

Motives and Personal Characteristics as Determinants of Employee Retention in Nigerian Public Service

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Abstract

This study investigated the effect of motives and personal characteristics on employee retention in civil service commission of selected states in Niger Delta, Nigeria. The cross-sectional survey research design was used and questionnaire was the main instrument of data collection. The questionnaire was administered on six hundred (600) respondents out of which five hundred and twenty-four (524) were fully retrieved. The study sampled civil service commission in three (3) States of Niger Delta; the selected States include Delta, Edo and Rivers State. Data obtained were analyzed via descriptive, post-estimation and inferential statistical tools. The multiple regression results revealed that personal characteristics (t -value = 6.91; Prob. = 0000 < 0.05) and motives (t -value = 5.2; Prob. 0000 < 0.05) significantly and positively affect employee retention. It was recommended that management should be considered as a vital component of strategic human resource management. In addition, civil service commission should improve motives and personal characteristics mapping on employee; this can be realized by introducing new ways of mapping out the motives (intrinsic, extrinsic, social, achievement motivations, etc.) of employees during phases of selection and placement. This study contributes to knowledge using human capital theory in explaining the relationship between motives and personal mapping and employee retention and also established that personal characteristics and motives significantly influence the level of employee retention.

Keywords: Motive mapping; Personal characteristics mapping; Employee retention; Civil service commission; Recruitment; Human capital theory

1. INTRODUCTION

One of today's biggest challenges facing organizations is the management of employees and retaining them. It is a predominant issue human resource managers (HRM) are confronted with. HRM is a procedure of hiring suitable employees and training them so that they can be resourceful assets to the organisation (Ashokkumar & Vanitha, 2023). It is essential for human resource (HR) practitioners to map skills with job descriptions to acquire resourceful workforce (Gatakaa & Lumwangi, 2023; and Rotich, 2020). Thus, ascertaining and mapping the employability skills and competencies becomes a vital task for HRM.

Broadly, motives and personal characteristics mapping are procedures of identifying the essential capabilities of an organization and capacities inside it (Garima, Richa & Swati, 2022). According to Kaur, Geetika, Sayeeduzzafar and Pretty (2023), motives and personal characteristics mapping acknowledged qualities and deficiencies of employee to enable them understand and demonstrate where career improvements are required for adequate coordination. It is only the employees which an organization seeks to retain, but their competencies as well because it is cumbersome for organizations to replace competencies of existing employees.

Retaining employees is an indispensable impediment for most organizations. Retaining a talented workforce is a critical management concern in public and private organizations (Ochieng, 2016). To retain a formidable workforce, it is vital to map competencies as retaining employees is not enough to have talented workforce but motive and personal characteristics mapping are the key (Nair, 2018). Employee retention as noted by Monari (2021) is the willingness of employees to show altruism behaviour in an organization.

According to Szafranski, Selma, Magdalena and Gerhard-Wilhelm (2022), employee retention via reward and recognition can assist an organization to retain employees for a specific period of time. If competencies of employees are harnessed efficiently and job roles are well assigned, it would help management retain talents for longer periods. In contemporary society, there is huge demand for competent employees, this has brought about fierce competition and scramble for the most talented employee (Gowrishankka & Iyyappan, 2017).

Motives and personal characteristics mapping are imperative dimensions are competency mapping which combine knowledge, skills and characteristics leading to increased work-related outcomes (Samuel & Chipunza, 2019; Shraddha & Kumar, 2016). Shivanjali and Tripti (2019), Jain and Bhavya (2021) showed that motives and personal characteristics mapping has found their usage in varied HRM and human resource development (HRD) functions like selection, career planning, leadership developments, performance appraisal, succession planning, among others.

Furthermore, organizations have realized that attracting and retaining the best talent make them to be at risk of losing employees to competitors. A recent survey by Sanjeev and Luxmi (2022) revealed that at least 80 percent of Chief Executive Officers agreed that the top agenda for progressive organizations is employee retention via motive and personal characteristics mapping. Accordingly, Jayasri and Srilalitha (2022) observed that the rate of employee retention translate to the amount of employees retained by an organization over a period of time and that the higher the employee retention rates, the better for the organizations because it will translate to financial savings, time and a benchmark for evaluating organizational success.

Usually, the lack of employee retention in the civil service commission has had adverse effects on their service delivery quality. It becomes vital to comprehend that employees can only be retained if their competencies are mapped, developed and used in the right direction. While several studies had been carried out on skills and knowledge mapping, majority of the studies had focussed on linking motives and personal characteristics to organizational or employee performance. Consequent upon the above, there is dearth of literature on the effect of motive

and personal characteristics mapping on employee retention; also, studies previously carried out focussed on other sectors other than civil service commission in Niger Delta.

