

The Impact of Employee Relationship Management on Job Satisfaction and Retention at Cane Firm in Sagaing

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Abstract

The objectives of this study are to identify Employee Relationship Management (ERM) Practices at Cane Firm in Sagaing, to examine the effect of ERM on employee satisfaction on the job, and to analyze the effect of job satisfaction on employee retention at Cane Firm in Sagaing. ERM practices used in this study are employee suggestion, conflict management, communication, and teamwork. According to the regression result, employee suggestion, communication, and teamwork have a significant effect on job satisfaction but conflict management has not influenced it. Therefore, firms should improve ERM practices because those practices can improve employees' job satisfaction. It is also found that job satisfaction has a significant effect on employee retention. Thus, the company should make an employee happy on the job because job satisfaction can increase employee retention.

Keywords: Employee Relationship Management, Job Satisfaction, and Retention

Introduction

Nowadays, businesses are more and more spreading all over the world. SMEs play a crucial role in the economic well-being of developed and developing countries alike. The government recognizes that SME entrepreneurship will define the future of country's national economic development. Therefore, employees' job satisfaction, loyalty and turnover intention on jobs are essential in all businesses. Effective employee relations are essential to achieving higher levels of productivity and keeping employees motivated. Managing employee relationships is important and valuable to organizational success and achieving competitive advantage. It is necessary to have a strong relationship between employees and employers that leads to productivity, motivation, and better performance.

The relationship between employers, trade unions, and employees is a key driver of competitive firms operating in a dynamic business environment (George & Jones, 2008). Besides, Customer satisfaction is also the most important factors in the growth and survival of businesses. If firms can only create employee job satisfaction, they can get customer satisfaction, loyalty, retention, and commitment. As employees are the person who serve directly customers, employee satisfaction is very important.

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Employee Relationship Management (ERM) is a tool and a strategic process to manage and increase motivation in the workforce through the increased focus on continuous perfection of the individual relationships between the employer and each employee (Wargborn, 2008). Job satisfaction is an essential element for the maintenance of the workforce numbers of any organization. In Myanmar, there are many conflicts between employees and employers. Poor relationships between employers and employees among organizations operating in global and local markets have become a challenge (Kaliski, 2007). Today, conflicts and problems between employees and employers are more happening. Therefore, employees are striking against job cuts by employers. Therefore, this study intends to analyze the effect of ERM on employee job satisfaction and the effect of job satisfaction on retention at a cane firm in Sagaing.

The Objectives of the Study

1. To identify Employee Relationship Management practices (ERM) at Cane Firm in Sagaing
2. To examine the effect of ERM on employees' job satisfaction at Cane Firm in Sagaing
3. To analyze the effect of job satisfaction on employee retention at Cane Firm in Sagaing.

Methodology

Primary data and secondary data are used in this study. In this study, questionnaires are used to collect primary data as the research instruments which are structured as question items to be answered by the employees of the organization. Primary data are collected from 50 employees of Cane Firm in Sagaing by using structured questionnaires with a five-point Likert Scale. Secondary data are obtained from relevant textbooks, previous research papers, journals, articles, reports, websites, and other reference books. These data are analyzed by using simple descriptive statistics of frequencies and mean. Regression and correlation analysis are also used for this study.

This study focuses on how employee relationship management affects job satisfaction and how job satisfaction affects retention. Although many ERM components are revealed by many researchers, ERM components developed by Schweitzer and Lyons (2008) are highlighted in this study. There is a total of 8 Cane firms in Sagaing updated in 2022. With a total of 79 employees in Sagaing. Among them, 50 employees are selected by using simple random sampling at Cane Firm in Sagaing. Structured questionnaires are used to collect the data from the employees.

Literature Review

Employee Relationship Management

A subset of human resource management is called employee relationship management. Employee relationship differs from industrial relationship in a number of ways, including the subject of the relationship, the method of resolving conflicts, the management objective, the

involved discipline, and the contents of discipline research, even though the concept is promoted based on organizational relationships. This is due to the ongoing development of the theory of human resource management (Arthur et.al.,1999).

For employee relationship management to be effective, representatives, employees, and managers must work together (Laundon et al., 2019). This calls for the development of policies that help to maintain fairness and efficiency in the workplace. Similarly, Arthur (1999) specified Employee Relationship Management as a premise that refers to the communication management observed between the enterprise and the staff.

