Change Management and Employees' Retention: A Survey-Based Insight from Construction Industry

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Abstract

Purpose: Insights on modalities to retain skilful personnel in construction organisations have been too limited. Accordingly, this study addresses the gap, as it examines Change Management (CM) and Employees' Retention (ER) in a Nigerian engineering company.
Design/methodology/approach: A purposive sample and a cross-sectional design were used in this investigation. Using Taro Yamane's calculation, the study's population was 355, and its sample size was 167. We utilised version 26.0 of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to analyse data from structured questionnaires.
Findings: Transportation allowances had a significant, but inverse, impact on employees' retention. ER was considerably impacted by Training Opportunities, but inversely. Moreover, ER was significantly influenced by workplace safety, but negatively.
Limitations and Research implications: This research applied a quantitative method; future research may benefit from a mixed method. Also, future studies should consider multiple organisations to enhance generalisation of reports of this survey. Generalization of this study would be achieved through confirmatory studies from potential researchers.
Practical Implications: Findings of this study imply that policymakers should apply a holistic approach to change management, including adequate financial incentives, comprehensive training programs, and robust safety measures, but not in isolation. Attempts to apply any of these variables in isolation may jeopardize ER drive.
Originality/value: This study filled a gap of limited literature on change management and ER in construction industry, particularly in an emerging economy.
Keywords: Change Management, Employee Retention, Transportation Allowances, Training Opportunities, Workplace Safety.

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Introduction

Retention of competent workers and implementation of effective change management practices have been critical concerns for organisations globally. In Europe, Kalejaiye (2023) explored strategies to tackle labor shortages and retain workers through training and upskilling initiatives. Similarly, Baier et al. (2025) emphasized the need for concerted action to address skills shortages to maintain competitiveness and public service quality. These studies highlighted the importance of continuous skill development and strategic change management initiatives in employee retention. In Asia, Sridevi and Reddy (2023) identified key trends in employee retention strategies in Southeast Asia, including flexible working arrangements and employee wellness programs. Researchers in Africa investigated the variables affecting employee retention across a range of industries. Aman-Ullah et al. (2022) investigated important factors affecting the recruitment and retention of medical professionals in remote and rural areas. John (2024) looked into the relationship between work happiness and staff retention in South Africa's aviation industry. These studies highlighted the

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importance of job satisfaction and targeted retention strategies in a variety of industries. Ajala's (2024) study on the relationship between career development and employee retention at MTN Nigeria Communications PLC highlighted the importance of structured career development programs. However, there is still a dearth of research in this area, as existing studies concentrate on the service sector. This study aimed to bridge this gap by examining how change management strategies affect employee retention in the construction industry, specifically in the selected engineering firm in Nigeria. Researchers like McCarthy et al. (2020) highlighted the significance of employee engagement in reducing turnover rates, but, regrettably, most of these studies in America, Europe, and Africa have focused on manufacturing and other industries, leaving out businesses in electrical and mechanical engineering. As such, limited studies on the application of change management components have left the issue of workforce retention in engineering firms in Nigeria to persist over the years. To fill this gap, this study explores specific determinants of change management (Transport Allowance, hereafter denoted as TA; Training Opportunity, hereafter denoted as TO; and Workplace Safety, hereafter denoted as WS) and examines their respective influence on employee retention in a selected engineering company.

Over the years, employees in this selected engineering company in Nigeria have contended with issues such as inadequate TA, insufficient TO, and poor WS. These issues were closely associated with incidents of dissatisfaction and employees' loss of interest in retaining jobs with less motivating. The selection of this subject resulted from a comprehensive examination of the literature, which identified knowledge gaps regarding various components that are affecting staff retention in the context of engineering firm chosen for this study. In Nigeria, all sectors and industries face issues that necessitate changes. For instance, costs of transportation has gone up by several percentages, as of May 28, 2023 a litre of petrol was being sold at ₦145:00, but with effect from May 29, 2023, the price per litre ranges from ₦800:00 to ₦950:00. As such, it becomes reasonable for employees to search for jobs in organization that can significantly provide TA.