Consequently, this study sought to bridge this gap by examining the effects of motives and personal characteristics mapping on employee retention in civil service commission of selected states in Niger Delta, Nigeria. Arising from the specific objectives of the study, the following research hypotheses were formulated:

H₀1: There is no significant relationship between motives and retention of employees in civil service commission

H₀2: There is no significant relationship between personal characteristics and retention of employee in civil service commission.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Motives and Personal Characteristics Mapping

Broadly, competency mapping identifies both strengths and weaknesses of employees in order to assist employees understand themselves better and show where career development effort needs to be directed. In this study, two (2) dimensions of competency mapping were employed – motives and personal characteristics mapping. According to Singh and Singh (2019), motives and personal characteristics mapping are not done for organizations' permanent employees only, but it is done for non-permanent employees to identify specific skills that will make them more valuable to organizations or employers.

In the same vein, Ashokkumar and Vanitha (2023) opined that motives and personal characteristics mapping are the most precise way organizations use in identifying employees' skills, ability, traits and behavioural competencies. Gatakaa and Lumwangi (2023) see competency as an anthology of knowledge, behaviour, skills and attitudes required for effective and efficient performance. Hence, competency portrays what employees need to do and not how employees will do it. According to Kaur, et al (2021), competencies cannot be copied; however, it formed the pillar on which employees rests. The foremost issue facing organizations is not only retaining employees, but mapping the competencies needed to be successful.

Jain and Bhavya (2021) reorganised the importance of competencies which is an essential required of employees to remain in an organisation. The required skill for a job as observed by Jayasri and Srilalitha (2022) largely depends on a number of dynamics such as organizational culture, structure, process, work environment, motivation, attitude, etc. Motives and personal characteristics mapping are ways organizations can build tap from the above identified dynamics (Kaur, et al, 2023).

Prior studies had shown that motives and personal characteristics mapping help in identifying employees' job and behavioural skills (Monari, 2021; Nair, 2018; Ochieng, 2016). Also, motives and personal characteristics mapping are internal tools employed by employers to motivate and guide the workforce towards shared goals, increasing values, performance as well as in retaining talented and formidable workforce (Rotich, 2020). According to Waghmare, et

al (2021), motives and personal characteristics offers ways of integrating the main human resource (HR) functions such as selection, recruitment, career planning, leadership development, succession planning, performance appraisal, among others.

First, motives mapping are observable traits needed to perform a specific job in the most valuable and efficient way. Motives mapping is the identification of employees' enthusiasm, commitment, energy and creativity levels expected by employers on a specific job role. Motives encompassed but not limited to those intrinsic, extrinsic, social, achievement and power motivations. A study by Shivanjali and Tripti (2019) showed that motives mapping are responsible for employees' retention; interestingly, the views shared by Shivanjali and Tripti (2019) have been widely upheld in the literature.

Second, personal characteristics are inbuilt traits, ability or aptitude skills employees are expected to possess on the job. Personal characteristics include self-motivation, integrity, stern communication skill, dedication, emotional intelligence, teamwork, leadership skill, creativity and the willingness to learn. The studies by Jain and Bhavya (2021); Samuel and Chipunza (2019); and Shivanjali and Tripti (2019) showed that mapping of personal characteristics contributes to employees' retention; a widely acknowledged viewpoint in the literature.

2.1.2 Employee Retention

Employee retention as noted by Garima et al (2022), is the capacity of an organization to retain or keep its workforce. Employee retention entails talent management which involves the use of integrated set of activities towards ensuring that organizations attract, retain, motivate and grow a talented workforce required now and in the future (Ramola & Santosh, 2020). The prime goal of employee retention is to avert the loss of capable employees which could adversely affecting performance and service delivery.

Singh and Singh (2019) believed that the main aim of employee retention is to avert loss of skilled workforce due to higher costs in recruiting and training new ones when existing ones quit the organization. Szafranski et al (2022) showed that employee retention negatively impact on organizational success. According to Udaya et al (2022); Samuel and Chipunza (2019), there are varied ways of retaining employees such as empowering employees, openness, career growth, recognition, fair compensation scheme and constant communication between employers and employees.

