

TALENT ANALYTICS AND EMPLOYEE RETENTION IN NIGERIA ORGANIZATIONS

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ABSTRACT

Human resource is the bedrock of any organization; they are a vital and significant resource that helps give the organization an edge. Organizations today especially in Nigeria are working towards a technology-driven entity and the management of human resources requires technology. Technologically generated data is needful for the analysis of human resource from the point of candidate attraction to the point of employee retention. Imperatively, for organizations to determine how far they want to imbibe talent analytics will indicate plans that will effectively develop their workforce with the right competencies and this in turn becomes a booster to retaining employees. Development in the economy has resulted into a stiff Labour competition creating avenues and opportunities for human resources. The biggest challenge organizations are faced with is managing these resources and retaining them especially the talented employees. Attracting and retaining these skilled employees plays an important role for any organization as employees' knowledge and skills are central to organizations' ability to be economically positioned and competitive. Organizations are also saddled with continuously satisfying the employees so as to make them stay-put. Sensitivity on the part of the organization with respect to employee retention is key, hence the study of a technology driven talent management strategy to help understand the measures for employees retention

KEYWORDS: *Analytics, Employee, Retention*

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INTRODUCTION

The world is moving at a fast pace with technology. Technology as a tool has come to stay and enhances every discipline of which human resources is one: human resource information system to talent analytics. Talent analytics is a relatively new but exciting and growing area in human resources practices in Nigeria and it presents a ground-breaking opportunity for organizations that are into human resources management both as an organization, department, course of study and discipline. Talent analytics is a creative initiative for transforming human resources-oriented organization. It is the application of technology and expertise to the data of employee for better decisions making for the organization (Guenole et al, 2017). Talent analytics is capable of helping the manager retain top performing employees, understand why they are loyal at the workplace, appreciate their satisfaction on the job and peek into why they stay-put. Talent analytic helps to determine corrective actions in addressing retention issues in the organization. A well measured performance helps to identify prime candidates, increase satisfaction on the job that boost employees' loyalty to the organization. Talent analytics has become a powerful predictive tool that can help anticipate performance levels; it increasingly has become

indispensable tool for attracting, retaining and optimizing work place talent. The future of human resources is changing. Like the rest of the business world, human resource officers and their teams are beginning to find that they need to focus on building a robust analytics capability to best prepare for the data-driven world. Schiemann et al (2018) believes that the key to human resources concern for businesses is employee retention (reducing employee attrition and turnover). There are significant financial and intangible costs associated with losing loyal and high-performing employees; it takes investments to find, hire, and train replacements. There is also a negative impact on the stakeholders they worked with regularly such as suppliers, colleagues, and customers. Hence, there is the called for organizations to retain talent in this technological era. Talent analytics or human resources analytical practice is as old as the late 19th century with credit to Fitz-enz (2010), author and president of human resource services organization Saratoga Institute, he looked at the measures of human resources management, a seminal tome outlining the metrics that is put into use for effectively measuring of employee performance. Giving rise to talent analytics and how it has evolved from being just an experimental approach to improving employee satisfaction and loyalty: a total boost of employee retention.

Talent analytics gathers workforce data, from work history to performance management, to employee satisfaction and loyalty. The analyses aid manager's insight making critical decisions, curbing and totally eliminating high attrition rates. The world is moving at a fast pace with technology. Technology as a tool has come to stay and enhances every discipline of which human resources is one; from human resource information system to talent analytics. According to Rory (2016), a human resources manager and blogger, he believes that "talent analytics is the real deal with its capable ability in successfully predictive and prescriptive analytics to recruit talent, identify and nurture talent's strengths, and ensure sustained productivity and innovation through the use of initiations that recognizes and rewards performance." Talent analytics is a relatively new but exciting and growing area in human resources practices in Nigeria, it presents a ground-breaking opportunity for organizations that are into human resources both as a department, course of study, discipline etc. Talent analytics is a creative initiative that helps in transforming human resource-oriented organizations. It is the application of technology and expertise to the data of employee for better decisions for the organization. Talent analytics is capable of helping the manager's retain top performing employees, understand why they are loyal at the workplace, appreciate their satisfaction on the job and peek into why they stay-put. This is actualized using talent analytic which can help determine corrective actions addressing any retention issues and a well measured performance helps to identify prime candidates, increase satisfaction on the job leaving the employee loyalty to the organization. Talent analytics has become a powerful predictive tool that can help anticipate performance levels; it increasingly has become indispensable tool for attracting, retaining and optimizing work place talent. Although organizations are still struggling to understand the complexities in the potential of their employees, Managers are saddled with the responsibility of talent acquisition, retention and encouraging performance and loyalty of the employees at the workplace in return employee must feel a sense of satisfaction (Becker et al, 2003). Talent analytics is a high-priority for any organization but readiness in this part of the world is relatively low, many organizations are lagging behind especially those within Nigeria; some organizations have five to seven systems for records of human resources data the effect is that the information that is often generated is inaccurate or unavailable and this is a major concern for organizations. According to Deloitte (2017), setting up clean and accurate data streams is, and will remain, a challenge for talent analytics. He further added that organizations run specific data quality activities to make the data fit for analysis with greater effectiveness directed at key variables that predicts and limits employee attrition: in order to ensure that predictive retention models are a robust tool for decision making, steps must be taken for accurate data stream. The reasons for which

