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Abstract

In many industries, especially education institutions operating in politically and economically unstable environments like Myanmar, employee retention is still a major concern. This study what makes Assumption Learning Loft (ALL), Myanmar an employer of choice for training centers that struggle to keep teachers on staff even with their competitive pay, great professional development possibilities, and first-rate facilities. To investigate important retention elements Interpersonal Relationships, Career Development, Perceived Organizational Support, and Employee Retention, in-depth interview with eight employees were done   using a qualitative research approach based on the Appreciative Inquiry (AI) model.   Numerous factors, including economic instability, rivalry from newly established private schools, and the allure of chances overseas, were found to have an impact on retention. It is recommended that a positive workplace culture be fostered by implementing a mutual respect culture and a recognition and reward system; that professional growth be supported by establishing clear career pathways and enhancing regular training programs; and that competitive compensation be ensured by conducting structured salary reviews. Crucial tactics to increase retention were also emphasized, like fortifying open lines of communication and establishing clear promotion and compensation guidelines. These findings give practical methods to improve staff stability and organizational productivity in difficult conditions, and they offer a valuable framework for Assumption Learning Loft (ALL) and other educational institutions facing comparable issues.

Keywords: Employee Retention, Interpersonal Relationships, Career Development, Perceived Organizational Support, Strategies.

Introduction

Employee retention is a significant challenge across various industries, particularly in unstable political and economic environments like Myanmar. This study investigates the factors affecting employee retention at Assumption Learning Loft (ALL), a training facility that has expanded significantly since its establishment on July 7, 2014. ALL has grown through various initiatives, including the Summer Holiday Program, the ALL-Education Centre, and online programs adapting to the COVID-19 pandemic. By December 2017, it became a recognized center for computer and English training, later launching additional programs and facilities.

Despite its growth, ALL has faced persistent difficulties in retaining employees, especially male teachers who are often primary breadwinners. Contributing factors include the search for better job opportunities, career changes, and challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic, policy changes, economic downturn, inflation, and political instability. To address these issues, a virtual meeting with the Director was conducted, and a SWOT analysis was performed to evaluate internal strengths and weaknesses and external opportunities and threats. This analysis aims to enhance ALL's staff retention strategies by focusing on career development, interpersonal relationships, perceived organizational support, and overall employee retention.

This study aims to provide practical recommendations to improve staff retention and organizational performance at ALL, contributing valuable insights into the challenges faced by educational institutions in Myanmar amidst a rapidly changing sociopolitical landscape.

Organizational Diagnosis

To assess the current situation, the researcher organized and conducted a virtual discussion with the head of the ALL-Education Center. This research, which utilizes a SWOT analysis to evaluate the organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, has identified key factors that could either facilitate or impede the advancement and sustainability of Assumption Learning Loft (ALL). The Director obtained comprehensive and actionable insights into the organization's current status through this analysis. Consequently, the research theme was developed to address these insights by leveraging the organization's strengths, addressing its weaknesses, capitalizing on opportunities, and preparing for potential threats. The below are the findings from the organizational diagnostic and explanation based on strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threads of the Assumption Learning Loft.

Strengths

There are enough staff members at the school, and the three sessions of instruction each day provide comfortable, overload-free learning environments. Teachers who are outsourced have access to staff housing and receive competitive pay. Instructors are employed and trained locally, and they know how to utilize computers and other technology. Teachers can pursue professional development opportunities at the school, and workers' children can receive a 50% discount. The institute, which is well-equipped with features like air conditioning, computers, Wi-Fi, fans, and solar panels, is run by professional leaders with advanced degrees from universities. The training center has also started offering adult learners in addition to preschoolers.

Weaknesses

Eighty percent of the teachers at the training center are inexperienced and young. It's difficult to keep these young teachers as staff since they frequently depart to pursue other interests, such as higher education, employment abroad, or career changes. It's also challenging to retain out-sourced teachers. Male teachers are hard to keep at the center since they are frequently the main providers for their families and leave to work for other organizations or abroad where the compensation is higher. These salaries only cover basic needs due to constant inflation compounded by fast-changing political dynamics in the country, even though they are comparatively high when compared to other local governmental or private company firms. Furthermore, although steps have been taken to improve it, the staff's initial awareness of proper customer service protocol was lacking.

Opportunities

Since most of the teachers are hired locally, they don't have to pay for transportation. Additionally, they get to engage with foreign guests, which broadens their exposure to different cultures. These educators, who are fluent in English and have computer skills, are able to pursue additional education, look for work overseas, and switch careers for their development.

