Challenges of Employee retention in two Non-Governmental Organisations Operating in Zimbabwe

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Abstract

The study analyses challenges of retaining employees in non-governmental organisations in an economically distressed environment showing the link between employee commitment and turnover. This is an exploratory qualitative case study. Seventy employees (including 10 former employees who were interviewed through the telephone), from two Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) participated in this study through questionnaires, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and semi-structured interviews. There is a serious problem of retention since 42% of workers would like to leave their organisation given a choice. Workers identified poor labour relations and poorly administered remuneration systems as major causes of dissatisfaction and staff turnover. Workers expected improvement of the labour relations, salaries and staff development programs in order to improve employee retention. Limited funding made it difficult for the two NGOs to provide more secure employment and invest in staff development and motivation and hence retain talent. The research implications are that NGOs should facilitate a learning organisational environment where employees feel valued and receive the necessary support to realise their potential and improve worker commitment. The value of the research is that no known study has been carried out to study employee retention in the non-profit sector in Zimbabwe. The study is exploratory and fills a gap currently existing concerning retention of employees in NGOs.

Key terms: Retention; turnover; remuneration; engagement; commitment; labour relations; disengagement.

Introduction

Zimbabwe attained independence from British colonial rule in 1980. In 1985 the Labour Relations Act (LRA) (No. 16 Of 1985) was promulgated to set the legal framework for industrial relations that had been hitherto governed by the Industrial Conciliation Act (No. 29 of 1959) and the Native Labour boards Act (No. 26 of 1947) (Cheater, 1992). The colonial legislation was biased towards promoting the rights of white workers (Herbst 1990). The LRA has been amended several times into the Labour Act of 2003. The Act provides for the establishment of trade unions, collective bargaining and clarifies dispute resolution procedures. Except for institutions categorised as essential services (such as health, the army etc.), most workers have the right to strike. NGOs are not part of essential services. Be that as it may, the state has on several occasions either banned strikes or declared them illegal. In the current neo-liberal dispensation the interests of state, capital and labour are generally expressed through the tripartite negotiating forum (TNF) meetings held occasionally in the country.

The importance of Non Government Organisations as employers in Zimbabwe was exaggerated from 1998 to 2008 due to their payment of salaries in stable foreign currencies at a time when the country was enduring the worst hyper- inflationary conditions in the history of the world outside a war zone (Mbohwa, 2009). This period of both economic and political decline is generally referred to as 'the crisis in Zimbabwe'. (Raftopoulos 2009). Formal sector employment shrunk from 1.4 million in 1998 to 998,000 in 2004 and hyperinflation reached an official level of 230 million percent by the end of 2008 (Raftopoulos 2009: 220). The estimate of Zimbabweans living below the poverty datum line was 85% in 2006 (Raftopoulos, 2009: 220). Many employees left both the private and the public service and thronged the humanitarian organisations. Surprisingly, NGOs were recording very high levels of labour turnover (over 30%) during the same period. An attitude survey conducted by the NANGO (2006) for some NGO employees indicated that 70% of the employees were not happy with their employers and were wiling to leave their organisation as soon as an opportunity arose. There is need to

establish the cause of such levels of staff disengagement in the humanitarian sector.

The signing of the Global Political agreement (GPA) in 2009 between the two main political parties in Zimbabwe created a transitional government, ended the political impasse and heralded a new socio-economic environment. There has been a resuscitation of the private sector and public service due to the return of investors. The economic recovery has created tough competition for talent from both government and the private sector organisations since the legalisation of the use of the US dollar (called the dollarisation of the economy) in all economic activites. The public service is particularly attractive due to security of tenure, benefits and tall structures that allow for linear career progression.

Humanitarian organisations tend to be highly dependent upon grants, which are generally geared towards paying for direct project and programme inputs in the field (NANGO, 2006). Projects and programmes are time-bound, often under-funded (NANGO, 2006). NGO B is a local Non Governmental Organisation which usually gets most of its funding from other International NGOs as sub-grants for specific line interventions. It used to receive some of its funds from the Government of Zimbabwe before the economic crisis. Its resource base is both limited and precarious. NGO A is an International NGO that relies on funds donated by other donor organisations. Donors prescribe the utilisation of their funds and the entrusted agency is expected to ceremonially comply, failure of which may result in the cessation of funding at any compliance visit made by the donor. Both NGO A and NGO B live from grant to grant and project to project. This does not allow for a healthy strategic process to develop, as both planning cycles and funding cycles are generally unpredictable (Scout, 2008). Such a situation discourages investment in workers and as the war for talents grips NGOs, these organisations need to take a proactive stance to retain employees and ensure program effectiveness and continuity.