Employee Relationship Management Practices

Employers typically use a variety of employee relationship management techniques to foster positive working relationships and bring out the best in each team member. Schweitzer and Lyons (2008) list the following as examples of employee relationship management techniques:

1. initiating employee suggestions
2. conflict management and grievance redress measures
3. conflict management and grievance redress measures
4. transparency in communication (Srivastava et al., 1998) and
5. encouraging group activities (teamwork)

The work of an organization can be greatly impacted by these employee relationship management strategies. They can improve employee perception, strengthen corporate communication, promote learning, raise employee involvement, give employees real-time access to company training, target information to employees based on their interests, simplify performance management, manage resources, promote commitment and loyalty, increase productivity, promote innovation, lower turnover, and retain human talent.

(a) Initiating Employee Suggestions

An organized method that encourages staff members to offer positive suggestions for enhancing the company where they work is known as an employee suggestion program. Ideas that are put into practice are rewarded with money or other recognition that is typically commensurate with the advantages they produce. It fosters an environment of confidence and trust, work satisfaction, and ongoing development inside the organization (Yusof & Aspinwall, 2000). A staff suggestion plan, according to Marx (1995), is a regulated process designed to inspire workers to think creatively about their work and the workplace and to submit ideas that, if accepted and beneficial to the company, will result in rewards.

(b) Conflict Management

According to Mesh'al (2001), conflict exists naturally in all workplace relations, including the most stable ones. Individuals view the world differently and will attempt to influence others to share their perspective. Therefore, open communication barriers, feeling threatened or experiencing an actual threat to your job position, or when an individual fails to meet professional goals are all common causes of disagreements. Unmanaged conflict turns nasty and has a detrimental impact on both worker productivity and the performance of the company. Employers will be more successful in managing and averting future conflicts if they begin to comprehend the root of the issue and how to address it (Gazioglu & Tansel, 2006).

(c) Communication

Amess and Drakeb (2003) state that one of the most important factors in fostering a culture of teamwork inside a company is communication. An organization's decision-making process can be improved by decentralized organizational models, and vice versa. Both top-down and bottom-up management styles are likely to foster a sense of unity among employees, which in turn will increase job satisfaction. The communication between the company and its stakeholders fosters a culture of creativity and teamwork within the organization (Niklas & Dormann, 2005).

(d) Team Work

Mattick and Miller (2006) defined a team as a group of people gathered in one department or task area, with common skills or product output in their goals. Encouragement of teamwork is necessary for the accomplishment of complex, multiple, interdependent tasks. Moreover, a team can overcome and supplement individual skill weaknesses (Sheaffer et al., 2009). The capacity to collaborate toward a shared goal and to channel personal achievements into corporate goals is known as teamwork.

Concept of Employee Retention

Human capital is a company's most precious asset. Before the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s, the majority of people joined organizations and stayed there for a long time, sometimes for the entirety of their working lives. This is why the concept of employee retention first became popular in those years. The primary goal of retention, according to Chiboiwa et al. (2010), is to keep talented workers from leaving the company because doing so could negatively impact output and service quality. Therefore, the goal of retention strategies should be to find and keep committed workers for as long as doing so benefits both the company and the individual (Sutherland, 2004).

Individuals must believe they are valued and make a contribution to the organization (Taylor, 2002). Employees must feel like they belong in the company in order to stay on board. Competitive pay, extensive benefits packages, incentive plans, and other activities that promote employee retention should be implemented (Talyor, 2002). Incentives and compensation alone won't suffice to boost staff loyalty, contentment, and retention.

The Relationship between Employee Relationship Management and Job Satisfaction

Any organization's intellectual and essential resources that underpin its competitive edge are its workforce. Effective employee relationship management guarantees business success and, eventually, long-term expansion. In an organization, employee motivation, engagement, performance, and work happiness are all significantly impacted by employee relationship management. Additionally, it lowers attrition, particularly among high performers, which lowers the expenses associated with hiring, training, and development. Any organization's performance is determined in part by the relationship between the employer and employees. Job satisfaction is directly correlated with positive employer-employee relations (Armstrong, 2006).