Threats

Due to the recent emergence of numerous new private schools supported by significant funding from nearby commercial firms, teachers may think about switching careers to other schools. Many young people—including teachers—are being prompted by changes in national policy to look for work overseas or pursue higher education. Furthermore, some instructors are leaving their existing professions in search of higher-paying careers to support their families as a result of the nation's economic slump.

Statement of the Problem

Based on the SWOT analysis, the training institution struggles to retain teachers, particularly young and outsourced ones, despite offering comfortable teaching hours, opportunities for professional growth, suitable facilities, and reasonable compensation. Teachers are seeking higher-paying positions as their current incomes, although relatively high compared to other local businesses, are insufficient to meet their basic needs due to inflation and the economic crisis. Young teachers are increasingly exploring opportunities abroad or in other fields to support their families, driven by changes in national policies and economic conditions. The retention issue is further exacerbated by the challenge of retaining male instructors and outsourced teachers, who are often the primary earners for their families. Additionally, the emergence of new private schools offering competitive packages may further attract teachers away from the training center. This study aims to provide strategic recommendations to enhance retention rates at the training center by thoroughly analyzing these factors and understanding their impact on teacher retention.

Research Objectives

1. To explore the aspects that contribute to employee retention.
2. To design the strategies to enhance employee retention at Assumption Learning Loft

Research Questions

1.What are the main aspects that contribute to employee retention in Assumption Learning Loft?

2. What strategies can be designed to enhance employee retention based on the findings?

Significance of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study is to better understand the challenges that Assumption Learning Loft (ALL) faces with employee retention. The overall operational strategies of the Assumption Learning Loft (ALL) will be strengthened by taking a close look at the favorable components that the organization has implemented thus far and the new components that the staff are envisioning for the future.

Scope and Limitation

The Assumption Learning Loft study on staff retention in Myanmar has several limitations. Four main areas of interest are covered in this study: career development, interpersonal relationships, employee retention, and perceived organizational support. The findings' applicability to other areas or organizations may be limited by the particular sociopolitical and economic circumstances. The depth of the data may be impacted by the qualitative research method used because there is a small sample size of local workers and management (from Twantay Township). The process of gathering data involves virtual video conferencing, which may have an impact on the insights obtained due to the lack of in-person interaction. Moreover, results that are not taken into consideration in this study may be impacted by abrupt changes in national laws or regulations.

Literature Review

Herzberg's Theory of Motivation

The workplace application of Herzberg's theory of motivation identifies two categories of motivating factors: 1) satisfiers (motivators), which are the primary causes of job satisfaction and include things like accomplishments, recognition, responsibility, and work advancement and 2) dissatisfiers (hygiene factors), which are the primary causes of job dissatisfaction and include things like working conditions, salaries, relationships with coworkers, administrative policies, and supervision (Alrawahi et al., 2020). Bernard (2012) further explained that motivators—also referred to as intrinsic factors—include opportunities for personal development, a sense of accomplishment, recognition, and growing responsibility. People are motivated to perform and feel satisfied by these features of their jobs. Yet, as contentment does not always translate into increased productivity, even while an individual may feel content and want to stay with an organization, this does not guarantee better performance. Abdulkhamidova (2021), also explained that to sustain even a minimal degree of job satisfaction, a person's work environment must prioritize hygiene. Job satisfaction is not directly influenced by these elements, but it might be negatively impacted by their absence. Benefits including competitive pay, employment stability, and social contacts with coworkers are a few examples of such elements. Herzberg claims that unsatisfactory work can result from a lack of satisfactory benefits, fair compensation, job stability, or socialization possibilities. Without ensuring the balance of the two aspects above, the employee retention will be a constant challenge for organizations.

The researcher employed Herzberg's theory because the framework offered by Herzberg's theory helps comprehend the two facets of employee retention. To effectively retain employees, the Assumption Learning Loft (ALL) must meet their basic requirements, which include fair compensation, job security, and favorable working circumstances (hygiene factors), in addition to offering possibilities for personal improvement, recognition, and increased responsibility (motivators). While motivators can promote long-term dedication and job satisfaction, the lack of hygienic aspects can cause discontent and employee attrition. Consequently, even if improved productivity may not always result from satisfaction alone, a balanced strategy that considers both sets of characteristics is essential for creating a work environment where individuals are both content and driven to stay. Organizations can gain a deeper understanding of the diverse demands of their workforce by implementing Herzberg's theory, which can lead to a more retention strategy.