The main objective of this study is to explore the possible causes of staff turnover and the challenges of employee retention in these two Non Governmental Organisations. The major questions asked to workers is; Given a choice would you like to continue working for your organisation?

Responses to this question and others are then analysed through thematic analysis and the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS).

Literature Review

Research on Human resource management (HRM) in Africa is still limited, especially so for Zimbabwe. African HRM is influenced by scholars such as Ghebregiorgis and Karsten (2006), Kamoche 1992, 2000, Kamoche et al 2004) among others. This study is important in that it pays attention to NGOs in Zimbabwe which are usually not the focus of labour studies. A similar study was carried out in Australia by Cortis et al (2009) who found out that employees in NGOs lacked job security, had poor conditions of employment, unclear career paths and lacked professional development. Unclear career paths can frustrate employees (Larsson et al 2007) and affect employee commitment. The same can be said for lack of training opportunities. Training increases the extent to which employees feel valued (Storey and Sisson 1993) and employee attraction (Jones and Goss 1991).

This study is theoretically based on the concept of commitment, the exchange theory and organisational justice theory. Meyer and Allen (1984, 1991) identified three types of commitment. Affective commitment refers to the individual's desire to stay with the organisation and their personal emotional attachment to the organisation. Continuance commitment is related to an individual's awareness of the costs related with leaving an organisation. Normative commitment is about the moral reasons an individual has for remaining with the organisation. Meyer et al (2002) relate high levels of affective commitment to low employee turnover, low absenteeism and improved performance.

Social exchange theory maintains that the employment relationship is a site of resource exchange governed by norms of reciprocity (Shore and Wayne 1993) However, Thibaut and Kelley, (1959) noted that satisfaction within a relationship alone does not determine the likelihood that a relationship will continue. They developed the concept of comparison level of alternatives, defined as the lowest level of outcome a person will accept from a relationship in light of available alternatives. When the outcomes available in an alternative relationship exceed those available in a

relationship, the likelihood increases that a person will leave the relationship (Blau, 1964). As a result, relationships that are rewarding are more likely to be stable because a high level of outcomes reduces, in terms of expectations, the likelihood of a better alternative existing. Unsatisfactory relationships, in turn, may remain stable for the lack of a better alternative.

Wang *et al* (2009:399) argue that organisational justice theory is about fairness that can be considered in terms of its outcomes, processes and interactions. They discuss four variants of justice; distributive, procedural, informational and interpersonal/interactional justice. Procedural justice concerns perception of fairness of procedures used to make decisions. Informational justice is about explanations given for procedures used and outcomes of particular interventions (Corquitt *et al* 2001). Interactional justice focuses on employee perceptions about fairness of interpersonal treatment received (often from supervisors or direct line managers) during implementation (Wang *et al* 2009). Distributive and procedual justice are more linked to employee commitment (Wang *et al* 2009).

Materials and Methods

Primary data were collected from 60 (30 from each of the two organisations) employees from Harare, Buhera and Chipinge using a questionnaire. NGO A and NGO B had a total of 70 and 55 employees respectively during the time of the surveys (between October and December 2009). NGO A has its head office in Harare and NGO B Head office is in Rusape where the majority of the management and support staff are officed. Both organisations have field offices in Buhera, Chipinge and Chiredzi where the majority of field officers work from.

Data obtained from the questionnaire survey was augmented by Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), telephone interviews and face to face interviews. 8 FGDs were conducted with employees (4 discussions per organisation) and 10 former employees from the two organisations were also interviewed through the telephone to establish their reasons for leaving. 8 managers, 4 from NGO A and 4 from NGO B, were also interviewed through semi- structured interviews.