Employee freedom to join the trade union of their choosing has a positive impact on teamwork and performance motivation within an enterprise. In the evolving business environment, workers who belong to trade unions typically feel protected and have a voice over their bosses (Sweeney & McFarlin, 2005). Work satisfaction and employee relationship management have been the subjects of much empirical research. Kanana (2016) investigated the relationship between job satisfaction and employee relations management techniques at Swissport Kenya Limited. Results showed that discipline, trade union, and communication were positively correlated with job satisfaction, but conflict management was not statistically significant.

Chaubey et al. (2017) investigated the effects of ERM on job satisfaction among workers in a subset of small and medium-sized businesses in the Uttarakhand State district of Dehradun. Except for one practice—encouraging employee suggestions—the study found a positive correlation between employee job satisfaction and all employee relationship management activities. Using the linked employer-employee survey data in Britain, Tansel and Gazioglu (2013) looked into the relationship between managing employee relationships, business size, and job satisfaction. The findings show that fair treatment by management and open communication with staff members both favorably impact workers' job happiness, and small businesses are better suited to handle these issues than large ones.

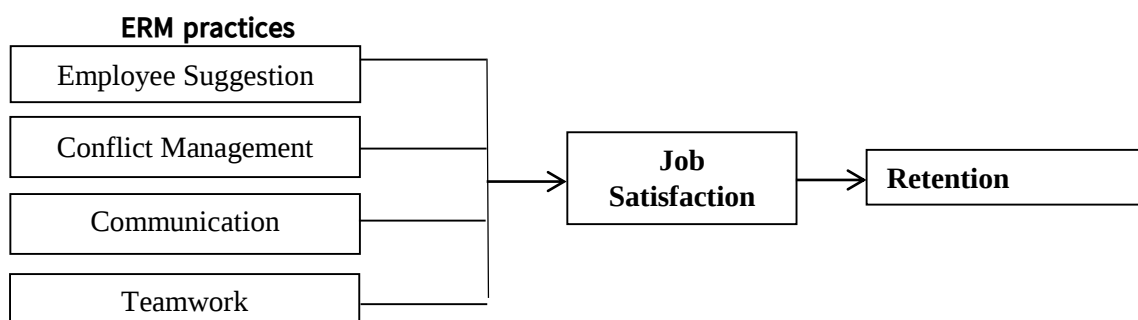
The Relationship between Job Satisfaction and Employee Retention

There are a number of benefits to job satisfaction that have been noted, and these eventually influence employees' intentions to stay with the company. According to Light (2004), employee satisfaction has a positive correlation with the intention to stay with the organization and a negative correlation with turnover and the intention to quit (Levy-Garboua et al., 2004). Customer happiness, increased revenue and shareholder returns, increased profitability and market share, increased productivity, and improved business image are just a few of the advantages of staff retention that have been highlighted. The most crucial element in the success of an organization is job happiness. According to a 2002 study by George and Jones, job satisfaction levels at work have an impact on absenteeism, which can lead to employee turnover and, ultimately, the possibility of resignation or other job loss.

According to Okolie and Omole (2017), achieving long-term personal objectives, feeling attached to oneself, and experiencing personal fulfillment are the aspects of satisfaction that improve an organization's reputation and help it retain brilliant individuals. According to a 2011 study by Parvin and Kabir, contented workers are typically more innovative, devoted, and effective for their employers. Not only does job satisfaction improve employee retention, but it also lowers the expense of recruiting new staff. From the aforementioned, it is clear that low job satisfaction leads to low employee retention and that high job satisfaction depends on high staff retention.

The Conceptual Framework of the Study

In this study, regarding the model from the previous section, this conceptual framework is built upon the literature review. (Schweitzer & Lyons, 2008; Srivastava et al., 1998 among others) have highlighted several ERM practices, which include: employee empowerment and involvement, employee suggestions, collective bargaining, conflict management and grievance redress measures, training and development, transparency in communication, encouraging group activities (teamwork), and workers compensation. Among these practices, the researcher took the research variables which are highlighted ERM practices developed by Schweitzer and Lyons (2008).



Source; Own Compilation Based on Previous Research

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework of the Study

According to Figure 1, independent and dependent variables are included in this study. ERM practices include employee suggestion, conflict management, communication, and teamwork as independent variables and their effect on job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is the dependent variable that can be influenced by ERM practices. This study mainly explores the relationship between ERM practices, job satisfaction, and retention of an employee in the Cane firm at Sagaing.