Strategic Plan Development

Miskell, 2020 stated that strategic planning is used by public and private institutions to provide a road map to what an organization is, does, and for what purpose. Gordon & Fischer, 2015 noted that strategic planning requires information gathering, the development of strategic choices, and careful assessment of present decisions on future results. Strategic planning is the initial step in the assessment process. Without assessment, improvement in operational processes and results is problematic. Through assessment, organizations of all types develop the potential to become learning organizations. Obviously, strategic planning is more than a plan developed by senior management for others to implement. Rather the process is a collaborate 'action road map' structured to guide the institution's ongoing process that questions the status of current initiatives, changes in the environment, initiates new learning criteria and adjusts the guidance as new information becomes available. The basic elements of strategic plans are captured in three major steps: strategy formulation, implementation and evaluation. Each step is generally recognized to include important considerations and must be aligned with the institution's practice and outcomes measurement. Babic Krstevska and Bajrami (2023) stated that the strategic plan is a live document that engages all the internal and external stakeholders and should be consistently evaluated, revised, monitored, and updated in order to be relevant for further improvements. The strategic planning process in education encompasses three concrete phases that puts the organizational model into action and empowers leaders with critical information and strategies to bring decisions into focus.

Employee Retention and Interpersonal Relationships

Interpersonal Relationship- Determinants of faculty retention were researched to explore the relationship between interpersonal and faculty retention. For an organization to succeed, interpersonal interactions are essential, especially in educational contexts. The goal of this study is to comprehend how these relationships—with students, parents, coworkers, and management—affect faculty retention. Strong interpersonal ties are associated with higher levels of job satisfaction and productivity, underscoring their significance in retention tactics. In order to improve faculty retention, school administration needs to put in place strategies that cater to teachers' needs and satisfaction while encouraging good relationships amongst all parties involved. This study intends to investigate and evaluate faculty perceptions regarding how these interpersonal dynamics impact their choice to stay in their current roles, highlighting the crucial significance that interpersonal relationships play in the workplace (Devi & Subramanian, 2017).

Employee Retention and Career Development

The effect of career development, organizational commitment, and organizational support on employee retention in higher education institutions is examined (Figure 1) as authored by Ferdiana et al., (2023) The results of the study showed that the three elements—career development, organizational commitment, and organizational support—had a considerable combined impact on employee retention. Important management theories like Expectancy Theory and Social Exchange Theory are in line with these findings. According to expectation theory, workers are more motivated when they think their efforts will result in the outcomes they want, especially when it comes to advancing their careers. According to the Social Exchange Theory, workers are more inclined to stick with a company if they feel that they are being treated fairly and have their needs addressed. The study underscores the significance of career development opportunities, corporate commitment, and robust support systems provided by firms in improving employee retention rates. These tactics have the potential to improve employee satisfaction, foster a healthy work atmosphere, and eventually increase retention rates. This study provides evidence in favor of the idea that attending to these critical elements is essential to employee retention, which makes it an invaluable resource for research on retention tactics (Ferdiana et al., 2023).

Employee Retention and Perceived Organizational Support

In Hayatabad Industrial Estate Peshawar, the relationship between employee retention and perceived organizational support (POS) and the mediating function of organizational commitment validated several related theories according to Afridi et al. (2019). Employees who perceive good organizational support are more likely to stay with the company, according to research showing a significant positive association between POS and employee retention. Moreover, POS has a big impact on organizational commitment (OC), which in turn has a big impact on staff retention. The study also shows that OC mediates the association between staff retention and POS. According to this mediation, the increased organizational commitment may account for some of the POS's beneficial benefits on retention. Essentially, when staff members perceive that their commitment leads to higher retention rates. Employee engagement is essentially strengthened when they perceive support from their company, and this subsequently results in increased retention rates. The research also shows that cooperation, support, and good feedback at work all lead to increased employee retention rates. These elements highlight the significance of a positive work environment, which is necessary to guarantee commitment and employee happiness. The study's conclusions highlight how important management is in creating this kind of atmosphere, which is required to keep a loyal and contented workforce. Analyzing the mediating role of organizational commitment on the link between perceived organizational support and employee retention was the main goal of this study. The findings confirm that organizational commitment acts as a positive mediator in this relationship, hence enhancing the already established positive association between POS and employee retention (Afridi et al., 2019).

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this qualitative study was developed based on the results of previous research and the organizational diagnosis. Four key components of the concept are employee retention, interpersonal relationships, career development, and perceived organizational support. These factors are essential in establishing the effectiveness of the organization as a whole and the overall employee experience.

