Loyalty Building of Professional Talents Through Organizational Involvement

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Abstract

In the current context of fierce competition, loyalty-building of Human Resources is one of the priority objectives of organizations, as competence is able to create a competitive advantage. As the present generations, in addition to salary motivation, are interested in taking psychological needs into account, this study has enabled us to conclude that the development of the affective dimension of organizational involvement is able to contribute to the retention of skills considered strategic.

Keywords:

Loyalty, Organizational involvement, Intention to leave, Human Resources Management.

1. Introduction

In today's fiercely competitive economic environment, Human Resources is the foundation on which organizations build sustainable competitive advantage. Organizations are therefore implementing loyalty policies adapted to their context and aimed at reducing as much as possible the intentions to leave and departure of employees, especially those with skills deemed strategic. According to Lachance, (2011) "the success of a company inevitably depends on its ability to acquire the skills necessary for its growth, to retain its personnel, to develop it, and even better, to retain it". Indeed, given the exacerbation of competition, organizations feel comfortable because of the ease of technological piracy and sales and marketing strategies. Human Resources then find themselves to be one of the main assets that cannotperfectly imitated and create a sustainable competitive advantage. Indeed, employee loyalty is an important issue that is a crucial pillar of corporate strategy, to which many companies allocate a significant portion of their resources. Loyalty has been a key issue in human resources management for many years. Human resources managers have understood that a qualified and competent employee represents a specific human capital and offers a competitive advantage for the company employing them. However, in order to gain in economic performance, in adaptability to technological changes, and to achieve its objectives, the company has to value, develop and retain its employees with a better commitment and involvement. In this new context, human resources have become an important asset and a source of competitiveness and performance and not a cost or a burden as traditional management thinks.

It is therefore appropriate and justified to rely on the skills and knowledge of people through management practices aimed at permanently developing existing potential and putting in place the necessary measures to build loyalty and commitment to the company's projects and strategies. According to Peretti, employee loyalty bears on "all measures to reduce voluntary employee departures". A loyal employee is one who has "significant seniority in the company, a very low propensity to seek and examine external job offers and, in general, a strong sense of belonging". Loyalty is a factor as long as it avoids the loss of skills, knowledge, and know-how. To grasp the intricacies of the concept loyalty, it is necessary to understand the nature of loyalty and place it in the organizational context. This is why the mechanisms of employee loyalty are widely developed, to better understand the processes that lead to employee loyalty.

Numerous studies have shown that organizational involvement negatively correlates with the intention to leave the organization [Meyer et al. 2002b; Mathieu and Zajac, 1990]. This gives us an alternative view of the effects of this concept on staff retention. This study subscribes itself under the development of retention strategies for organizations' key competencies. Its main objective is to check the existence of links between the dimension of perceived organizational involvement and

staff retention. This could represent, in social science research, a contribution to the literature oncorporate retention strategy of key competencies in an uncertain environment.

The organization's human capital is seen as a strategic resource in that the knowledge, skills and professional abilities it includes are scarce, imperfectly imitable and non-substitutable (Penrose, 1959, Barney 1991). However,although they fulfil the conditions for a sustainable source of competitive advantage, the potential problem with human resources is that they can leave the company overnight and sometimes they put themselves at the service of the competition. Fostering strong organizational commitment among employees, supported by positive and caring perceptions of the company felt through the quality of the employment relationship could, in our opinion, represent an alternative for staff retention. Indeed, the agent could be attached to the company because it allows them to satisfy their needs, while at the same time they feel a strong sense of belonging to it. Just as they may well be emotionally attached to the company, they may decide to leave it all the same because it would not allow them to meet their multiple social and family obligations.

However, several studies clearly show that many factors such as mood swings, turbulent social climate and the frequency of job offers from competitors indicate that there is a risk that intentions to leave may be transformed into actual departures that are detrimental to the stability of the company. This has aroused our interest in the need to measure the level of staff loyalty and to study the impact that organizational involvement could have on the implementation of a staff retention strategy. Our study bears on the concept of organizational involvement for staff retention within companies, a concept that translates and makes explicit the relationship between the individual and their working environment (Thévenet, 2004) and whose negation with turnover is established (Meyer and Allen, 1991; Vandenberghe et al. 2009). Bearing on the premise that organizational involvement plays an important role in staff retention, we formulated the following research question and the main research hypotheses:

Q1: What is the impact of organizational involvement on employee retention in companies?

Our research question is reformulated into the following research hypothesis and three secondary hypotheses:

- (H_1) Degree of organizational involvement determines the level of staff loyalty.