Apparently, construction engineering now requires significant innovation and dynamic processes. As such, change becomes inevitable, as organisations must drop obsolete technology in favour of the latest innovations. So, it is mandatory to subject the workforce to training that enhances skills in the use and application of the latest technology. Consequently, workers get attracted to an organisation that can significantly offer them TO. By nature, construction works involve hazards. So, well-informed workers will prefer to retain their services with firms that clearly demonstrate a commitment to migrating from the traditional practice of work first to the modern ethical practice of safety first. The above dimensions of change are considered relevant in change management and constitute a focus of exploration in this research.

There has been a dearth of targeted studies on the particular difficulties businesses in the Electrical and Mechanical Engineering & Construction sector face. Apparently, prior studies mostly addressed staff retention in a variety of industries outside the electrical and mechanical engineering & construction sector. Importantly, research by Ekhsan et al. (2022) and Shahzad et al. (2024) highlighted the importance of change management in enhancing staff retention. While Shahzad et al. (2024) focused on employability training, competitive intensity, and sustainable HRM practices, Ekhsan et al. (2022) used a variety of variables, including employer branding, management effectiveness, and employee engagement. This study was guided by the following research questions:

I. What influence does an increase in TA have on ER in a selected company?
II. How does TO affect ER in a selected company?
III. How does WS impact ER in a selected company?

Literature Review

Change Management (CM)

CM is an organised process that helps businesses transition from their present state to a desired future state. Understanding the need for change, integrating stakeholders, providing support and training, and monitoring progress are key elements that ensure successful change implementation (Abawari et al., 2024; Vasel, 2025). Additionally, CM represents a pool of strategies that lead to mutual comfort among an organisation's stakeholders (Alexandru-Marius, 2024). Effective CM minimizes resistance, fosters a positive environment, and ensures successful navigation through the complexities of transformation (Hasbi & van Marrewijk, 2024).

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Transport Allowance (TA)

An increase in TA represents a targeted policy change that can significantly influence employee behavior and organisational outcomes (Hezron & Golyama, 2025). Numerous studies have demonstrated how transportation advantages increase employee retention. For example, transportation gestures significantly increased employee retention (Ma & Ye, 2019; Litman, 2025). Likewise, Börjesson and Roberts (2023) found that transportation benefits enhanced retention rates in Latin America. Shaaban and Reda (2021) also reported a significant positive impact of transportation allowances on retention in the Middle East. These findings indicate that increasing TA can reduce the financial burden of commuting and enhance ER (Börjesson & Roberts, 2023).

Training Opportunities (TO)

It has been argued that TO constitute critical components of employee development that significantly influence retention and engagement (Capatina et al., 2024; Adeyemo et al., 2024). According to Capatina et al. (2024), opportunities for ongoing training result in a 76% increase in staff retention. According to this research, companies that invest in employee training programs can increase employee loyalty and lower turnover. The rise of microlearning, AI-driven personalization, and gamification are key trends in training that improve engagement and learning outcomes (Kalejaiye, 2023). Other scholars who offer insights on TO include Hosen et al. (2024) and McGrath and Yamada (2023).

Workplace Safety (WS)

WS refers to strategies, policies, and practices needed to ensure employees' health, safety, and well-being at work. WS can be achieved by preventing accidents, illnesses, and injuries; these actions aim to provide a safe and healthy working environment (Aman-Ullah et al., 2022). Shaaban and Reda (2021) highlight that combining technology with human factors can lead to significant improvements in safety outcomes. Keffane (2014) emphasizes the importance of effective communication strategies in improving WS, while Hejase et al. (2024) provide long-term evidence of the benefits of investing in employee well-being for organisational commitment. These findings imply that more thorough and efficient WS measures can result from a multidisciplinary strategy that incorporates communication training, technology developments, and an emphasis on employee well-being.

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Novelty of Adopted Measures of CM

The application of TA, TO, and WS as measures of CM in this study is a novel exploration. The background, gap, and problems that facilitate the adoption of these measures have been stated in the introduction of this study.

Employees' Retention (ER)

ER refers to a company's capacity to retain its workforce over an extended period through various strategies and tactics (Hezron & Golyama, 2025; Sridevi & Reddy, 2023; Zwane et al., 2021). The publications suggest that mentorship, training, and development initiatives are important for retention. For example, Liff and Rovio-Johansson (2022) discovered that mentorship programs enhance retention by 30%. These observations highlight the significance of establishing a nurturing atmosphere that encourages staff development. Employee loyalty and retention have also been shown to improve with sustainability programs and ESG (environmental, social, and governance) policies.