employees leave the organization is essential for building models that lead to targeted and effective retention strategies. Organizations must identify adequate coaching and mentoring for employees. Human resources managers are being trained on the key objectives of developing attrition models and coached on how to use generated information to avert high-flyers and performing employees from leaving the organization (Becker et al, 2006).

This paper is to help address talent attrition and turnover issues to better position the organization to attract and retain talent.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

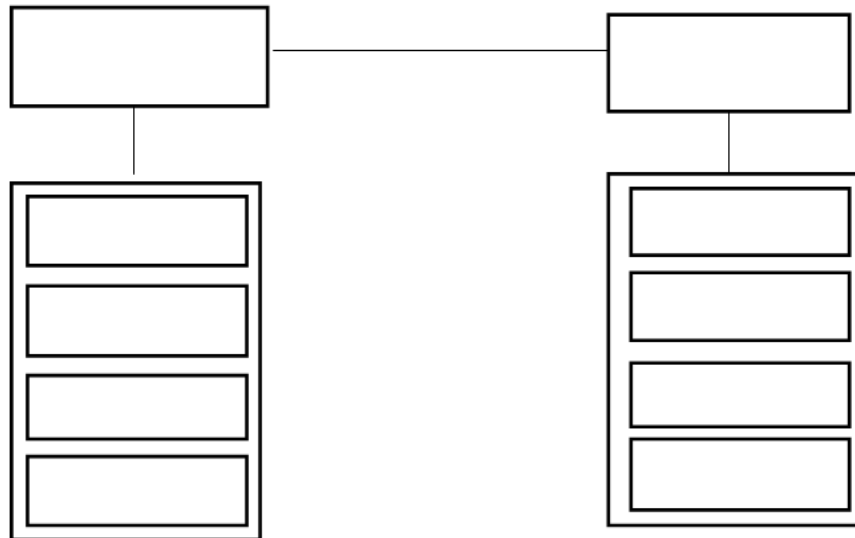


Figure 1: Conceptual Frameworks for Talent Analytics and Employee Retention Source: Researchers Desk 2019

LITERATURE REVIEW

CONCEPT OF TALENT ANALYTICS

Talent analytics is the use of statistics, technology, and expertise to large sets of people data for adequate and timely decision making for an organization. Talent analytics makes data accessibility to enable reporting on demand (Wang & Cotton, 2018). Organizations apply talent analytics as focus is on data for turnover and attrition (records of those who leave and if such separation was by choice) and the data gathered aids human resources manager know why employees left to accurately predict such attrition risks of existing employees; with the right knowledge and information steps can be taken to mitigate attrition and attain talent employee satisfaction. According to Bhatla (2011), organizations that will win in the future entail a change in strategy, an empowered human resources team in developing employees and improving organization's performance. Decisions, ranging from locations to place applicant to decisions on how to accurately incentivize the workforce are guided by predictions of data analytics. Talent analytics can also be referred to as: human resource analytics, workforce analytics, human capital analytics, or even just people analytics. Talent analytics improves an organization's human resource procurement process, helping human resources managers to identify highly rated and qualified candidates (Comb et al, 2006). Talent analytics enhances the capabilities of the organization to generate and sustain greater employee level of belongingness in the overall productivity and output of any organization; it shows organizations that are focused in retaining skilled and competent heads (talents). A successful talent analytics is one that is designed to grow competent workforce for the attainment of goal and building a competitive edge in the global face of

business world (Sparrow et al, 2015). The technology of talent analytics has enhanced organizations with the provision of information to aid employee retention. Levenson's (2018) paper argues that effective systems thinking and diagnostics are essential for the design and implementation of effective talent analytics programs. Levenson (2018) further explains that talent analytics is meaningfully developed following a careful diagnosis of the critical problems facing the organization. An understanding as to what extent these critical problem lie is attributed to the work force. He claims that the process begins with assessments at two levels:

- Competitive advantage analytics and
- Enterprise analytics.

These in turn allows the creation of human capital analytics that enable effective strategy execution. Minbaeva (2018), who directs the Human Capital Analytics Group at the Copenhagen Business School, makes the point that despite the utility and appeal of predictive Talent Analytics (helping us to understanding what will happen), most organization emphasise their analytics efforts on gaining understanding of what has happened (activity metrics within the human resource function on cost per hire). Minbaeva(2018), suggested that human resources managers do this out of an effort to gain legitimacy for human resource functions at the expense of developing analytics systems that are adequately useful for organization. This shows the ability of organizations to design and implement effective measures for best thought on organizational capability and demonstrates a method to operationalize such construct. An effective talent analytics requires human resources managers to address three interrelated facets which are data quality, analytical competencies, and strategic ability to act. Driving improvements in these facets will require interventions of the individuals, processes, and structural levels of analysis provided. These information guides the actions of the human resource personnel (Minbaeva, 2018). The goal of any analytic solution is to provide organizations with information that can propel actionable perceptions for smarter decisions making for improved productivity and better results in the organization. It is imperative for managers to understand what solution and decisions each analytics expression proffers and to match such analytical functions to the overall organization's operational capabilities. Robinson's (2018) provides a very useful contribution to the very high proportion of practitioners wishing to incorporate survey data into their analytics efforts. His comprehensive guide to the development and use of multi-item psychometrics scales for Talent Analytics is likely to become widely used in the Talent Analytics profession. The various dimensions of talent analytics build on each other descriptive analytics retrospectively views data which can be diagnosed to ascertain its usefulness for forecasting likely futurist predictions for which prescription are made for better results. These dimensions are interwoven with focus on improving capabilities of organizations in understanding data, and the development of such data for business decision making.

Descriptive Analytics – Viewing the Past

Asking “*What has happened? When, where and how?*”, descriptive analytics sources data to provide trending information on past or current events that can give futuristic actions that is explained by the use of key performance indicators, descriptive analytics drills down into data to uncover details such as the frequency of events, the cost of operations and the root cause of failures. The most common type of analytics used by organizations is that it displays information within a report. Descriptive analytics provides a holistic view and context for what has happened in the past from the point of current status by gathering information regarding a problem from different sources, comparing and contrasting data for diagnosis (Boudreau et al, 2017).Descriptive analytics focuses on the followings:

- The process of investigating past data to better comprehend the changes that have happened in a business.
- Using a range of past data for decision makers to attain a universal view on performance and trends on which to base business strategy.
- It helps in the identification of strength and weakness areas in an organization.

Descriptive analytics uses a full range of data to give a precise depiction of what has occurred in a business and how it varies from similar periods. These performance metrics can be used to indicate areas of strength and weakness; it also informs management on employees' relevance and competence on the job (Fitz-Enz, 2010).

Diagnostic Analytics – Dissecting the past

Diagnostic analytics is a form of advance analytics which examines past data to answer the question of “*Why did it happen? Where should we look?*”, and is categorized by techniques such as drill-down, data discovery, data mining and correlations (Simon et al, 2018). Diagnostic analytics takes a deeper look at data to attempt to understand the causative proceedings and actions based on historical data. Descriptive analytics provides insights of outcomes from the past for diagnoses in order to ascertain the root-cause of issues in the systems. Hence, organizations can take better decisions in avoiding the errors that resulted into negative outcomes from the past. Based on this historic analysis, organizations must identify areas that require further study. Questions requiring answers such as why sales have increased in a region where there was no change in marketing, or why there was a sudden change in traffic to a website without an obvious cause or why skilled workforce mobility. According to Fitz-Enz (2018), diagnostic analyst identifies the data sources to aid the explanation of these anomalies from descriptive analysis and then looks out for patterns outside the existing data sets into external sources to identify correlations to determine the cause of the problem. Hidden relationships are uncovered by looking at events that might have resulted in the identified anomalies. Probability theory, regression analysis, filtering, and time-series data analytics can all be useful for uncovering hidden issues in the data. Descriptive and diagnostic analytics uses insights from the past to provide detailed report for futuristic plans.