The data were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Scientists

(SPSS). Thematic data analysis was also employed following the five interconnected key stages of familiarization; identifying a thematic framework; indexing; charting; mapping and interpretation (Ritchie & Spencer 1994) . Each FGD lasted approximately 2-3 hours, basing on the complexity of the topic under investigation and participants were warned about their time commitments. They were also guaranteed anonymity through the concealment of their names and the identity of their organizations which we only identify as NGO A and NGO B.

Discussion

Both organisations do not have human resources managers and an efficient human resource function. They also have not been conducting exit interviews for their employees. Therefore information from former employees was collected through telephone interviews. 10 former employees (two females and eight males), five employees from each organisation, were prepared to share their experiences with the researchers.

The organisations had more male than female workers. Sixty nine percent (69%) of the workers were males and 31% of them were females. The majority of the females were support staff occupying relatively less influential posts in the two organisations. Only two field officers were females out of the 21 field staff interviewed. Each of the organisation had one female field manager. The findings differ from Cortis et al (2009) who discovered that women dominated NGOs in New South Wales, Australia.

Table 1. Employee category of the respondents by organisation.

Employee category	No. of respondents		Percentage of respondents
	NGO A	**NGO B**	
Management	6	5	18,3
Support staff	14	14	46,7
Field staff	10	11	35
Total	30	30	100

The two organisations have flatter structures comprising top managers heading programs, field staff and support staff. Field staff are employees who directly implement programs in the different parts of the country. Support staff do not directly implement programs but provide support through logistics, finance, human resources, and administration. The smaller size of NGOs makes linear career progression difficult (Cortis et al 2009). Seventy four percent (74%) of the employees were below 40 years old by the time of the study. One security guard employed by NGO A was exceptionally old with 70 years of age. Sixty percent (60%) of the interviewed workers were married, while the rest were either widowed, had never been married or were divorced. Sixty three percent (63%) of the respondents had attained tertiary education and almost all the field staff had tertiary education. Fifty seven percent (57%) of the support staff had tertiary education as shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Educational level by employee categories

Highest level of education attained	Employee category the respondent belong				Total
	Management	Support staff	Field staff		
None	0	2	0		2
Primary	0	0	0		0
ZJC	0	1	0		1
'O' Level	0	9	1		10
Tertiary (diploma/degree)	11	16	20	5	47
Total	11	28	21	20	60

The educational qualifications of respondents reflect the melt down of the Zimbabwean economy prior to the adoption of the United states dollar of the economy in 2009, where employees were leaving their good jobs from the civil service and the private sector to occupy very low profile jobs in the non governmental organisation as it was one of the few sectors paying salaries in foreign currencies during hyper inflationary conditions. All the managers had tertiary education possibly because their jobs require high

levels of expertise and usually require a first degree in the relevant field as a minimum qualification. For other positions like field officers and finance, experience with the NGO accounting systems or donor financial reporting system is highly valued even if the incumbent might not have a tertiary qualification. NGO B had few workers with tertiary education than NGO A. The special economic circumstances made our results to contradict Cortis et al (2009) who found that NGO generally employed less educated people. However, there is need to establish minimum qualifications since anyone can work in an NGO even without academic credentials. An unclear recruitment and selection strategy of just taking anyone available might be a reason for poor salaries (Cortis et al (2009). Quoting Pfeffer, (1995:58) Ghebregiorgis and Karsten (2006:729) argue that a stringent recruitment and selection system gives employees who are selected "a sense of elitism, imparts high expectations of performance and conveys a message of the importance of the people to the organisation".

Twenty four percent (24%) of workers had joined their organisations between 2004 and 2006 and 50% of all the respondents had less than two years in their respective organisations. This is, possibly, due high staff turnover and the fact that the two organisations were growing during the same period. Almost all the employees in the two organisations were occupying positions they occupied when they first joined their respective organisations. Only two field officers in NGO B were promoted to be field managers between 2004 and 2009. There is evidence of less mobility (either vertical or lateral) of staff within the two organisations. This frustrates linear and spiral careers (Larsson et al 2007).

Workers' willingness to continue with their organisation given a choice
The respondents (current employees) were asked if they would want to continue working for their respective organisations given a choice. Fifty eight percent (58%) were prepared to continue and 42% of them indicated they would not want to continue working for their respective organisations given a choice. Seventy percent (70%) of the female employees were prepared to continue working and 56% of the males were prepared to continue working for these organisations regardless of their marital status. NGO A had slightly more people who would want to continue working for the organisation given a choice. This difference, in willingness between the two organisations, was explained in

most FGDs as caused by the fact that NGO A was offering higher salaries than NGO B at the time of the interviews.