Theoretical Review

Lewin's Change Management Model (LCMM)

Based on insights provided by Ekhsan et al. (2022), LCMM interpreted change as a process with distinct steps (Unfreese, i.e., preparing the organization to accept that change is necessary; Change, i.e., executing the intended changes; & Refreese, i.e., ensuring that the change becomes permanent). LCMM promotes assumption that change is beneficial to organisation's stakeholders. However, it may be too simplistic for complex modern organizations. Abawari et al. (2024) and Vasel (2025) were among those scholars who had shed light on LCMM).

Hypotheses Development

According to Keffane (2014), effective change implementation depends on the standard of CM techniques such as stakeholder involvement, communication, and organisational culture alignment. These tactics are commonly utilised and have a favorable effect on change outcomes, according to their study, which used a survey given to CM practitioners (Ekhsan et al., 2022; Abawari et al., 2024; Vasel, 2025). Though the study emphasizes the significance of these tactics, it ignores the unique difficulties other industries face and how technology might help bring about change. According to Hezron and Golyama (2025), the administration of an allowance enhances workers' punctuality in Iruwasa, Tanzania. More so, according to Zwane et al. (2021), the exit of technical and skilled employees in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport was rooted in unsatisfactory financial motivation.

Their quantitative regression analysis suggested that while financial incentives might provide short-term motivation, they do not significantly alter long-term retention patterns (Hezron & Golyama, 2025; Zwane et al., 2021). However, the study does not explore why financial incentives fail to affect long-term retention. Given the foregoing contexts, a tentative hypothesis is proposed.

H1: TA significantly affects ER in a selected company.

Adeyemo et al. (2024) found that while training programs are beneficial for skill development, they do not significantly impact long-term employee retention. Their longitudinal study indicated that employees often seek external opportunities despite internal training programs (Liff & Rovio-Johansson, 2022). Nevertheless, the study doesn't examine why workers choose external opportunities despite internal training. Hosen et al. (2024) employed a mixed-

methods approach to investigate the efficacy of training initiatives. Although they value TO, their results showed that they had little effect on employees' decisions to remain with the organisation (Hosen et al., 2024). In view of the foregoing backgrounds, an understated hypothesis is advanced:

H2: TO significantly affects the ER in a selected company.

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According to Aman-Ullah et al. (2022), safety precautions are essential for maintaining compliance and lowering accidents, but they have little effect on employee retention or general morale. Their survey-based study highlighted that employees often view safety measures as a basic expectation rather than a motivator (Aman-Ullah et al., 2022). However, the study does not examine how safety measures can be enhanced to improve employee morale and retention. Shaaban and Reda (2021) conducted a critical review and found that enhanced safety measures do not significantly improve employee retention. According to their findings, other elements, including work-life balance and job satisfaction, have a greater impact (Shaaban & Reda, 2021). With the foregoing frameworks, an understated hypothesis is proposed:

H3: WS significantly impacts ER in a selected company.

Underpining Theory

Lewin's Change Management Model (LCMM): According to Vasel (2025), LCMM was developed in 1951 by someone named Kurt Lewin. Moreover, according to Ekhsan et al. (2022), LCMM views change as a process with distinct steps: Unfreeze (preparing the organisation to accept that change is necessary), Change (implementing the intended changes), and Refreeze (ensuring that the change becomes permanent). LCMM emphasises alignment of human-centered change with the need to address employee concerns and foster a supportive culture (Abawari et al., 2024; Vasel, 2025).

LCMM guided this study's theoretical framework. LCMM has evolved to meet the demands of today's fast-paced and complex business environment. It emphasizes agility, inclusivity, and continuous transformation, making it highly relevant for organisations implementing change initiatives that directly impact employees' disposition towards their jobs and organisation (Ekhsan et al., 2022; Abawari et al., 2024; Vasel, 2025). Consequently, LCMM offers insight into how organisational interventions, such as TA, TO, and WS measures, affect employees' resolve to remain with an engineering company selected for this study.

Specification of Model

CM measures (TA, TO, & WS) have no statistically significant effects on ER in a selected construction company in Lagos State, Nigeria. Justifications for scope and adoption of TA, TO, and WS as measures of CM are presented earlier under introduction section.

$$Y = f(X) \qquad \text{equation 1}$$

Where:

Y = Dependent Variable (DV): Employee Retention (ER).

