manage job-related stress, offering incentives to stay, and fostering a culture of care. This aligns with the findings of Akala (2012), who observed that staff at the University of Nairobi viewed institutional support for training and development as a key contributor to retention. Such development initiatives provide employees with the tools to perform well in their roles while offering them opportunities for career advancement, which increases job satisfaction and encourages loyalty (Pritchard, 2007). Additionally, Shelton (2001) demonstrated that relevant and valuable training improves both job satisfaction and retention, as employees who feel supported in their professional growth are less probable to seek opportunities elsewhere.

Armstrong (2009) and Azeez (2017) argue that institutions that invest in development of their employees tend to retain staff for longer periods, as employees who feel valued and supported are more committed to their jobs. This is consistent with Champathes (2006), who found that developed employees are generally more satisfied and loyal to their organizations. Employee development, therefore, acts as a retention tool by meeting both the professional and personal growth needs of employees, creating a sense of belonging and reducing turnover. Shimels (2019) supports this claim, revealing that the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia successfully retained employees through structured development programmes, which increased job satisfaction and commitment.

Despite these positive outcomes, there is concern about the potential downside of employee development programmes, as noted by Chandrans and Ruchi (2012). They observed that after investing heavily in employee development, organizations sometimes face high turnover rates when employees are equipped with new skills, they leave for better opportunities. This challenge is also reflected in Guest's (2003) study, which found that organizations suffer from reduced productivity and profit when developed employees exit. However, this perspective is contested by Abba (2018), whose study in Bauchi State Metropolis Banks demonstrated that effective training and development programmes significantly improved retention, as employees felt more capable and secure in their roles, leading to stronger organizational loyalty.

Frimayasa (2021) also explored the effects of employee development alongside other factors such as compensation and work environment, finding that development programmes

significantly influenced employee retention at PT Telkom Witel Tangerang BSD. The study concluded that a combination of career development opportunities, fair compensation, and a supportive work environment increases retention rates. This view is further supported by Pinnington et al. (2022), who found that organizational development programmes not only improve retention but also address gender disparities in career development, suggesting that tailored development initiatives can enhance retention across diverse employee groups.

Lastly, Anlesinya et al. (2015) underscored the importance of employee development in the public sector, demonstrating that targeted development initiatives in the Controller and Accountant General’s Department in Accra significantly improved employee performance and retention. This is consistent with Logan’s (2000) assertion that organizations offering comprehensive development programmes tend to succeed in retaining staff, a view strongly underpinned by the principles of Human Capital Theory.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

Conceptual framework gives a contextual representation of the study outcomes and to explain the variables and interconnection between or among them.

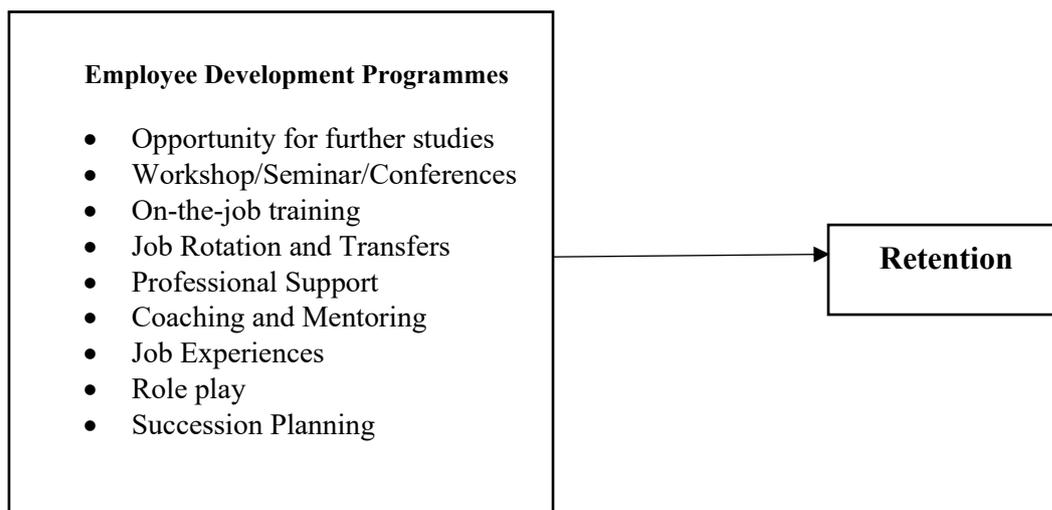


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

Source: Fieldwork

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

Chandan, Singh and Khanna (2010) assert that a research design is the arrangement, collecting, and analysis of data in a way that targets or combines relevant procedures to achieve the research purpose. The type of design that underpinned this study is the concurrent study design. With this method both quantitative and qualitative data are both collected simultaneously. The data collected from the two methods were analysed concurrently. The concurrent nested design may be employed to serve a diverse purpose. Often, this design is used so that a researcher may attain broader views from using the different methods instead of using the predominant method

alone. In relation to the present study, the qualitative and quantitative data were collected simultaneously, fitting into the cross-sectional study design. However, respondents and participants who needed to be revisited were done. The concurrent nested research design was recognised by authors (Creswell & Clark, 2013) as one of the most straightforward mixed method designs.