Table 3. Reasons for unwillingness to continue working by gender

Reason for unwillingness to continue working	NGO A		NGO B	
	Males	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**
Salaries are lower than other NGOs around	19.00%	12%	9%	12%
Does not recognise effort made	8.00%	4%	24%	0
The labour relations are very poor	40%	0	28%	4%
Top management victimize openness or second opinion	12%	0	4%	0
Feeling underutilized	8%	0	4%	0
Lack job security / short contracts	20%	12%	20%	12%
Lack of support for staff development	8%	0	12%	0
Frustration with criteria for promotion	8%	0	4%	0
Inequitable salaries	8%	4%	8%	0
Partial application of personnel policies	0	8.00%	4%	0
Too much micro management	24%	0	0	0

Almost 50% of the employees below 40 years of age unwilling to continue while most of those above 40 years were willing to continue working for the two organisations given a choice. This is possibly because of the differences in intergenerational motivation. According to Henry (2005) the workforce can be divided into two generations Generation X (born before 1970) and Generation Y (born from 1970 onwards). Generations Y is not loyal to organisations or brands the way generation X is because generation Y strongly believe that the only job security is to be employable.

As a result generation X is more likely to have one career, working for one or two employees in a lifetime while generation Y have at least three distinct careers, more than 12 employers and a greater orientation

towards self employment by choice (Henry, 2005). Therefore, the differences by age in the commitment to the two organisations may be consistent with the changes in the global job market as the workforce redefines the psychological contract, with a greater concern on careersecurity over job security. With this shift comes enhanced tolerance of "job hopping" and the expectation that individuals will occupy jobs with a variety of organizations throughout their career rather than just maintaining a job within one organization. Building a fit between the career concept and the organisation culture becomes key in motivating and retaining such employees (Larsson et al 2007).

Lack of recognition and direction
Thirty six percent (36%) of those who were not willing to continue working for the organisations felt their efforts were not being recognised. The field staff contributed the highest percentage of respondents who felt their efforts were not recognised in the two organisations. All the respondents with this feeling had tertiary education. It was also noted in the FGDs that managers of the two organisations had problems in recognizing efforts that individual workers make on their job such that high performers were getting de-motivated. One NGO B field officer said "even if you break your back working no one appreciates this effort". Non recognition of effort and lack of respect are among some of the disincentives to retaining front line workers who also experience stress and burnout because of the nature of their jobs (Cortis et al 2009).

Still linked to this point is the view that twelve percent (12%) of those who were unwilling to continue working for their respective organisations felt they were underutilized by their organisations. NGO A had relatively more workers (eight percent) than NGO B (four percent) with this feeling. It was explained in the majority of the FGDs and some of the in-depth interviews that these organisations especially NGO A were so good at attracting highly qualified personnel who hitherto occupied senior profile jobs in the public service or the private sector during the hyper-inflationary years in Zimbabwe. These would settle for even very low profile jobs as long as they would earn foreign currency. With time they realised that money was not everything they liked on jobs and were feeling underutilized. One male field officer told the group that he was once a

provincial head managing eight districts but now he is a mere officer with three managers to report to. To him this was a career regression. It was also revealed that, some employees were exposed to training opportunities within NGO B and NGO A but this never translated into new responsibilities and challenging assignments hence feeling underutilized. All these factors reveal lack of a fit between individual people's careers and organisation culture. Larsson et al (2009: 378) argue that matching career-wise self aware people with consistent, pluralistic and precise human resource management and organisational cultures can be a powerful way of building strong motivational capital platforms for high performance. This also lends support to Herzberg's (1968:53) notion that "if you want people motivated to do a good job, give them a good job to do". A job where one is underutilized and undervalued is not in this sense a 'good job'.