- (H_2) Level of staff departure intention is high for a company that has several direct competitors.

- (H_3) The calculated dimension of organizational involvement is most representative at the staff level.

- (H_4) The affective dimension of organizational commitment positively influences the level of staff retention.

2. Theoretical Approach

2.1 Staff retention:

A person is considered loyal when he or she is able to contribute to performance while having a low propensity to seek work outside the organization (Peretti, Swalhi, 2007). Thus, loyalty is often associated with turnover, even though its origins are many (Darmon, 1994). Indeed, departure may be taken at the initiative of the organization or the individual. The employee loyalty scheme, defined as the set of measures to reduce the voluntary departure of employees (Peretti, 1999), is concerned only with voluntary departures on their own initiative. Loyalty and turnover are therefore linked without confusion. In the end, it is a question of physical loyalty, i.e. whether or not employees are present in the organization, compared with other organizations (Renaud Petit and Véronique Zardet, 2017). Indeed, loyal employees offer many advantages for the company because, in general, they capitalize on knowledge (Pina e Cunha, 2002), provide extra effort at work (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982), serve as representatives of the company outside (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986) and, finally, go beyond the norm by providing the "little extra" that makes the company function well (Organ, 1988). The distinction between loyalty and retention is as follows: according to Paillé (2004, p. 5): "Loyalty emphasizes individual conduct in a

professional situation, while retention leads the company to mobilize management systems to obtain the loyalty of its employees". Employee loyalty is therefore what loyalty practices hope to generate: a psychological state that reflects a form of employee attachment to the organization (Thévenet&Neveu, 2002).

The HRM literature distinguishes two forms of employee loyalty to the company. The first is an Anglo-Saxon conception presented by Luchak (2003).The author considers two forms of loyalty: affective and emotional attachment and rational and calculated attachment. The Francophone conception, presented by in Peretti (2001) taxonomy, distinguishes three forms of work loyalty: real loyalty, conditional loyalty and facade loyalty. When we look at the definitions of the categories listed by Luchak (2003) and Peretti (2001), we already see differences in the way HRM researchers classify the different types of loyalty. In fact, these different forms of loyalty include elements of job satisfaction and organizational involvement. Indeed, "the application of the notion of loyalty to HRM raises the question of the quality of professional relationships" (Paillé, 2004, p. 15). Thus, in order to better understand the notion of employee loyalty, we will present below its determinants: job satisfaction and organizational involvement. These two notions are the key variables in most of the turnover models existing in the Anglo-Saxon literature, according to the meta-analysis carried out by Steel and Lounsbury (2009). The authors show that at least one of these notions is present in every classic turnover model. Job satisfaction and organizational involvement are also unavoidable variables in turnover models in the francophone literature (Colle et al., 2005; Meyssonnier & Roger, 2006; Neveu, 1996; Palmero, 2000).

The concept of loyalty to an organization, from a management perspective, is complex because it touches on the affective dimension and is difficult to measure. In fact, calculating turnover alone is not enough to measure loyalty. This is why many researchers have chosen to focus on the motivation of the intention to leave, understood as a process, instead of only addressing the observed behavior of actual departures. For example, Neveu (1996) proposed a sequential conceptual framework illustrating the relationship: attitude - intention - behavior. We can see that the criteria for evaluating loyalty become more complex as work on this issue unfolds, to the point that these criteria are closer to those

of attractiveness. In the end, the two concepts of loyalty and attractiveness cannot be studied separately, and recent work clearly illustrates the idea that the main common lever seems to be the involvement of people in the workplace (Renaud Petit and Véronique Zardet 2017).

2.2 Organizational Involvement

The first conceptualization of involvement came from Morrow in 1983 who conceived atypology of five dimensions, namely: value orientation at work, career orientation, work orientation, organization orientation and finally union orientation. For the purposes of our study, it is organization orientation, i.e. organizational involvement, that we will examine. (Renaud Petit and Véronique Zardet, 2017). Theories of organizational involvement represent a fruitful perspective. Involvement corresponds to "behavior and attitude characterized by a strong belief in the goals and value of the organization, a willingness to make significant efforts for the benefit of the organization and a strong desire to remain a member of it" (Mowday, al., 1982). Other approaches have combined involvement and loyaltytheories from a multidimensional perspective that admits three components of involvement: affective, calculated (or instrumental), and normative (Allen, Meyer, 1991).