X = Independent Variable (IV): Change Management (CM).

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CM = ($x1$, $x2$, $x3$) equation 2

Where:

$x1$ = Transport Allowance (TA)

$x2$ = Training Opportunity (TO)

$x3$ = Workplace Safety (WS)

ER = β0 + β1TA + β2TO + β3WS + ei equation 3

Where:

β0 = Constant term

β1, β2, β3 = coefficients

ei = Error term

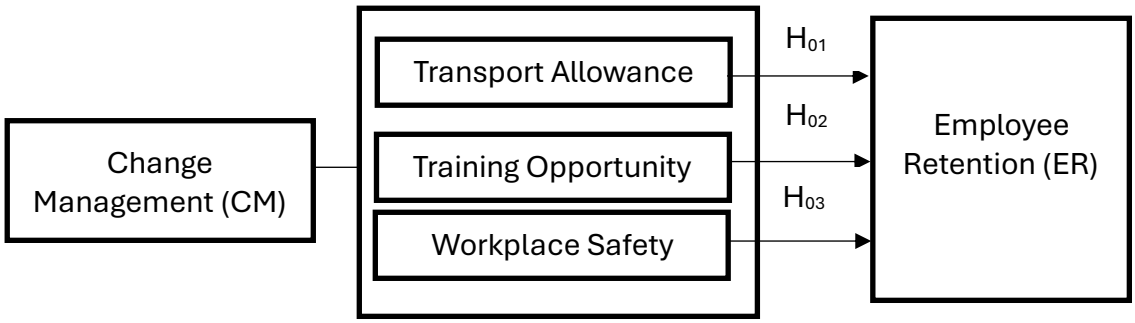

Figure 1
Conceptual Framework

What is known is that there are changes within various sectors and industries, driven by economic, technological, socio-cultural, and political instabilities in emerging economies, including Nigeria. Thus, employees within Nigeria look forward to staying in organisations that can consistently apply measures that minimise the negative effects of various instabilities. What is inconsistent/unknown to earlier researchers is that TA, TO, and WS could be adopted as measures of CM. Variables projected in this research were, for years, seen as human resource dimensions being explored to incentivise employees. What gap remains in construction/engineering firms is that earlier contributors failed to explore insight from economic, technological, socio-cultural, and political instabilities to adopt TA, TO, and WS as measures of CM, which could influence ER in construction/engineering firms.

How the proposed model fills the gap. This model explored variables that serve as a modest strategy to address the economic, technological, and socio-cultural issues that discourage employees' service or job retention in firms. Accordingly, TA is adopted to address the economic issue of the upward change in petrol prices, which affects transportation costs in Nigeria. TO is adopted to address dynamic technology. WS is adopted to address socio-cultural and political instability. Employees are usually free to withdraw their services from organisations that failed to make changes that would allow them to cope with the realities highlighted earlier in the introduction.

In this research, the method employed for determining the sample size was the Taro Yamane formula (Yamane, 1967), expressed as:

$n=N/1+N(e)^2$

Where:

n is the sample size

N is the total population size

e is the error tolerance

Given that N=355 and e=0.05,

Calculated sample size is $n= 355/1+355(0.05)^2 = 167$.

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Result

A cross-sectional survey research design was employed for this investigation. The study's population comprised 355 employees at a construction company in Lagos, Nigeria. Using the Taro Yamane formula, the sample size was 167. Because it allows for the inclusion of all participants with traits relevant to the research issue, the purposeful sampling technique was employed. A standardized questionnaire was used to collect data, which was distributed to participants and made available online via Google Forms. By utilising a pre-tested, structured questionnaire to identify and address problems before the primary data collection phase, the research instrument's dependability was ensured. Face and content validity were assessed by subject-matter experts. The software SPSS was used to analyze the gathered data. To give a summary of the data's key characteristics, descriptive and inferential statistics were applied.