Ninety percent (90%) of the employees who had joined the two organisations before the year 2006 were willing to continue working for the organisations while about 40% of those who joined the organisations after the year 2006 were not willing to continue working for the two organisations given a choice. These new joiners could have unfulfilled expectations or could have failed to fit in the new organisational environment with different HRM practices. Considering that some of the respondents with tertiary qualifications were occupying low profile jobs, it can be possible that some of their psychological expectations were not being met and they might be seeking opportunities else where. Continuance rather than affective commitment is what keeps them going. Research shows that when employees meet HRM practices that are incompatible with their previous experience, expectations, promises and obligations, they are likely to have negative reactions (Ghebregiorgis and Karsten 2006).

Remoteness of work area
Half of the employees in Chipinge were not prepared to continue working. This was attributed to the fact that it was the hottest working area which is prone to malaria. One female NGO A employee in Chipinge said "I am not happy working here…this place is very hot, there is no network for mobile phones, its remote and I am always living in fear of malaria…". Rural areas tend to isolate workers, threaten safety and discourage employee development (Cortis et al 2009).

Poor remuneration and lack of alternatives
Management had the highest proportion (81%) of workers who would want to continue working for their respective organisation. Almost 61% of the support staff and 42% of the field staff would also continue working for their respective organisations given a choice. There was a general feeling that in NGO A, managers relatively receive better salaries than all the staff. In most FGDs, participants were quick to say "NGO A pays its managers only". In NGO B most employees felt there was no significant difference between the various staff categories on remuneration issues. Managers in NGO A admitted that they were paid better than other managers in most NGOs. This possibly suggests that the retention efforts of the organisation were probably focused on management.

The fact that (58%) of the employees felt that high turnover was due to staff members leaving for better economic opportunities suggests that the two organisations were not benchmarking their labour and remuneration practices with their competitors to retain the relevant talents for their organisations. Some participants in the FGDs indicated that their experience with the two NGOs was making them more marketable with other NGOs in and outside the country. Those who indicated that they would want to continue working for their organisation had eight percent of them acknowledging that their experience with these organisations was enriching their careers. These would possibly remain engaged until such a time when their experience markets them outside the respective organisations. Better alternatives would have developed (Blau 1964). Two of the four former employees of NGO A and NGO B who indicated, during telephone interviews, that they left the organisations for better opportunities had joined attractive International NGOs (INGOs). The management of both organisations indicated that they were aware that these (INGOs) were paying better but could not do anything to prevent their talent workers joining them because of limited funding. Stacey Adams' (1965) equity theory asserts that employees expect equity between what they give to the organisation and what they receive in return and what other employees in the same field are giving and receiving. Employees get de-motivated due to the perceived absence of such equity. It came out clearly in some of the FGDs that some employees strongly believe that their posts were better paid in INGOs involved

in the same areas of operation and doing almost similar duties. It can therefore be concluded that when employees feel that their efforts are better rewarded elsewhere, the propensity to leave the current employer will be high.

Poor labour relations
NGO A's head office in Harare, had the highest proportion of employees (64%) who were not prepared to continue working while 73% of the employees in Rusape, NGO B's head office, were prepared to continue working for the organisation given a choice. Evidence from the FGDs suggests that labour relations were poorer in NGO A than NGO B and the effects of such poor relations were strongly felt by those at the Head Office where the management are officed.

Seventy two percent (72%) of those who indicated that they were not willing to continue working for both organisations cited poor labour relations as their reason for their unwillingness. Some were not happy with the top management for allegedly victimizing workers for being outspoken. The support staff contributed the largest percentage of employees (42%) who felt poor labour relations are making them unwilling to continue working for their organisations. One lady commented in one FGD that "it's known in all NGOs that if you become critical to management and outspoken you are on your way out". Both organisations have no channels for grievances since both NGO A and NGO B had no workers committees or Works Councils by. Another field officer who had served NGO A since 2004 reiterated that; "If you are heard or suspected of having been talking about workers committees you will be fired". Employees strongly feel that they are at the mercy of management whose actions cannot be challenged by workers. One field officer who resigned in 2008 confirmed that he was frustrated by the top management's refusal to his proposal to establish a workers committee. Management accepted that the organisation does not believe in workers committees for fear of militancy, but indicated that no one was being victimized for such proposals. The Labour Act provides for the formation of the workers committees and works councils. These findings tally with Cortis et al (2009)'s argument that NGO workforce faces considerable barriers to enterprise bargaining which makes it difficult to achieve equity.