The ability of an organization or a business to retain its workforce over time is reflected in employee retention, which is a crucial indicator of organizational stability. Because it links an individual's objectives with the organization's goals, career development is crucial for fostering employee growth, work satisfaction, and long-term commitment. To create a happy and effective work environment, interpersonal relationships are crucial. They have a significant impact on teamwork, communication, and job satisfaction. The last reason perceived organizational support matters is that it shapes how much workers feel appreciated and a part of the institution, which influences their motivation and engagement. This conceptual framework aims to provide a deeper understanding of these aspects and how they support employee retention.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework Developed by Researcher
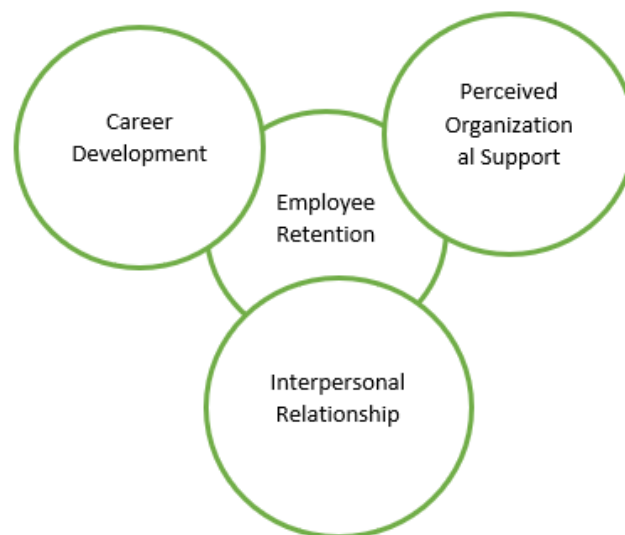
Research Methodology

Research Instrument

The researcher used the Appreciative Inquiry methodology, which includes the stages of Discovery, Dream, Design, and Destiny, to carefully design the qualitative study questions. The aspects of employee retention, interpersonal relationships, career development, and perceived organizational support—were addressed using this model. Four questions were created for each of these aspects, for a total of sixteen questions in all. The purpose of these questions was to provide in-depth insights. The researcher ensured a systematic and comprehensive examination of the participants' experiences, goals, and perspectives by matching the questions to the stages of the AI model. This provided a strong framework for examining the factors that influence employee retention at Assumption Learning Loft.

Data Collection

Virtual interviews were conducted as part of the data collection process. Eight informants in all, representing different responsibilities inside the Assumption Learning Loft, took part in the interviews. Employees and management personnel made up the informants, offering a diverse and well-rounded perspective on the retention problems. Furthermore, the researcher and two other coders examined the interview responses to spot recurring themes and guarantee the accuracy of the analysis of the qualitative data. Tables 6, 7, 8, and 9 present the common motifs for each stage of the AI cycle, accordingly.

To make sure every step of the AI model was covered, each interview was meticulously planned. With open-ended inquiries, informants were able to openly discuss their ideas and experiences. This methodology aided in gathering comprehensive, in-depth information that reflected the intricacies involved in staff retention at Assumption Learning Loft.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was used to examine the qualitative information acquired from the interview process. This approach comprised finding, examining, and summarizing trends (themes) in the data. The data was coded, codes were grouped into themes, and themes were then interpreted to produce significant insights. Through the application of thematic analysis, the researchers were able to gain a thorough grasp of the experiences and viewpoints of the participants as well as to methodically investigate the contributing factors to employee retention. View the coding process in the excel file in the annex.

Demographic Profile of the Informants in this Study

Table 1

Job Levels of Informants from Assumption Learning Loft

No.	Job levels of informants	Number of informants
1	Department heads	2
2	Full-time teachers	2
3	Part-time teachers	3
4	Administrative	1
Total		**8**

Table 2

Age Bracket of Informants from Assumption Learning Loft

No.	Age	Number of informants
1	18-24	7
2	25-30	1

Table 3

Years of Service of Informants from Assumption Learning Loft

No.	Year of Service	Number of informants
1	Less than a year	3
2	1 to 3 years	4
3	4 years above	1

Table 4

Education Level of Informants from Assumption Learning Loft

No.	Level of Education	Number of informants
1	High School (Grade 12)	4
2	Attending Bachelor Degree	2
3	Bachelor Degree	1
4	Master Graduate	1

Results and Discussion

Research Objective I: To explore the aspects that contribute to employee retention.