Table 1
Response Rate

Copies Administered (CA)	Valid Copies Recovered (VCR)	Percentage of VCR
167	167	100%

Table 2
Profile of Participants

Demographic Factors	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Age of Participants		
21-30 years	51	30.54
31-40 years	68	40.72
41-50 years	44	26.35
51+ years	4	2.40
Gender of Participants		
Female	8	4.79
Male	159	95.21
Marital Status		
Single	73	43.71
Married	94	56.29
Academic Qualification of Participants		
SSCE	46	27.54
OND/NCE	47	28.14
B. Sc/HND	73	43.71
M. Sc/MBA	1	0.60
Others	-	-

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Demographic Factors	Frequency	Percentage
Employment Position of Participants		
Contract/casual staff	94	56.29
Junior staff	47	28.14
Senior staff	24	14.37
Management staff	2	1.20
Work Experience of Participants		
0-5 years	72	43.11
6-10 years	48	28.74
11-15 years	30	17.96
16+ years	17	10.18

Based on Table 2, 30.5% of the 51 participants were between 21 and 30 years old. The sample included 68 people, or 40.7% of the total, aged 31-40. Furthermore, 4 participants, or 2.4% of the sample, were 51 years of age or older, while 44 individuals, or 26.3% of the sample, were between 41 and 50 years of age. As a result, the majority of participants were between 31 and 40 years old. Additionally, the gender distribution of participants shows that 159 participants were male, accounting for 95.2% of total responses, as seen in Table 2. The number of female respondents was 8, accounting for 4.8% of total responses. Findings reveal that participants in this study included a higher proportion of male participants than female participants. This observation does not necessarily reflect a stronger representation of males in the organization, but it suggests that more males than females showed interest in participating in the survey. Moreover, according to the data presented in the same Table, the marital status distribution of participants shows that married respondents accounted for 94 individuals, or 56.3% of the overallresponses. In contrast, the number of single respondents amounted to 73, constituting 43.7% of total responses.

Moreover, Table 2 illustrates the academic qualifications of participants, along with the respective percentages. Categorically, 46 participants, representing 27.5% of the survey population, held an SSCE. Explicitly, 47 participants, representing 28.1% of the survey population, held an OND/NCE. Most respondents, specifically 43.7% (73 participants), held a BSc/HND. Out of the total participants, 1 individual, representing 0.6% of the sample, held an MBA/MSc/PhD degree. As a result, most individuals held a higher education credential, notably a BSc/HND. Here, the findings suggest that many participants have sufficient reading ability to understand and provide meaningful responses to questions. In addition, the data presented indicate that contract/casual staff accounted for 94 individuals, or 56.3%of the overall responses. Junior staff accounted for 47 individuals, representing 28.1% of the total. Seniorstaff accounted for 24 individuals, representing 14.4% of the total, while management staff accounted for 2 individuals, representing 1.2% of the total. Furthermore, considering data in the same Table 2, it can be deduced that a notable percentage of participants, precisely 43.1% or72 individuals, accumulated work experience within the range of 0-5 years at the company. 28.7% (48 respondents) reported having worked at this company for 6-10 years. Apparently, 18.0%and 10.2%, representing 30 and 17 individuals, reported being employed as staff members for 11-15 years and 16 years or more, respectively. This suggests that a significant proportion of participants have been affiliated with the organisation for 0 to 5 years. Therefore, it is transparent that a substantial fraction of personnel is familiar with operational protocols of this organisation.

In Nigeria, most females do not see engineering as a profession. More so, a few studies show that engineering students prefer areas like computer engineering and software engineering. Apparently, the construction sector involves hazards that most females can't cope with in Nigeria.

Interpretation and Discussion of Findings

Test of Hypotheses

The collected data were methodically organised, coded, and analysed using SPSS software to uncover observable patterns. Decision criterion was implemented, where p-value is less than predetermined significance level (α), commonly established as $p < .001$.

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Statement of Hypotheses

H1: TA significantly affects ER in a selected company.

H2: TO significantly affect ER in a selected company.

H3: WS significantly impacts ER in a selected company.

In this research, the results of three (3) hypotheses tested provided empirical support. In Table 3, the breakdown of results comprised the effect of TA on ER (H1: $\beta = -0.236$, $t = -1.986$, $p < .001$), which reveals that proxies (i.e., increase in TA, adequacy of allowance, expenses coverage, and motivation via allowance) have significant potential to inversely affect ER in this selected engineering company in Nigeria. Accordingly, the regression shows that an increase in TA has a significant but inverse impact on ER (a unit increase in 'TA' decreases ER by 0.236).