Micro management is a process whereby the top management disregards the presence of supervisor and junior managers and seek to control the duties of low level staff without giving them the autonomy over their work. 24% of those who were not willing to continue working for the two organisations indicated that they were frustrated by the micro- management of their top management. Some field officers and even the office assistants had times when their top directors would ask them what they were doing 'since morning', for a particular day. According to the job characteristics theory, individuals will experience high motivation when their jobs foster autonomy for the worker, and enable workers to receive feedback about their performance (Lyons, 2008). Worker satisfaction tends to decrease where workers lack discretion (Cortis et al 2009) Lack of discretion increases the propensity to leave (Healy et al 2009).

Lack of employee training and development opportunities
Twenty percent (20%) of the respondents who were unwilling to continue working for their organisations given a choice cited lack of staff development as their reason. Staff development programs can be an indicator of whether the organisation cares for its staff or not (Storey and Sisson 1993). They can be a greater motivator which can elicit commitment (Jones and Goss 1991). Management indicated that the nature of humanitarian work which is usually period specific does not give them time to train employee and also the funds from donors are usually limited to finance staff development initiatives. Another concern highlighted in the FGDs is that some workers were selected for training and other left out through a process which was discriminatory. CIPD (2010) highlights that while the overall level of pay is unlikely to play a major role unless it is way below the market rate, perceived unfairness in the distribution of rewards is very likely to lead to resignations. Distributive justice greatly affects employee commitment (Meyer and Allen 1991).

Partial application of Human resource Management Policies
The majority of the reasons for leaving are consistent with the reasons cited

by those who were not willing to continue working for the organisations. The 62% (with almost similar proportions in the two organisations) who cited unfair dismissal possibly suggest that the provisions of the Labour Act were not followed in the human resource management of these organisations. Evidence from the FGDs suggests that some employees were dismissed for poor dressing, falling out of favour of the top management, complaining against salary issues, being involved in an accident with a car even if the driver was not at fault and being critical of the organisation's policies. Under normal circumstances such incidences would not justify dismissal. If someone leaves the organisation because of unwarranted demotion or after complaining about unfair labour practices, that move can constitute unfair dismissal. There was one confirmed case of a man who indicated in the telephone interview that he sent the organisation to court on grounds of unfair dismissal and won the case. Failure to handle one labour issue or unfairly treating one person can have a negative multiplier effect on the entire staff and can be a reason for leaving the organisation even if one was not directly affected. This was deduced from the use of the same few examples of some staff members who were felt to have been unfairly dismissed by the FGDs participants at every centre. The above reasons for turnover are related to both procedural interactional justice. This lends support to the argument that workers do not leave organisations but leave their bosses (Hay 2002).

It also emerged in the survey that, 12% of the employees who were not willing to continue working for the two organisations were not happy with the way people were promoted with NGO A contributing eight percent and NGO B, four percent. Some were expecting to be promoted but some external candidates (expatriates) were selected to fill the vacancies. One former field manager based in Harare indicated that his decision to leave NGO A was triggered by the country directors who recruited a less qualified European expatriate to occupy a post he was acting for two years. This was also confirmed with some of the in-depth interview with senior management in NGO A who indicated that they were happy with new blood and ideas coming into the organisations through recruitment outside or even hiring some consultants to make programs more effective.

Another twelve percent (12%) of the employee (eight percent females and four percent males) who were not willing to continue working for the organisation cited partial application of personnel policies as their reason. These employees had tertiary education and 75% of them were field staff between 26 and 40 years of age. A follow up on some of these cases in FGDs indicated that some female field officers had their maternity leave shortened from three months to two months while others were enjoying full maternity leave. One of the ladies who was affected had already left NGO B and joined another INGO. When asked why she left NGO B, she also confirmed the maternity leave anomaly as one of the reasons.

It can therefore be concluded that employees can lose their motivation when organisations mandate certain behaviours and norms which are not aligned with the individual values of the employees. The norms of distributive and procedural justice, or fairness, norms of reciprocity, and norms of equity suggest that in a relationship, the rewards experienced by partners should be more or less proportionately distributed (Colquitt et al 2001, Thibaut and Walker 1975)). When these norms are violated, people are apt to complain more about the relationship and pressure their partners to restore a more just and fair pattern of exchange (Scout, 2008). Feelings of unfairness reduce employee affective commitment thus encouraging turnover (Meyer and Allen, 1984, 1991).