Predictive analytics- Understanding the Future

Asking “*What could happen? What is the pattern?*”, predictive analytics provides answers that move beyond using historical data as the principal basis for decisions, it goes further in helping managers anticipate likely scenarios for proactively planning ahead instead of reacting to what has already happened. Predictive analytics utilizes diagnostic information accumulated over time for predicting outcomes (Fitz-Enz, 2010). Predictive capabilities such as forecasting and simulation provide enhanced insight that managers can use to make informed decisions. The use of trends of time-series data and correlations to identify patterns, predictive analytics applies advanced statistical analysis and data mining as well as sophisticated mathematics to validate assumptions and test hypotheses to provide a solid, data-based foundation that can raise managers' confidence. Predictive analytics provides organizations with futuristic likelihoods which in turn helps managers identify conditions for potential deficiencies or surpluses in the future. Predictive analytic give organization the capabilities to leverage on its data for evaluation purposes for productivity anticipation or likelihood of failure (Davenport et al, 2010).

Prescriptive analytics – Tender Possible solution

Asking “*What should we do? What is the best action? What if we try this?*” prescriptive analytics explores a set of possible

actions and suggests actions based on descriptive, diagnostic and predictive analyses of complex data. Prescriptive analytics provides reliable solutions for organization needs and for better decision making on alternatives problems solving (Guenole et al, 2017). The outcomes help organization identify inventory that should be re-ordered, talent deficiency in the organization due to attrition and turnover, measures to revamp a sale outlet etc. Prescriptive analytics takes uncertainty into account and recommends ways to mitigate the risks that can result from it: Its ability is not only to examine potential outcomes but also make recommendations to help managers make decisions even when the data environment is too large or complex.

CONCEPT OF EMPLOYEE RETENTION

Employees today are different. They are not the ones who do not have good opportunities, especially, talented, skilled, competent and experienced ones. Job dissatisfied or lack of advancement opportunities, salary and remuneration and others are the reasons for which employees switch organization (Schiemann et al, 2018). The resultant effect of employee attrition or turnover is loss of invested resources on the part of employers, employee/customer relationships are strained, huge cost associated with replacement and downturn of moral for remaining staff. It is therefore very imperative that employers retain their employees, especially the talented and experienced ones. Employee retention is a process in which employees are encouraged to remain with the organization for the maximum period of time or until the completion of a particular project (Bhatla, 2011). In as much as remuneration and other types of benefits continue to be important factor in the retention scale, it is important to note that current human resource literature treats them as only one potential area for retention, and not always in adequate enough to guarantee a strong employee loyalty and commitment. Over the years, the business statistics on employee participation, workplace wellness, work-life balance and other topics has tailored towards indicating a strong interest in and recognition of how other aspects of working life influence people's decisions to stay with or leave a company (Hom & Griffeth, 2000). There are numerous factors that create satisfaction that result into employee retention in an organization: factors such as:

- A stimulating work environment- An environment that improves the effective use of people's skills and knowledge, allowing them some degree of independence on the job; this will aid in providing an avenue for the employees to contribute more ideas, as they see how their contributions influences the overall well-being of the organization.
- Opportunities for learning and upgrading skills-Development and consequent advancements on tasks require some level of learning for improvement. Effective communications and employee participation in decisions that affect them is attained when they are given the room for improvement and contribution; understandings of what is happening in the organization are the employer's main business concerns.
- Good compensation and adequate, flexible benefit plans- Helping employee stay motivated with extrinsic values that propels them internally.
- Recognition on the part of the employer- Every employee needs to strike a good balance between their lives at work and outside of work. Respect and support from peers and supervisors is significant in achieving such balance (Hamid et al, 2014).