2.2.1 Affective involvement

Emotional involvement was the only form of organizational involvement identified in early research on this topic (Buchanan, 1974; Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979; Sheldon, 1971). Affective organizational involvement has been defined as "an emotional identification with, and attachment to, the organization" (Bentein et al., 2004, p. 1) through identification with the organization (T. E. Becker & Billings, 1993; Lodhal&Kejner, 1965) and attachment to values (Buchanan, 1974). Mowday et al. (1979, p. 226) define organizational involvement as "the reflection of an employee's affective response to the organization as a whole". Finally, it should be noted that job satisfaction factors reinforce emotional involvement with the organization (Carmeli, 2003; Cheng & Stockdale, 2003; Mathieu &Zajac, 1990; Meyer, Allen, & Smith, 1993; Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, &Topolnytsky, 2002;

Neveu, 1996; Paik, Parboteeah, & Shim, 2007; Somers, 1995).

2.2.2 Calculated involvement

The second form of organizational involvement is calculated involvement, i.e., the perception of the costs associated with leaving the organization. This form of involvement is also called "continuity involvement" (Bentein et al., 2004). It is "based on the perceived costs of breaking the contractual link with the firm and on cost avoidance" (Bentein et al., 2004, p. 2). McGee and Ford (1987) identify two dimensions of calculated involvement: perceived sacrifices and perceived lack of alternatives. The rational individual first calculates the impact of the loss of investment in the firm they might leave (Kanter, 1968). The employee therefore remains involved in the organization until he or she has obtained a return on his or her investment in the company (H. S. Becker, 1985). Starting from the observation that salary is the individual's primary motivation (March & Simon, 1958), Commeiras and Fournier (2000) put forward the idea that the relationship between the employee and the organization is mainly rational. As for the relationship between "calculated involvement" and "job satisfaction", it is not obvious. While some researchers show that there is no relationship between the two variables (Cooper-Hakim &Viswesvaran, 2005; Crossley et al., 2007), others find negative (Carmeli, 2003; Meyer et al., 2002) or positive relationships (Mignonac, 2002).

2.2.3 Normative involvement

Normative involvement is the third dimension of organizational involvement. It represents "an attitude of loyalty to the organization, derived from a sense of moral obligation towards it" (Bentein et al., 2004, p. 1). Normative involvement thus has an effect on employee loyalty through the moral obligation to remain a member of the organization according to the pressures of the norm (Wiener, 1982) and morality (Kidron, 1978).

However, the affective dimension seems to be closest to our positioning of loyalty/loyalty-building. In fact, the willingness and above all the need of organizations to retain staff on a long-term basis is part of an understanding of the relationship of involvement (Thévenet, 1992). Beyond the companies' desire to "seduce", some employees are attached, for different reasons, to theirorganizations. This attachment may lead them to reject external opportunities and accept short-term sacrifices in favor of a long-term relationship (Porter, al., 1979). The levers for building loyalty to an organization are multiple and are not limited to a simple salary increase, which is sometimes not enough or no longer sufficient (Commeiras, Fournier, 2003 cited by (Renaud Petit and Véronique Zardet 2017).

2.3. Links between loyalty and organizational involvement

The link between these two concepts comes in the definitions of organizational involvement, especially that of Meyer and Allen, (1991, P. 67) for whom "organizational involvement reflects a psychological state that characterizes the relationship between an employee and his or her organization and influences the decision to maintain or terminate that membership. (Ida Rachel OUEDRAOGO, Désiré Boniface SOME, 2016) Indeed, the nature of the relationship between the individual and their organization conditions the degree of attachment of the individual to the organization and is a determining factor of the decision to remain or leave this organization, thus reflecting their level of loyalty. Mowday et al. (1982) defines organizational involvement as "behavior and attitude characterized by a strong belief in the aims and values of the organization, a willingness to make significant efforts for the benefit of the organization and a strong desire to remain a member". This definition suggests a link between organizational involvement and the intention to leave, and therefore staff loyalty. Many studies have shown that organizational commitment negatively correlateswith the intention to leave (Meyer et al. 2002; Mathieu and Zajac, 1990). Thus, according to Wasti (2005), intention to leave is much lower for highly involved employees and those whose profile combines strong emotional and normative involvement than for other involvement profiles. According to Meyer and colleagues (2002) all forms of organizational involvement strongly correlate with the intention to leave the

organization" (Ida Rachel OUEDRAOGO, Désiré Boniface SOME, 2016).