Analysis Result

An Analysis of Employee Perception of Employee Relationship Management Practices

To explore the first objective, frequency Tables of employee relationship management considered in this study are mentioned and discussed. The overall mean values of employee relationship management: employee suggestion, conflict management, communication, and teamwork are presented in Table (1)

Table (1) Overall Mean Values of Employee Relationship Management

Employee Relationship Management	Mean	Std. Deviation
Employee Suggestion	3.51	0.61
Conflict Management	3.46	0.63
Communication	3.52	0.75
Teamwork	3.48	0.62

Source: Survey Data (2022)

The overall mean and standard deviation of each of the variables are presented in Table (5). According to the table, the communication dimension of ERM has the highest rank in the mean (3.52) while teamwork has the lowest rank in the mean (3.48). Communication has the highest standard deviation (0.75) while employee suggestion has the lowest standard deviation (0.61). This indicates that employees stated that their positive perception of employee relations management practices embraced by Cane Firm in Sagaing has enabled them to have boosted their morale and enhanced job satisfaction. Further, they stated that their positive perception of employee relations management practices has led to reduced instances of labor turnover in Cane Firm in Sagaing.

Demographic Profiles of the Respondents

This section presents the profiles of employees at Cane firms in Sagaing. The profiles cover the gender, age, marital status, work experience at Cane firms in Sagaing. In Table (2), the frequency distribution of employees' demographic data is illustrated through the table of frequency counts, and their respective percentage.

Table (2) Demographic Profiles of the Respondents

Sr. No.	Particular	Demographic Profile	Respondents	Percent
1	Gender	Male	20	40.0
		Female	30	60.0
2	Age (years)	30 Below	12	24.0
		31 - 40 years	18	36.0
		41 - 50 years	13	26.0
		51 - 60 years	5	10.0
		61 Above	2	4.0
3	Marital Status	Marriage	35	70.0
		Single	15	30.0
4	Work Experiences	1 – 3	16	32.0
		4 - 6	21	42.0
		7 Above	13	26.0
Total			50	

Source: Survey Data (October, 2023)

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha is designed as a measure of the internal consistency of items in the questionnaire. It varies between zero and one. The closer alpha is to one, the greater the internal consistency of items in the questionnaire. The total number of questions or items in the questionnaire is 40 testing variables or Likert scale variables and 6 items related to employee suggestion, 6 items related to conflict management, 6 items related to communication, 6 items related to teamwork, 8 items related to job satisfaction and 8 items related to employee retention. The following table shows the Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of the scales of the questionnaire's instruments.

Table (3) Reliability Statistics

Item	No. of items	Cronbach's Alpha
Employee Suggestion	0.771	6
Conflict Management	0.832	6
Communication	0.867	6
Teamwork	0.725	5
Job Satisfaction	0.943	8
Retention	0.897	6

Source: Survey Data, (2022)

The items that represent each factor are subjected to reliability analysis. The computation of Cronbach's alpha will be determined the extent of agreement between respondents for each dimension. Therefore, Cronbach's Alpha test was performed and it resulted in an overall score of 0.771 for employee suggestion, 0.832 for conflict management, 0.867 for communication, 0.725 for teamwork, 0.943 for job satisfaction, and 0.897 for employee retention. In this study, all dimensions have high levels of reliability and are well above the cut-off value of 0.7 as suggested by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994). That means all the items are well established with an acceptable level of reliability.

This study analyzed the effect of employee relationship management on job satisfaction and employee retention at Cane Firm in Sagaing.

The Effect of Employee Relationship Management on Job Satisfaction

The second objective of this study is to analyze the effect of employee relationship management on job satisfaction at Cane Firm in Sagaing. In this analysis, the independent variables are employee suggestion, conflict management, communication, and teamwork and the dependent variable is job satisfaction. The summarized results for the effect of employee relationship management on job satisfaction are shown in Table (4).

Table (4) The Effect of Employee Relationship Management on Job Satisfaction

Independent Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	-1.426	0.526		-2.710	0.009
Employee Suggestion	0.565***	0.111	0.414	5.095	0.000
Conflict Management	0.119	0.095	0.095	1.249	0.218
Communication	0.212***	0.071	0.249	2.986	0.005
Teamwork	0.513***	0.096	0.467	5.321	0.000
R	0.861				
R ²					
Adjusted R ²					
F. test					
	0.741				
	0.718				
	32.149***				

Source: Survey Data (2022)

*** Statistically significant at 1% level

As shown in Table (4), the value of the F-test, the overall significance of the model, is highly significant at a 1% level. the analysis of employee relationship management on job satisfaction, the adjusted R² value is 71.8% variation of employee relationship management can be explained by employee's job satisfaction.