Employee Retention Strategies

Strategies here refer to a more formal and deliberate system of practices that links with an organization overall vision, set of values and mission (Allen, 2008). Organizations develop activities that engage in elaborate planning mechanism for

cohesive strategy that deals with employee retention issues. According to Schiemann et al (2018) he emphasized the importance of good retention and the ability for organizations to keep their talents longer. In my contribution to knowledge, I viewed employee retention as a deliberate scheme organizations put in place to stop their talented and experienced workforce from leaving, to help them find satisfaction on the job and make exit interview of utmost concern. To this employee retention strategies include employee engagement, employee training, employee motivation and work-life-balance.

Employee engagement

The success or failure of the organizations is largely dependent upon employees working in it (Khan, 2013). In this era of globalization and industrialization, where there is high competition in the market (organization), it is important for the organization to have engaged workforce for the survival, growth and smooth running of the organization. Employee engagement is considered an important mechanism that is implored in the business world afloat. Kahn (2013) defined employee engagement as the dedication and involvement of the employees towards their organization and its value. Many scholars consider employee engagement as similar to other important work-related constructs like job satisfaction, job involvement, organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behaviour (Garvin, 2013). The drive is for organization to put measures in place to keep highflyers (talented employees) from an exodus-experience. According to Becker et al (2001) he saw employee engagement “as willingness or enthusiasm that the employee holds to spend optional effort towards the job”. Hamid et al (2014) defines employee engagement as the extent to which an individual is attentive and absorbed in the performance of his/her roles. It is the positive feeling that employees have towards their jobs and also the motivation and effort they put into it. An engaged employee is considered as the base of the organizational development. Such kind of employees carries the organization in positive direction. They not only perform their work but also play an important role in achieving the organization’s goals and objectives. Engaged employees want to use their talent and strength to move the organization forward: performing task with passion and driving innovation on overall performance (Bakkar, 2008). Employee engagement is decisive to any organization that seeks to retain their valued employees. It is very important for effective utilization of human resource and smooth running of the organization. Without employee engagement, an organization cannot survive for a long period of time. As opined by Becker et al (2003) engaged employees strengthen the organizations’ competitive advantage and generate favorable business environment. Cook (2008), have reported that engagement is one of the important and powerful strategies to attract, nurture, retain, respect and manage the manpower of the organization. They have also pointed out that married employees tend to have a higher level of engagement than those who are unmarried.

Employee Training

In addition to employee engagement, training is another key area in retaining employee (Sundaray, 2011). Learning new skills triggers renewed interest in aspects of the job for which they were learned. Through training, new recruited and current employees acquires the knowledge and skills to perform assigned jobs in a more effective way. The employees who enhance their skills through training are more likely to engage fully in on work and the tendency to be highly motivated and satisfied with mastering new tasks (Swarnalatha & Prasanna, 2012). According to Khan (2013) training and developmental activities are important and like every other human resource functions, it improves the abilities of any employee. It is the act and process of imparting knowledge and skills that are job specific. Training provides the opportunities to raise talents in the organization; helping the employee to perform their work efficiently and effectively,

hence reducing the problem of employee attrition and turnover. Lack of skills has been cited as one of the reasons for employee turnover, thereby indicating the necessity for training, re-training and multi-skill training. Messmer (2000) but stressed that one of the important factor in employee retention is investment on employee training and career development. Organizations are most likely to productively retain their skilled employees when they invest in training and development. The return of such investment is growth and profitability. Tomlinson (2002) agrees with the view that organizations can keep the leading edge in this competitive world by having their employees well trained in the latest technologies. Garg & Rastogi (2006) explained that in today's competitive environment employee feedback is very essential for organizations; as they learn and gain knowledge, the more they will perform on the job to meet the global challenges of the market place. Handy (2008) has mentioned that proper innovation, and assimilation of new knowledge is essential for survival in any work environment. Thus, knowledge is the most expensive asset of any firm.