Table 5

Common Themes on Discovery Questions

Stage of AI	Variable	Question	Common Themes
Discovery	Interpersonal Relationships	Describe your top three good experiences with relationships at your workplace with your peers or your supervisor.	Positive Support and Guidance. Collaboration and Teamwork. Respect and understanding.
Discovery	Career Development	Please share three essential elements in creating encouragement for one to pursue your teaching career.	Fulfillment and satisfaction. Training and Development. Mentorship and Guidance.
Discovery	Perceived Organizational support	-What aspects of organizational support do you value the most? -Why are these important to you?	Stable income. Professional development. Supportive environment.
Discovery	Employee Retention	Describe the core strengths of your workplace that make it a great place to work.	Positive work environment. Benefits and Compensation. Team building and social activities.

Interpersonal Relationships (Discovery)

At the Assumption Learning Loft, a positive work environment is nurtured through three main themes: positive support and guidance, collaboration and teamwork, and respect and understanding. Informants highlighted the significance of receiving supportive mentorship and encouragement from both peers and supervisors, which fosters professional and personal growth. Collaboration and teamwork are also crucial, with staff members working closely together, learning from each other, and creating a supportive, family-like atmosphere. Additionally, a culture of respect and understanding ensures that all employees feel valued and heard, promoting open communication and mutual support. These elements collectively contribute to a cohesive and productive work environment.

Career Development (Discovery)

Informants at the Assumption Learning Loft expressed strong appreciation for factors contributing to their professional fulfillment and success, including a pleasant work environment, stable income, and proximity to family. They valued the flexibility of the role, which allowed personal growth despite educational limitations, and found inspiration in the teaching methods and achievements of their students. Commitment to training and development was also emphasized, with informants appreciating opportunities for professional learning and growth. Mentorship and guidance were recognized as crucial for both personal and professional development, providing support and encouragement essential for achieving fulfillment and overcoming challenges.

Perceived Organizational Support (Discovery)

Informants at the organization highly value three key aspects: stable income, professional development, and a supportive environment. They appreciate the financial security provided, including annual bonuses and support during illness, which significantly boosts job satisfaction. Professional development opportunities are also highly regarded, with the organization offering various training programs to help employees stay current and motivated. Additionally, the supportive environment—characterized by moral support, celebration of personal milestones, and a commitment to diversity—fosters a sense of belonging and respect. This nurturing atmosphere, which includes practical benefits like scholarships and problem-solving assistance, enhances overall job satisfaction and staff morale.

Employee Retention (Discovery)

Informants highly value three key aspects of their organization: a positive work environment, benefits and compensation, and team-building and social activities. They appreciate the supportive and inclusive culture, where employees are treated with respect and recognized for their contributions, contributing to higher engagement and job satisfaction. Competitive pay, regular salary adjustments, and accommodations for employees with families are seen as crucial for financial stability and retention. Additionally, team-building activities and social events, such as group meals and outreach activities, are cherished for fostering a sense of community and collaboration, enhancing overall workplace enjoyment and cohesion.

Research Objective II. To design the strategies to enhance employee retention at Assumption Learning Loft.

Dream Stage

During the Dream phase, the researcher-led conversations allowed employees to articulate their aspirations for a supportive and motivating work environment. By identifying potential growth opportunities, this collaborative dreaming is expected to form a shared vision that could ultimately improve employee retention.

Table 6

Common Themes on Dream Questions

Stage of AI	Variable	Question	Common Themes
Dream	Interpersonal Relationships	Describe the ideal type of interpersonal relationships you want to see at your workplace.	Approachability and Support. Respect for Diversity. Clear Communication.
Dream	Career Development	Describe your vision for your career development in 3 to 5 years.	Growth and Advancement. Skill Enhancement. Financial Consideration
Dream	Perceived Organizational support	What sort of organizational support do you wish to be introduced at your workplace?	Compensation and Financial Support. Career Development and Growth Opportunities. Employee Recognition and Appreciation.
Dream	Employee Retention	What sort of talent would you wish to retain?	Qualification and skills. Commitment to development. Interpersonal skills.

Dream Stage (Interpersonal Relationships)

In the Dream stage of international relationships, employees envision a work environment characterized by three key themes: approachability and support, respect for diversity, and clear communication. They desire a culture where approachability fosters collaboration and personal growth, with team members feeling comfortable seeking advice and encouragement. Respect for diversity is also crucial, as employees hope for an inclusive environment where different backgrounds are valued and understood, leading to greater empathy and creative problem-solving. Finally, they emphasize the importance of clear and transparent communication, advocating for consistency in task instructions, professional behavior, and empathy in interactions. By prioritizing these elements, the center can create a supportive, inclusive, and communicative workplace that enhances team dynamics and achieves organizational goals.