Table 3
Results of hypotheses testing

H	Path	β-Value	T-Value	P-Value	Results
H1	TA → ER	-0.236	-1.986	p < .001	Significant
H2	TO → ER	-0.456	-4.203	p < .001	Significant
H3	WS → ER	-0.611	-6.130	p < .001	Significant

Also, the effect of TO on ER (H2: $\beta = -0.456$, $t = -4.203$, $p < .001$) demonstrates that TO significantly bears an inverse impact on ER. Accordingly, regression analysis shows that TO has a significant but negative impact on ER (a unit increase in 'TO' declines ER by 0.456). Moreover, the effect of WS on ER (H3: $\beta = -0.611$, $t = -6.130$, $p < .001$) reveals that WS has a significant, but inverse effect on ER (a unit increase in 'WS' decreases ER by 0.611).

Discussion of Findings

H1: An increase in TA significantly affects ER in the selected company.

The findings show a significant, but inverse association between TA and ER. This is similar to a study by Bader (2019), who found that attendance management and employees' performance had a negative relationship. Similarly, Miraglia et al. (2024) highlighted the limited effectiveness of financial benefits in reducing absenteeism, pointing out inconsistencies in how absenteeism is measured across studies. Shaaban and Reda (2021) also found inconsistent results regarding the impact of transport subsidies on retention, emphasizing the need for more standardized methodologies. Aman-Ullah et al. (2022) conducted a case study showing that financial incentives, including TA, do not significantly motivate employees to improve retention. However, results here contradict the report from the work of Hezron and Golyama

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(2025), who found that TA had a significant positive correlation with employees' engagement. More so, Shaaban and Reda (2021) found that TA had a significant positive effect on ER. Given the findings on TA and ER indicating a significant but negative interaction, H1 is not supported.

H2: TO significantly affect the ER in the selected company.

Results show a significant, but inverse effect of TO on ER. Some findings are similar to this. Adeyemo et al. (2024) reported that TO had no significant effect on ER in listed Nigerian insurance firms. Although employees value TO, Hosen et al. (2024) found that this does not have a major impact on ER. Nevertheless, the result from H2 is inconsistent with that of Sridevi and Reddy (2023), who empirically established a significant positive impact of TO on ER. Findings from H2 imply that although TO plays a significant role in ER, using it as a sole factor could be erroneous.

H3: WS has a significant impact on ER in the selected company.

Findings from H3 show a significant, but negative influence of WS on ER. This is consistent with the findings of Aman-Ullah et al. (2022), who conducted a study in Pakistan and reported an unencouraging effect of WS on ER. According to Miraglia et al. (2024), safety precautions are necessary, but they have little effect on workers' loyalty to the organisation over the long run. Findings from H3 imply that although WS plays a significant role in ER, using it as a sole factor could be counterproductive.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate how CM measures (TA, TO, & WS) impact ER in selected organisations. The results offered insightful information about TA, TO, and WS. According to this study's findings, application of any of CM's measures (TA, TO, & WS) in isolation cannot help achieve ER desirably.

A conclusion drawn from findings is that TA, TO, and WS, respectively, serve as significant inverse predictors of ER in the selected company.

Implications, Limitations, and Future Research

Findings from this study raised implications. For instance, to improve employee retention, policymakers in selected companies should conduct reviews of the application of TA, TO, and WS. Concerning TA, engaging employees as to which approach is most preferred, or a combination of different approaches, i.e., will provision of staff quarters within the proximity of company be preferred? Will the staff bus be preferred? Is the increase in TA adequate to cover the actual cost of transportation? Concerning TO, engaging employees as to which approach is most preferred, or a combination of different approaches, i.e., is the TO being given just to fulfill all righteousness? Is TO being offered on merit or bias? Is there feedback from TO participants? How is their feedback treated? Do employees prefer overseas TO more than local TO?

Concerning WS, engaging employees as to which approach is most preferred, or a combination of different approaches (i.e., How safe are employees from harassment by the superiors? Can employees safely contribute and utilize their initiatives? Are there insurance provisions? How prompt and committed is the management in handling emergencies or accidents involving employees on duty? e.tc.). If policymakers failed to make necessary reviews and reapply strategies to address grey areas, attempts to retain a dexterous workforce

might consistently prove elusive for this construction engineering firm. Insights from this study serve as sensitisation to organisations from emerging economies that share similar characteristics with Nigeria.

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