Finally, the literature confirms that it is through multidimensional actions that staff loyalty can be achieved. This assumption supports our hypothesis, since the levers for improving involvement consolidate loyalty and stimulate the attractiveness of the organization, and vice versa. Under this perspective, a person is loyal to his or her organization when he or she can prove significant seniority and disinterest in external professional opportunities, but also when he or she adopts a line of conduct in his or her work that favors continuous effort and avoids any act that might deliberately disrupt the functioning of his or her organization (Paillé, 2005). For an employee to be loyal, many conditions have therefore to be met: he or she is satisfied with his or her work, has good relationships with his or her colleagues, and the organization offers values in terms of management style (Brami, 2013) and equity between members (Meysonnier, 2006 cited by (Renaud Petit and Véronique Zardet, 2017).

3. The study

This section is intended to enrich our theoretical framework and to affirm or invalidate our research hypotheses.

3.1. Methodology

The study opted for a quantitative approach. The aim is to test our hypotheses. The rigor and precision of statistical techniques offer a great guarantee of objectivity. We opted for a questionnaire-based survey is because of the nature of the studied concepts and the desire to interview many employees.

3.1.1. Data collection procedure and sample

The data were collected using a questionnaire with 18 items, i.e., six (6) items for each dimension of organizational involvement. For retention, we used the measure of "intention to leave", which, according to Fishbein & Ajzen, (1975), is "the best indicator of the adoption of actual departure behavior". In order to

measure loyalty, we were inspired by the model of Michel Cossette and Alain Gosselin, (2009), which we adapted to the context of the study.

The questionnaire was administered online through e-mail. The approximate return rate was 47%, or 148 questionnaires, of which 43 were not usable. The actual return rate is therefore 41%. The survey population is made up of employees from different activity sectors. It is consisting of 20 per cent females and 80 per cent males, i.e., 18 women and 87 men. The 105 surveyed employees are between 25 and 55 years of age. The distribution of the socio-professional categories is as follows: senior managers (10%), i.e., 14 agents, executive agents (10%), i.e., 41 agents, middle management (10%), i.e., 50 agents. As for the occupation variable, 40% of the sample are technicians, i.e., 42 agents, 35% are sales staff, i.e., 37 agents, and 25% are administrative staff, i.e., 26. The quota sampling method was used for this survey in order to better highlight the level of staff involvement and retention according to the variables gender, age, professional categories and occupation.

3.2. Results

3.2.1. Measuring loyalty

Studying employee retention through measuring "intention to leave" of our survey population, we found that 24% have an intention to leave the company. This level is 25% for males and 17% for females. With regard to age, the finding is that the 25 to 35 age group, i.e. the youngest, have a stronger intention to leave, i.e. 34%, followed by the over 35 age group with 21% and finally 15% of the over 45 age group. With regard to the level of retention by professional category, the finding is that the senior management category records 43% of intention to leave, followed by the middle management category with 26% and finally 15% for executive agents. With regard to the occupation variable, we note that intention to leave is 31% among technicians, 22% among sales staff and finally 15% among administrative staff. This allows us to confirm our secondary hypothesis N°H1 according to which, "staff departure intention is quite high for a company that has several competitors on the market".

3.2.2. Measuring involvement by dimension

Our analysis of organizational involvement determined for each dimension the number of people in the survey population who identified with that dimension. "calculated" involvement represented by 51% of the sample, "normative" involvement with 19% and "affective" involvement with 30%. As forinvolvement by gender, men are more emotionally involved than women, with 33% of men and 17% of women. Normative involvement is 22% for women and 16% for men. As for calculated involvement, women are a majority with 61% against 48% for men. With regard to involvement by age group, we found that emotional involvement is higher, i.e. 41%, for those over 45 years of age, and lower, i.e. 30% and 23%, for those over 35 years of age and those over 25 years of age. Normative involvement, on the other hand, is relatively low, 17% for the first age group and gradually rises to 19% and 22% for the upper age groups. Calculated involvement is 60% for the first age group and gradually declines to 51% and 37% for the upper age groups. As for involvement by professional category, we found that executive agents are emotionally more involved with 37% against 30% and 14% respectively for middle and senior managers, whose calculated involvement predominates with 64% for senior managers and 50% for middle managers against 46% for executive agents. Finally, involvement by profession shows us that technicians record a higher percentage for the calculated dimension with 57% against 46% for administrative staff and 46% for sales staff. For emotional involvement, administrative staff record the highest percentage with 35% against 32% for sales staff and 26% for technicians. therefore, we can therefore deduce that calculated involvement has the highest percentage, i.e. 51%, compared to 30% and 19% respectively for emotional involvement and normative involvement. This confirms our secondary hypothesis N°H2 according to which, "calculated involvement is the most representative for the staff of the companies under study".