Job insecurity
Fourty sic Percent (46%) of all unhappy respondents regardless of gender, educational status and age complained about the short contracts they are given. The nature of most NGO work involves employees signing short term contracts (some as short as 3 months) corresponding to the end of the implemented program or end of funding for a particular intervention. Some of these contracts can be renewable depending on the availability of funding. However, evidence from the FGDs indicated that some NGOs were taking these short term contracts as a way of controlling employees' behaviour. Even when a program runs for 3 years, employees are made to sign one year contracts renewable yearly so that if the organisation decides to sack the incumbent, they will just do so by not renewing his or contract at the end of the year. Those that the organisation wants to retain always

had their contracts renewed and served the organisation as long as they wanted. This sounds like the best way of dealing with none or under performers and trouble markers as long as it is done legally and transparently and fairly in the eyes of the generality of the staff.

A reliance on short-term contracts meant that the level of job insecurity implied was discouraging. One field officer left NGO A and joined the civil service in January 2010 after working for 6 months complained that short contracts were very stressful as he was always pondering about his future as a family man. This is consistent with Cortis et al's (2009) argument that workers from non governmental organisations move to state organisations in search for job security. In explaining excessive staff turnover, some of the top management in the two organisations have pointed to donors' insistence on low overheads, encouraging the use of short-term contracts through short funding cycles and discouraging staff development and appear to have resigned to the problem, seeing it as the result of factors outside of their control. However, they also concurred with employees on the view that they were using short contracts as a management tool in dealing with under-performers through non renewal of contracts. general uncertainty in the NGO jobs coupled with the poor labour relations is was a reason for disengagement.

The factors responsible for high turnover, as revealed through the research are poor labour relations, low salaries, job insecurity, employment opportunities elsewhere, lack of respect and appreciation, under employment, lack of development opportunities, poor work culture within the workplace and non alignment of values (typical of Herzberg's hygiene factors). These factors of staff turnover are in line with Herzberg's (1968) postulation that if the needs related to the Hygiene factors are not met, employees get de-motivated. Healy *et al* (2009 cited in Cortis et al 2009) further identify four factors that demotivate workers in NGO ; work stress (exacerbated by poor preparation for the work, poor job design and high case loads) ; a lack of professional support and development; a culture of blame (including intensive public and management scrutiny ; poor rewards (including low pay, poor career progression and lack of recognition and respect.

Conclusion

The two organisations are not examples of best practice in terms of Human resource management. They do not have HR mangers. They still practice hard HRM (Guest 2002) and it is only a matter of time before they face serious problems of employee attraction. Their only advantage had been the payment of salaries in US dollar and now that every organisation is using the same currency NGOs no longer have any advantage over other organisations. Their organisational culture are not conducive to the traditional linear and spiral models of careers. The two organisations employ highly qualified but undervalued and underutilised and demotivated employees. Knowledge workers expect more in exchange of their labour in a working relationship. They are more sensitive to poor labour relations and low salaries than the less educated. The nature of the NGO work involved employees signing short term contracts corresponding to the end of the implemented program or end of funding for a particular intervention. However, the organisations under study were using these short term contracts as a way of controlling employee behaviour. The most vocal and critical employees had fewer chances of their contracts being renewed. Lack of procedural and interactional justice led to employee turnover. Most employees are still with their organisations because of continuance commitment rather than affective commitment. The two organisations restrict workplace democracy through objecting to employee unionising. All attempts to unionise by employees were countered with bullying tactics by management from both organisations.

Lyons (2008) states that the goal of HR should not be limited to recruitment, but should also include influencing who leaves the company and when they leave. Companies may need to identify and release under-performing workers who may demotivate high performers (Hay 2002). In order to avoid losing top talent to competitors it is essential that companies remain aware of employee demands. The two NGOs do not conduct periodic staff surveys. Periodic staff surveys are periodic health checks of the organisation and can be a more proactive way of assessing staff satisfaction and engagement among a more representative sample of employees. Engaging with staff through some form of survey while they are still employed gives an organisation time to adapt before employees leave (Deloitte and Touch, 2008). It also offers an opportunity for staff to air their concerns, a positive action in itself, provided of course that these comments are acted upon.

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