According to the result, employee suggestion, communication, and teamwork are significant at 1% level. The results show that employee suggestion, communication, and teamwork have a positive significant effect on job satisfaction but conflict management has no significant effect on it. Therefore, three independent variables have a significant effect on job satisfaction. Among independent variables, only conflict management has no significant effect on job satisfaction.

After analyzing the effect of employee relationship management on job satisfaction at Cane Firm in Sagaing, it can be concluded that employee suggestions, communication, and teamwork can enhance employees' job satisfaction. Therefore, job satisfaction can be enhanced if the company can improve employee suggestions, communication, and teamwork.

The Effect of Job Satisfaction on Employee Retention

The third objective of this study is to analyze the effect of job satisfaction and employee retention at Cane Firm in Sagaing. In this analysis, the independent variables is job satisfaction and the dependent variable is employee retention. The summarized results for the effect of job satisfaction on employee retention are shown in Table (5).

Table (5) The Effect of Job Satisfaction on Employee Retention

Independent Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.262	0. .324		3.898	0.000
Job Satisfaction	0.654***	0.087	0.734	7.479	0.000
R	0.734				
R ²	0.538				
Adjusted R ²	0.529				
F. test	55.939***				

Source: Survey Data (2022)

*** Statistically significant at 1% level

According to Table (5), the value of the F-test, the overall significance of the model, is highly significant at a 1% level. In the analysis of job satisfaction on employee retention, the adjusted R² value is 52.9% variation of job satisfaction can be explained by employee retention. The results show that job satisfaction has a positive significant effect on employee retention at a 1% level. Therefore, job satisfaction has a significant effect on employee retention.

After analyzing the effect of job satisfaction on employee retention at Cane Firm in Sagaing, it can be concluded that job satisfaction can enhance employee retention. If employees are satisfied with their work, the firm can retain them. Thus, the firm should make an employee happy on the job because job satisfaction can increase employee retention.

Suggestions and Recommendations

The analysis of Cane Firm in Sagaing's employee relationship management and work satisfaction reveals that, based on employee perspective, the total mean value of ERM activities corresponds to the level of agreement among employees on these practices. Employees then feel work satisfaction and retention at the mutually agreed upon level of perception. The impact of ERM on worker job satisfaction at Cane Firm in Sagaing is examined using linear regression analysis. This study's regression analysis reveals that employee suggestions significantly improve job happiness. Consequently, if the organization permits employees to make employment suggestions, it may be said that workers are happy in their positions. The findings indicate that communication significantly improves job satisfaction as well. As a result, effective communication is essential at this company between staff members and managers, as well as between staff members and employers. Family-style communication is required in this study in order for participants to engage with one another. According to this study, a company's ability to communicate positively and significantly affects employees' job happiness, thus it is imperative that it maintain a friendly and intimate relationship with its workforce. The outcome indicates that job satisfaction is positively and significantly impacted by teamwork as well. As a result, this organization needs to inspire teamwork. When collaboration is promoted, employees are able to accomplish more in their responsibilities than when they work alone. According to this study, the company has to incentivize cooperation because it significantly improves employees' job happiness.

Job satisfaction is not much impacted by conflict management. As a result, this company needs to be adept in handling disputes. When resolving disputes, the organization must do so without favoritism. Managers ought to mediate disputes between employers and workers.

The findings show that employee retention is positively and significantly impacted by job satisfaction. Consequently, when workers are happy in their positions, staff retention is more successful. Preventing competent personnel from leaving the company is the primary goal of retention as doing so could negatively impact output and service quality. According to this study, work satisfaction has a positive and significant impact on employee retention, meaning that the organization needs to make sure its employees are pleased in their jobs.

Employee work satisfaction may rise above the existing level if the organization gains a deeper comprehension of the significance of employee relationship management. Employee job satisfaction may be impacted by the company's ability to improve employee suggestions, communication, teamwork, and dispute resolution. Staff members can stay with the company for extended periods of time if they are content where they work.

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