3.2 Target Population

The target population consist of all senior staff of the University of Cape Coast. The University has three (3) groups of employees namely: Senior Members, Senior Staff and Junior Staff. Senior Staff of the University are categorised into teaching and non-teaching. The teaching staff is made up of teaching assistants, teaching associates, and graduate assistants who assist in teaching and research at the University. Non-teaching staff are the class of workers that support administrative and technical aspects and play important roles in assisting the University achieve its core vision and mission. Data gathered from the Directorate of Human Resource of the University of Cape Coast indicated that as at 30th November 2019, the total population of all staff of the University of Cape Coast was at 4,959 with Senior Members being 949, Senior Staff 1,437 and Junior Staff 2,573.

3.3 Sample and Sampling Procedure

The sample size for the study was determined using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table. A sample of 306 which represents the population of 1437 senior staff of the University of Cape Coast. The determination of sample size using Krejcie and Morgan has been seen as an effective method. Even though the table predicted a sample size of 306, the researcher decided to add 5 more to cover for responses that may not be retrieved after administering the questionnaires; hence, the total sample size was 311. In order to obtain a fair representation of respondents in each of the colleges, the researcher adopted the proportionate stratified sampling to allow each stratum's to be proportionately represented in the population sampled.

The researcher divides the entire population into different subgroups or strata through stratified sampling and then randomly selects the final subjects. 16 participants were qualitatively chosen by using criteria which include senior staff who have benefited from the employee development program, senior staff who have worked in the Training and Development Section, and long-serving senior staff who have extensive experience on the job and assist in staff training and supervision. In line with the criteria, participants were selected from the various colleges/support service sections based on size of the college.

3.4 Research Instrument

The instruments that were used in collecting information from participants were questionnaires and interview. The items in the questionnaire were developed by the researcher from reviews of works on employee development programmes, while the retention aspect was adopted from Kosi, Opoku-Danso, and Sarpong (2015). A structured questionnaire was used as the research instrument to collect the quantitative data for this study. On the other hand, the semi-structured in-depth interview guide was used to collect the qualitative data for this study.

3.5 Validity and Reliability

The instrument was taken through a validity and reliability test. The validity of a test instrument is the degree to which an instrument measures the variables in the research. A validity and reliability test were conducted on the instruments. A test instrument's validity is established by its ability to measure the variables being studied, which in this case were the questionnaires/interviews. In order to establish the validity, the instruments were reviewed and modification done to reflect the goal of the research. The reliability coefficients were above .70, and this supports the views maintained by Bui (2009) that, if the coefficient alpha value is .70 and above, then the instrument is reliable and of good quality for collecting useful data for the study.

3.6 Data Analysis

Data was analysed using Statistical Package for Service Solution (SPSS) version 25. Employee Development data of respondents was analysed quantitatively using mean and standard deviation to give a clear picture of the effect of employee development programme on the retention of the senior staff. The research question was analysed using descriptive statistics (simultaneous multiple linear regression analysis). Concerning the qualitative data which was collected through the face-to-face interview, the researcher first transcribed and coded the data. After this, the transcripts were independently read through four (4) times by the researcher and research assistant after which themes were independently generated. Responses were then categorised under each theme. The transcription were generated and coded before analysis and interpretation were made. Following these steps, logical and comprehensive outcomes were obtained to present the result of the study. The analytical tool for the quantitative data was SPSS (version 25) and the qualitative data was analysed manually using content analysis. The content analysis approach looks across the transcripts to identify the common issues that emerge and the main themes that summarise all the views you have collected (Pathon, 2002).

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research investigated the effects of employee development programmes on UCC senior staff retention. Data gathered on the study was analysed using simultaneous multiple linear regression analysis. The predictor variables were nine development programmes carried out. These include opportunity for further studies, workshops/seminars/conferences, on-the-job technical training, job rotation and transfers, professional support, coaching and mentoring, job experiences, role play, and succession training. These variables were measured on continuous basis. The criterion variable was employee retention, which was measured on continuous basis.