Dream Stage (Career Development)

In the Dream phase of career development, employees prioritize three key aspects: growth and advancement, skill enhancement, and financial considerations. They seek clear pathways for professional growth, including opportunities to explore new roles and attain educational milestones, such as advanced degrees or new career fields. Skill enhancement is also critical, with employees expressing a need for continuous development in areas like language proficiency and emotional intelligence, as well as skill diversification. Additionally, financial considerations are significant, with employees advocating for fair compensation that reflects their achievements and adjusting for economic changes, while some explore alternative career paths or opportunities abroad to improve their financial prospects.

Dream Stage (Perceived Organizational Support)

In the Dream stage of Perceived Organizational Support, employees emphasize the importance of stable income, professional development, and a supportive environment. They advocate for fair compensation adjustments based on tenure and pension plans to enhance morale and loyalty. Career development is also crucial, with employees seeking more opportunities for skill enhancement and guidance, including training in diverse areas like computing and accounting. Additionally, recognizing and appreciating employee contributions is vital for a positive work atmosphere, with suggestions for consistent recognition and attention to detail in company events. By addressing these needs, organizations can boost employee satisfaction, engagement, and overall performance.

Dream Stage (Employee Retention)

In the Dream stage of employee retention, three key characteristics emerge as highly valued: qualifications and skills, commitment to development, and interpersonal skills. Employees emphasize the importance of retaining staff with relevant qualifications and expertise, including the integration of experienced external educators. They also stress the need for a commitment to personal and professional growth, highlighting the value of sharing knowledge and continuous self-improvement. Interpersonal and communication skills are equally important, with a focus on maintaining staff who are humble, effective communicators, and cooperative team members. By prioritizing these attributes, organizations can foster a skilled, motivated, and collaborative workforce.

Design Stage

In the Design phase, the researcher helps turn employees' shared vision into a practical organizational strategy. By facilitating brainstorming sessions, employees collaborate to develop projects aligned with their ideal workplace, focusing on professional growth, teamwork, and fostering a culture of gratitude. This inclusive approach ensures that new policies, programs, and frameworks meet employees' needs, leading to a clear, actionable roadmap that enhances worker engagement and satisfaction.

Table 7

Common Themes on Design Questions

Stage of AI	Variable	Question	Common Themes
Design	Interpersonal Relationships	What should be effective actions in interpersonal relationships you'd like to suggest bringing about work productive and favorable environment?	Effective Communication Approaching Issues Listening and Feedback
Design	Career Development	Describe the concrete step or actions you would ensure to achieve your envisioned career development.	Skills Development Personal Development
Design	Perceived Organizational support	What are the concrete actions needed to obtain your envisaged organizational support?	Compensation and Financial Considerations Professional Development and Teacher Growth Recognition and Appreciation Feedback and Communication
Design	Employee Retention	What specific actions, in your opinion, will you take to retain talent?	Recruitment and qualification Professional development and training Compensation and benefits

Design Stage (Interpersonal Relationships)

In the Design stage of interpersonal relationships, three key themes emerged: Effective Communication, Approaching Issues, and Listening and Feedback. Employees emphasized the need for open, honest communication to build trust and foster a collaborative work environment. Proactive problem-solving was highlighted as essential for addressing workplace challenges and promoting accountability. Active listening and respectful, constructive feedback were also seen as critical for promoting growth and maintaining a culture of mutual respect. Together, these elements create a supportive organizational atmosphere where collaboration, creativity, and innovation can thrive.

Design Stage (Career Development)

In the Design stage of career development, two key themes emerged: continuous learning and skills development. Employees emphasized the importance of ongoing education and training for both personal and organizational success. Examples included improving English proficiency, pursuing academic degrees, and self-study in subjects like anatomy and communication. Skills development focused on acquiring practical competencies necessary for career growth, such as learning color theory for the beauty industry, understanding child development, and gaining expertise in teaching methods. These themes underscore the need for continuous improvement and actively seeking opportunities to align new skills with professional goals.

Design Stage (Perceived Organizational Support)

In the Design stage of perceived organizational support, four key themes emerged: compensation, professional development, recognition, and communication. Fair compensation was seen as essential for financial stability and retaining quality teachers. Employees also valued opportunities for professional growth through peer observation and feedback, emphasizing a culture of continuous learning. Recognition of teachers' efforts was highlighted as crucial for motivation and workplace unity. Effective communication, including open feedback and collaboration, was seen as vital for addressing issues and fostering a cooperative work environment. These themes underscore the importance of support in enhancing teacher satisfaction and performance.