3.2.3 Impact of the dimensions of organizational involvement on loyalty.

The study of the level of loyalty by dimension of organizational involvement provides us with information on the proportion of the survey populationwhoexpress more intention to leave than to remain in the company. The distribution of people expressing their intention to leave for each dimension is as follows: those with calculated involvement are at the top and represent 36%, as opposed to 20% with normative involvement and only 6% with affective involvement. Then, we can deduce that the dimension of organizational involvementthat has the most positive influence on staff loyalty in our sample is the affective dimension. We then confirm our hypothesis N°H3 according to which "Affective involvement positively affects staff loyalty". Worth noting is that the highest percentage of departure intentions is essentially found with calculated involvement, less with affective involvement and moderate with normative involvement. Taking as an example the age variable, which records 34% in the 25-35 age group, i.e. the highest rate of departure intentions, it also records the highest percentage of calculated involvement with 60% and the lowest rate of affective involvement with 23%. This allows us to confirm our main hypothesis (H) according to which, "Ddegree of organizational involvement determines the level of staff loyalty within companies", yet it is above all the affective dimension and the normative dimension to a lesser extent, which have a positive and lasting impact on staff loyalty.

3.3. Discussion of Results

We noticethat 36%participants with calculated involvementexpressed an intention to leave. These results may somewhat reflect the specificity of the context where satisfaction with social obligations, especially financial, takes precedence over any other consideration of an emotional nature towards one's organization. The study of loyalty revealed, as far as the age variable is concerned, that the older the employee, the more the "intention to leave" decreases. This may be explained by fewer job opportunities offered to older employees or a lack of interest in changing companies because of the benefits gained through seniority. For our sample companies, the remuneration policy that favors seniority may be one of the main reasons behind this decrease in the intention to leave expressed byolder employees. As for the professional category, the finding is that the highest categories with higher employability on the labor market

are those with the highest intention to leave. In terms of retention by occupation, technicians express more intentions to leave, followed by sales and administrative staff. This can be explained by the frequency of job offers for technicians from competitors and the advantages they offer. In addition, technicians have more means to achieve their goals through private initiative. This also explains the high rate of voluntary departure intentions recorded in this professional group. Moreover, an analysis of retention by age, occupation and professional category allows us to understand why, in terms of departures, the majority is made up of young people, technicians and senior managers. The latter, who hold the strategic skills, are therefore the preferred target of the competition. Fororganizational involvement, this study shows that it is a function of age, with older employees being more emotionally involved than younger ones. This confirms the results obtained by Meyer and Allen (1984), whofound that the older employees are, the more emotionally involved they are. In terms of occupation, the higher the category, the lower the level of emotional involvement and the higher the calculated level of involvement. This finding can be explained by the achievement needs experienced by managers as opposed to line managers who generally aspire to satisfy physiological and safety needs. With regard to profession, administrative staff are more emotionally involved, followed by sales staff and finally technicians. At this level too, we found that technicians are the category that feels the least emotional attachment to the company. This could explain their fairly high level of intention to leave. The above results confirm that there is a positive impact of organizational involvement on staff loyalty, but more particularly the affective dimension of organizational involvement. In fact, the loyalty variables measured are reflected in the measure of organizational involvement, since those with a high level of calculated involvement are the same ones that have a high intention to leave, while those with a high level of affective involvement have a low intention to leave.

4. Conclusion

We have tried to show that attracting and retaining staff is complex and depends on many variables. Our study shows that the easiest levers for attracting, and above all making staff loyal and involve them, are intrinsic

to the company. Accordingly, there is a significant room for developing both local management practices and company management. The challenge is to allocate energies on "mental" loyalty (Petit, 2008; Petit, 2012), i.e. employee involvement. Consequently, management's and executives' allocation of more internal resources (time, training, etc.) to management practices allows for greater staff involvement. Moreover, if we assume that an individual involved in their work has a more positive image of theirorganization, then they are likely to make it more attractive. Finally, our main question about the impact of organizational involvement on staff loyalty-building has been answered adequately, as our research hypotheses have been confirmed. We were therefore able to measure the level of staff loyalty and degree of organizational involvement and to identify affective involvement as the dimension that has a direct impact on staff loyalty. As a research perspective, it would be interesting to look at the impact of trust and the psychological bond on organizational involvement, which seems to be relevant to study in such a dynamic corporate environment.

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