Prior to the multiple linear regression analysis, the following assumptions were checked for and adhered to: normality, linearity, homoscedasticity, autocorrelation, and multicollinearity. Data on employee retention was normally distributed. In addition, assumptions such as linearity, and homoscedasticity were also met. Regarding autocorrelation, the Durbin-Watson's coefficient of 1.99 was greater than 1.4 but less than 2.5, suggesting no assumption violation (see Table 1). Finally, there was no multicollinearity since all the VIF coefficients were less than 10 (see Table 2). Table 1 presents the regression model summary.

Table 1: Regression Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.626	.392	.368	4.02078	1.986

F (9, 237) = 16.32, p < .001

The overall regression model containing the predictor variables (that is, the nine employee development programmes) and employee retention was statistically significant, F(9, 237) = 16.32, p < .001. The model accounted for 36.8% of the variations in employee retention (adjusted R2 = .368). Table 2 presents the regression coefficients of each of the employee development programmes.

Table 2: Effects of Employee Development Programmes on Employee Retention

Model	Unstd. Coefficients		Std. Coef.		Sig.	VIF
	B	S.E	Beta	T		
Constant	12.873	1.282		10.038	.000	
Opportunity for further studies	.011	.477	.001	.024	.981	1.430
Workshops/seminars/Conferences	1.517*	.496	.207	3.061	.002	1.721
On-the-job technical training	-.088	.436	-.016	-.201	.841	2.346
Job rotation and transfers	-.730	.469	-.093	-1.558	.121	1.340
Professional Support	.308	.469	.050	.657	.512	2.158
Coaching and mentoring	2.416*	.490	.368	4.928	.000	2.096
Job experiences	-.229	.489	-.030	-.468	.640	1.498
Role play	1.527*	.559	.177	2.732	.007	1.580
Succession training	.562	.396	.090	1.419	.157	1.499

*Significant, p < .05

As shown in Table 2, workshops/seminars/conferences (B = 1.52, p = .002); coaching and mentoring (B = 2.42, p < .001); and role-play (B = 1.53, p = .007) were significantly positive predictors of employee retention. The outcomes indicate that a unit increase each in workshops/seminars/conferences, coaching and mentoring, and role play would lead to 1.52, 2.42, and 1.53 units increase in employee retention. These mean that enhancing the practice and implementation of workshops/seminars/conferences, coaching and mentoring, and role play would likely result in high employee retention.

However, employee development programmes such as opportunity for further studies, on-the-job technical training, job rotation and transfers, professional support, job experiences, and succession training were not significant predictors of employee retention. Generally, it can be said that workshops, seminars, conferences, coaching and mentoring, and role play are the specific employee development programmes that affect employee retention. The aforementioned employee development programmes positively affected employee retention, implying that the more employees engaged in workshops/seminars/conferences, coaching and mentoring, and role play, the more likely they are to be retained in UCC.

The foregoing results have established that the nine employee development programmes collectively accounted for 36.8% of the variations in employee retention. Interestingly, the remainder was not accounted for with the quantitative data. However, with the qualitative aspect of this study, participants made certain claims on other factors of retention they are being provided with.

The results of the interview indicated that job stability/security plays a significant role in retaining senior staff of UCC. This assertion was maintained from the responses given by the senior staff during the interview section. One of such response's worth discussion states:

The stable nature of the job is what is keeping me in the University. The job is such that you are being guaranteed at all times. The University sees to the welfare of the workers making sure that they are well protected. They hardly sack workers. That is to say that the employee is highly secured. UCC is not like other private organisations that would employ you today and sack you the following day, month or year unless you have committed an offense that they felt they can't keep you on the job (a 37-year-old Male Principal Administrative Assistant with 15 working experience)

Again, another senior staff stated that:

I believe my work at UCC is highly secured unlike other organisation where some of their workers work for commission and contracts and after they are done with the contract their work cease (a 40-year-old female Senior Administrative Assistant with 8 years working experience)

That notwithstanding, some participants reported that though UCC offers job security, some other organisations offer better security and stability. This is what they said:

Even though UCC gives high security to staff, other organisation gives or pay high attention to staff welfare and benefit. I think some organisations are doing a lot to their staff making them feel secured.

In a related study, Willis (2000) also discovered that the stable nature of any employee's job is the utmost reason in attracting and retaining talent. In support of this, Dieckhoff (2011) noted that previous experience of unemployed workers can make them feel secure when they are employed in a new job. Succinctly, senior staff of the University are more concerned about their job security, which enables them to work continuously without any break or exit.