Employee Motivation

A motivated and qualified workforce is essential for any company that wants to increase productivity and customer satisfaction. For the purpose of this study, motivation is the willingness of an individual to be determined and take deliberate actions toward organizational goals and objectives. The challenge for any manager is to find the means to create and sustain employee motivation. On one hand, managers should focus on reducing job dissatisfaction (working conditions, salary, supervision, relationship with colleagues), while on the other hand should use motivating factors such as achievement, recognition, responsibility and the work itself to retain competent employees. Employee participation and empowerment do not only enhance efficiency, growth and innovation but they also increase employee motivation and trust in the organization. If employees feel appreciated on their achievements on job and are involved in decision-making, their enthusiasm is fed and the resultant effect is motivation that will lead to productivity and continuous loyalty. Organizations want to use maximum potential of their human resources, to stay in the competition and to survive; great organizations are built on the inherent value of their human resources, and the motivation and commitment of its employees (Mohsen et al., 2004). To achieve employees' satisfaction and commitment, effective motivation becomes a necessity (Tella et al., 2007). Mohsen et al. (2004) supposed that employee motivation and commitment is very important for an organization's success. Motivated and committed employees with high levels of job involvement are considered as an important asset to an organization. Barkar et al (2008) argued, that keeping the employee motivation, commitment and job involvement up, is always rewarding to a business; as motivated and committed employees are productive and emotionally stable. Motivation is a management process that encourages employees to work better for the overall benefit of the organization. Organization's willingness on survival is hinged on its ability to adequately understand employee motivation as a pillar for successfully running any organization when employees are well motivated, they help the organization to grow and survive in a fast changing workplace (Mohsen, 2004).

Work-Life Balance

Work-life balance is becoming gradually more central for employees and tends to affect employees' decision to stay or leave an organization. Work-life balance is concept that supports employees flexible work schedules which allow them to take care of both their personal and professional life. The balance between personal and professional lives is determined by the amount of sacrifice the individual is ready to make at the expense of other areas of life. Loan-Clarke et al (2010) observed that a job that gives the holder the possibility to fulfill his/her family responsibilities/obligations increases such employees' retention rate. At the point of employment, employees are focused on the job but after a while attention is

given to other areas of their lives (phenomenon of downshifting). Kyndt et al (2009) laid emphasis on the significance of a healthy balance. The relationship between retention and work-life balance is an area of concern as employees focus is divided when time is not allotted to his personal life. Lener et al (2006) are of the view that employers should implement a harmonious balance to improve employee retention rate. Osman (2013) found that offering emotional support to employees through work-life balance reduces their intention to quit their job. Mita et al (2014) observed a direct relationship between employees' decision to stay or leave is work-life balance.

Employee Retention through Talent Analytics

The need for organizations to retain their talents is crucial as their ability to remain in business depends largely on it (Garvin, 2013). Traditionally talent analytics are descriptive in nature, an examined employee data across dimensions such as department and demographics to identify past patterns within metrics like employee turnover and retention. The findings are used to formulate talent retention policies. Descriptive analytics do not predict the future outcomes, the outcomes are diagnosed to know the reasons for past results, and predictive analytics goes a step further using the evidence from descriptive and diagnostic analytics as inputs for advanced techniques like statistical modeling, machine learning probability, regression analysis and time series. These methods provide forward-thinking measures to quantifies the likelihood of an employee's leaving the organization within a certain period of time and prescriptive analytics proffers a mechanism that helps organization keep skills within. Predictive analytics also identifies hidden connections between key factors contributing to employee turnover. The predictor variables such as pay, promotion, performance reviews, time spent at work, commute distance, and relationship with a manager, training and ability to strike a balance with professional and personal life, motivation level, and engagement rate are contributory factors for employee retention or turnover. Organizations also use external data such as labour market indicators and the current economic scenario in prescriptive analytics to better design effective intervention for employee retention purpose (Bhatla, 2011).

CONCLUSIONS

The emerging level of talent analytics holds a significant promise for organizations and human resource managers as this will improve their operational and strategic performance through more effective workforce management. Well informed prescription on problems solving, resulting from better data analytics with the potential to help employees manage and improve their own careers, through more effective feedback and career-path systems. It is imperative that workforce metrics and analytics systems are supported in organizations going forward. The automation of human resources functions to improve the health of the overall organization is paramount in this era where new roles and jobs are created, talented employees are fewer (Bock, 2015). Organization must put measures in place to help skilled, talented and competent employee stay actively engaged with upgraded knowledge that keep them motivated and then strike a balance that aids flexibility at the workplace.

RECOMMENDATION

It is important that organizations understand the dimensions of analytics as it is the tool that aids in problem identification and also brainstorms the solution using data driven factor. Talent analytics helps organization perceive challenges and also put a reward system that motivates talented employees to stay put in the organization. It identifies the key drivers of resignation and develops a retention measure. In this era, organization success is hinged around the level of technology.

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