Design Stage (Employee Retention)

In the Design stage of employee retention, four key themes emerged: personal development, fostering a positive culture, management support, and effective communication. Personal development, through ongoing training and skill-building, was seen as essential for both individual and organizational growth. Promoting a positive work culture, with fair recruitment and recognition practices, was emphasized for boosting morale and inclusivity. Strong management support, particularly in addressing financial concerns and investing in employee training, was highlighted as crucial. Lastly, effective communication was recognized as vital for problem-solving, collaboration, and creating a cohesive, open work environment that encourages idea-sharing and growth.

Destiny Stage

The Destiny phase of Appreciative Inquiry focuses on sustaining the initiatives developed during the Design phase by implementing programs, policies, and structures that foster professional growth, teamwork, and a culture of appreciation. By actively participating in this process, employees take ownership of the projects, ensuring the improvements align with their evolving needs. Ongoing feedback and adaptation are prioritized, helping the organization remain dynamic and resilient. This phase enhances employee engagement and satisfaction, creating a thriving workplace where individuals feel valued and motivated to contribute to the organization's success.

Table 8

Common Themes on Destiny Questions

Stage of AI	Variable	Question	Common Themes
Destiny	Interpersonal Relationships	What steps can you take to sustain and enhance the positive aspects of our relationship that we've identified?	Promoting Positive Culture Management Support Effective Communication
Destiny	Career Development	Please share three essential elements in creating encouragement for one to pursue your teaching career.	Career Development and Growth Organizational Support Feedback and Evaluation Experiential Learning
Destiny	Perceived Organizational support	What aspects of organizational support do you value the most? Why are these important to you?	Compensation and Salary Reviews Professional Development and Training Open Communication

Stage of AI	Variable	Question	Common Themes
Destiny	Employee Retention	Describe the core strengths of your workplace that make it a great place to work.	Recruitment and Promotion Processes Compensation and Financial Considerations Professional Development and Individual Growth

Destiny Stage (Interpersonal Relationships)

In the Destiny phase of interpersonal relationships, three key themes emerged: promoting a positive culture, management support, and effective communication. A positive culture is built on mutual respect, recognition, and clear task planning to ensure employees feel valued. Strong management support is essential, with leaders fostering an open environment where employees can voice concerns and take on well-defined roles. Effective communication, including open discussions and constructive feedback, was emphasized as crucial for teamwork and reducing misunderstandings. Together, these elements enhance collaboration, engagement, and overall workplace satisfaction.

Destiny Stage (Career Development)

In the Destiny phase of career development, key themes include career growth, organizational support, feedback, and experiential learning. Employees emphasized the importance of actively seeking educational and skill-building opportunities, whether through formal education, independent study, or mentorship. Organizational support, such as training sessions and mentorship from senior staff, plays a crucial role in fostering employee growth. Feedback and self-evaluation guide professional development, aligning individual goals with organizational expectations. Experiential learning, through practical, hands-on experience, is seen as vital for improving skills and achieving career advancement. Together, these elements create a culture of continuous learning and development.

Destiny Stage (Perceived Organizational Support)

In the Destiny phase of Appreciative Inquiry, the key themes of compensation and salary reviews, professional development and training, and open communication are crucial for fostering a positive organizational culture. Systematic salary evaluations ensure fairness and alignment with organizational goals, while structured professional development programs provide staff with opportunities to enhance their skills through clear strategies and peer feedback. Open communication is vital for continuous growth, with emphasis on creating a supportive environment where employees can freely express ideas and receive regular, constructive feedback. Together, these elements promote a productive, engaged, and flourishing workplace.

Destiny Stage (Employee Retention)

The Destiny phase of Appreciative Inquiry focuses on fostering a positive workplace through compensation reviews, professional development, and open communication. Fair salary evaluations ensure equity, while structured training programs and peer feedback support continuous skill improvement. Open communication promotes a supportive environment where employees can freely share ideas and receive constructive feedback, driving engagement and productivity within the organization.

Findings and Discussion

The findings from Assumption Learning Loft align closely with Herzberg's Theory of Motivation, particularly in how they address both satisfiers (motivators) and dissatisfiers (hygiene factors) to enhance employee retention. By exploring the key themes that emerged from the Destiny phase of the Appreciative Inquiry based on interpersonal relationships, career development, perceived organizational support, and employee retention, we can see how Herzberg's dual-factor theory provides a valuable framework for understanding and improving these areas.

1.Interpersonal Relationships and Positive Culture

Findings: Herzberg's theory suggests that interpersonal relationships, while not directly increasing job satisfaction, can lead to dissatisfaction if poorly managed. Findings from Assumption Learning Loft emphasize the need for a positive culture and effective communication to maintain healthy relationships.