The respondents also indicated that good relationships at work were very important regarding employee retention. The benefits of good relationships at the workplace cannot be over-emphasised as they play a significant role in the continued survival of senior staff on the job they perform. Where the relationship at the workplace seems not to be cordial and rather a hostile working environment, they turn to leave quietly. Some participants had this to say:

Colleague staff relates very well to each other as family and any problem to one is a problem to all. The University creates a comfortable space for every one of us. In other words, there is enough room for everyone to work comfortably (a 42-year-old Male Senior Administrative Assistant with 11-year experience)

However, a 37 years' Principal Administrative assistant expressed that:

Generally, the working relationship is good only that at times where individual difference and background set in and there are disagreements on how some work is supposed to be approached but even that one has to adopt the best way of doing things.

This finding is in congruence to the outcomes of Ontario (2004) and Silbert (2005). In Ontario, the retention of workers is strongly influenced by their relationship with their supervisor(s) at the workplace and other workers. Silbert added that workers are less likely to leave an organisation and be more engaged by having good relationship and open communication with the supervisor. Good relationships at the workplace help an organisation achieve a lot as everyone is united to support the organisation's vision.

Furthermore, career development opportunities are another factor affecting employee retention. The University has the career aspiration of senior staff in mind and therefore provides a clear career path to enable them to progress to and with the necessary support. This was evident when a 37 years old male principal administrative assistant participant reported that:

I think the University helps staff to develop his or her own career in line with the laid down career progression which are clear and documented in policies. So when you are appointed as an Accounting assistant you know that when you acquire the necessary qualification and experience you will get to be an accountant one day.

In addition to what the earlier participant reported, a 42-year-old male principal administrative assistant with 15 years of work experience also reported:

When I entered the University, I aspired to be a Registrar in future and I see the University helping me to achieve that target through the laid down career path and the promotion system in place.

In support of these discussions, Prince (2005) claims that in order to gain and maintain competitive advantage, organisations required talented and productive employees and these employees need career development to enhance and cultivate their competencies. That is to say that career development is vital for both the employees and employer (Hall, 2002). Similarly, career development is mutually beneficial because it gives imperative outcomes to employers and employees (Hall, 1996; Kyriakidou & Ozbilgin, 2004). It also creates promotion opportunities within organisation and provides training opportunities and skill development to improve their employee's employability on the external and/or external labour market (Butler & Waldrop, 2001). Also, Meyer, Topolnytsky, Krajewski and Gellatly (2003) propose that employee development contributes to retention by building employee commitment through a show of support, providing the workforce with the means to tackle stress related to job demands and change, serving as motivation to stay, and fostering a culture of caring.

5.0 CONCLUSION

The study identified three main employee development programmes contributing to the retention of senior staff of UCC. These include workshop/seminars/conferences, coaching and mentoring, and role play. The entire employee development programme contributed 36.8% to

the retention of senior staff of UCC. The study established that employee development programmes contribute to senior staff retention at UCC by providing workshops/seminars/conferences, coaching and mentoring, and workplace role play. The study also recognised other factors of retention that came out of the interview session, such as job security/security, good relationships at the workplace, and career development opportunities.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Enhancing and diversifying employee development programmes at UCC can significantly impact the retention of senior staff. Personalised training paths, tailored to individual performance reviews and career aspirations, will make staffs feel more valued and supported in their professional advancement. Additionally, cross-departmental training can broaden employees' skills and deepen their understanding of the institution, fostering a stronger sense of belonging. Expanding coaching and mentoring programmes, including innovative reverse mentoring initiatives where younger staff mentor senior colleagues, will strengthen collaboration and spark new ideas. Moreover, intensifying role-play sessions with real-world simulations can better prepare staff to handle complex challenges, improving leadership and problem-solving capabilities.

Addressing job security and workplace relationships with targeted strategies based on the study's findings can significantly boost staff retention at UCC. Introducing long-term employment contracts for senior staff and transparent job security policies can create a greater sense of stability and commitment. The study also highlighted the importance of workplace relationships, so UCC should implement structured peer mentoring programmes and inter-departmental collaborations to strengthen professional bonds. Career development opportunities should also be expanded by providing clear, structured career paths and advancement programmes that directly tie into development milestones like workshops, seminars, and coaching. Offering role-specific bonuses for building positive workplace relationships and achieving team-based goals can encourage collaboration and enhance workplace satisfaction.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research could explore the long-term impact of employee development programmes on senior staff retention across multiple institutions to identify broader trends. Additionally, examining the role of technological advancements in enhancing these development programmes could provide insights into modernizing staff retention strategies. Finally, a comparative study between public and private universities on how employee development influences retention could yield valuable perspectives on institutional differences.

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