Discussion: Promoting mutual respect and recognition aligns with Herzberg's view that poor interpersonal relations can cause dissatisfaction. Implementing a reward system and planning tasks in advance helps set clear expectations and mitigate dissatisfaction, supporting the notion that while these actions may not boost motivation, they prevent dissatisfaction.

2.Management Support

Findings: Management support addresses both hygiene factors and motivators. Supportive management prevents dissatisfaction, while proactive involvement in organizing tasks enhances feelings of accomplishment and responsibility.

Discussion: Employees value management that is both supportive and engaged. This aligns with Herzberg's theory that supportive management ensures baseline satisfaction, while active leadership and responsibility can motivate higher job satisfaction and long-term commitment.

3.Effective Communication

Findings: Effective communication addresses both hygiene factors and motivators. It prevents misunderstandings and dissatisfaction while also facilitating recognition and feedback.

Discussion: The Assumption Learning Loft's findings highlight the importance of open communication, supporting Herzberg's theory. Holding meetings and feedback sessions helps prevent dissatisfaction and motivates employees by recognizing their contributions and guiding their growth.

4. Career Development and Growth

Findings: Career development and growth are key motivators, providing employees with a sense of accomplishment and personal advancement, which Herzberg identifies as vital for job satisfaction.

Discussion: The focus on skill enhancement and continuous learning at Assumption Learning Loft reflects Herzberg's motivators. Employees' proactive efforts in improving their skills and seeking mentorship highlight their commitment to personal and professional growth, which enhances job satisfaction and strengthens their dedication to the organization.

5. Compensation and Financial Considerations

Findings: Compensation is a key hygiene factor. While it may not boost job satisfaction, inadequate pay can lead to dissatisfaction and impact retention.

Discussion: The Assumption Learning Loft's findings highlight the need for fair compensation and systematic salary reviews. This aligns with Herzberg's theory, emphasizing that addressing compensation issues is crucial for preventing dissatisfaction and ensuring employee retention.

6. Recruitment and Promotion Processes

Findings: Recruitment and promotion processes impact both hygiene factors and motivators. Transparent and fair procedures prevent dissatisfaction, while promotion opportunities motivate through recognition and increased responsibility.

Discussion: The suggestions for improving recruitment and defining job roles align with Herzberg's theory, ensuring fairness to prevent dissatisfaction. Structured promotion processes also serve as motivators by offering clear paths for advancement and recognition, boosting job satisfaction and commitment.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Implications for the Organization: Strategic Directions based on the results of the study

1. Review and update job descriptions and interview processes to attract qualified candidates to ensure this initial process help the recruit the right people. Regularly evaluate salary structures to ensure fairness and alignment with employee qualifications and market conditions.

2. Establish structured training programs with clear criteria for skill-building, including teaching methods and relevant technical skills for staff. Facilitate knowledge-sharing sessions, peer feedback opportunities, and dedicated courses to support continuous professional and personal growth.

3. Create a strong feedback system between supervisor and subordinates with regular performance reviews and open communication channels, encouraging staff to express opinions and contribute to their development.

4. Implement mentorship programs that pair less experienced staff with seasoned professionals to accelerate skill development. Develop personalized growth plans that align individual strengths with team and organizational objectives.

5. To organize training sessions that concentrate on cultivating staff support abilities like empathy and active listening which can enhance communication, interpersonal relationships, and collaboration among staff.

Conclusion

This qualitative research on staff retention at Assumption Learning Loft (ALL) in Myanmar examines key factors impacting staff retention in politically and economically unstable settings. Despite attractive compensation, development opportunities, and facilities, ALL struggles with retaining staff, particularly male teachers, due to economic instability,

competition from new private schools, and job opportunities abroad. Political instability and regulatory changes further complicate retention efforts.

The study finds that cultivating a positive workplace culture through mutual respect, recognition, and a structured reward system is crucial for enhancing employee morale and commitment. Clear career pathways, regular training, and competitive salary reviews are essential for professional growth and fairness. Open communication and transparent promotion and compensation guidelines are also critical for increasing retention and fostering a stable, productive environment.

Overall, the study offers practical recommendations for ALL and similar institutions to improve staff retention, boost organizational productivity, and manage challenges in unstable contexts.

Recommendations for future study

Based on the findings, future research should be done to determine how these recommendations specifically affect employee retention and satisfaction in other organizations such as non-profit organizations (NGOs) settings in Myanmar. Further research would be beneficial to have an understanding of how putting such findings into practice affects employee satisfaction and organizational success over the long run.

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