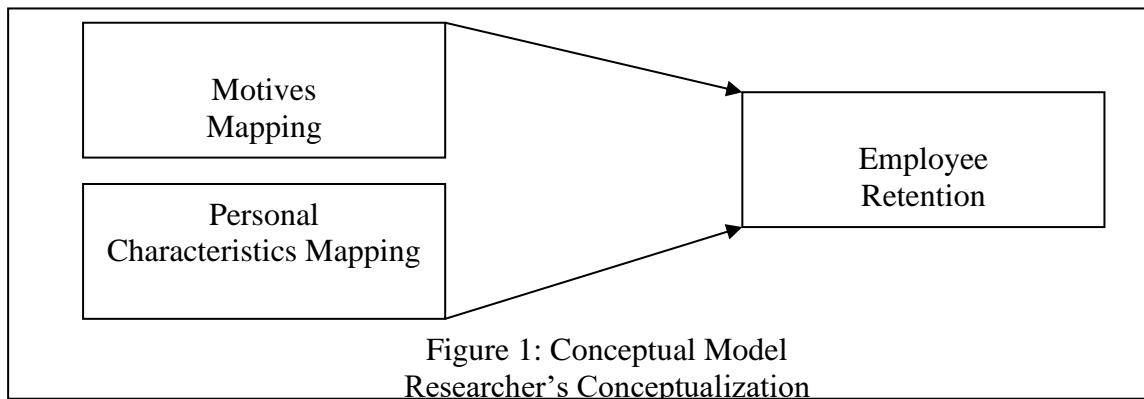
Overall, retention rate is the numbers of employees held by an organization. According to Gowrishankka and Iyyappan (2017), employees' retention rate is useful in assessing or as a threshold for assessing organization's ability to have reduced cost on recruitment and training. There are two (2) components of employee retention - creativity and novelty; while creativity portrays development of new ideas helpful in providing solutions to ongoing problem, novelty consists of developing new business ideas. Thus, employees are usually retained either on the basis of creativity or novelty (Sanjeev & Luxmi, 2022; Shraddha & Kumar, 2016).

2.1.3 Link between Motives, Personal Characteristics and Employee Retention

Motives and personal characteristics mapping are multifaceted concepts which has been extensively linked to numerous work-related outcomes (e.g. performance, productivity, quality of service, turnover, retention rates, etc); while studies on motives and personal characteristics mapping are abundant in most developed countries, there are little or no studies that had assessed whether motives and personal characteristics mapping influence the level of employees' retention in civil service commission in Niger Delta. Gatakaa and Lumwangi (2023) investigated what creates competence; the study showed that there is no distinct consent about what creates competency.

Arising from the above assertion, organisations have strived to create competence needed to assist them in identifying skills needed to become successful and gain competitive advantage. Shivanjali and Tripti (2019) showed that motives and personal characteristics mapping positively significantly affect employees' retention. Shivanjali and Tripti (2019) asserted that for organizations to be able to retain a talented workforce, they must be able to locate in the employees, innate and learned abilities that can make them perform better on a job role.

Through motives and personal characteristics mapping, Ashokkumar and Vanitha (2023) evaluated the role of motives and personal characteristics mapping and the performance of employees and found that motives and personal characteristics mapping offers direction to employees and organization; this make them to be able to plan developmental programmes and needs for the employees. Other studies (Kaur, et al, 2023; Szafranski et al, 2022; Monari 2021; Rotich, 2020; Gowrishankka & Iyyappan, 2017; Ochieng, 2016; and Shraddha & Kumar, 2016) have equally showed that mapping of competencies positively significantly affect employees' retention and other work-related outcomes. In view of the review of concept, a model was conceptualized:



2.2 Theoretical Framework

The current study adopted the Human Capital Theory (HCT); HCT is a paradigm which is used to evaluate the influence employees may have on organization. Ochieng (2016) noted that HCT explains the value additions created by employees and threshold upon which future employees and organizational plans are structured in order to enhance the effectiveness of competency

mapping vis-a-vis, increased employees' retention. The HCT considers employees as assets and accentuates that investments by organizations in its employee would generate returns.

Consequently, the HCT reinforces the notion of HRM and human capital management (HCM). The HCT is closely linked with resource-oriented perception of organization. According to HCT, sustained competitive advantage is realized when organizations have a talented workforce that cannot be substituted by competitors or rivals (Shraddha & Kumar, 2016). According to the HCAT, knowledge, skills, abilities, and other elements required from a workforce that can be achieved via competency mapping, are needed in retaining a talented workforce.

2.3 Empirical Review

Ashokkumar and Vanitha (2023) evaluated the role of personal characteristics mapping and the performance of employees of Atlas export enterprises in Malaysia. Questionnaire was used as instrument of data collection and data obtained were analyzed using regression statistical tool. Findings indicated that personal characteristics mapping offers direction to employees and organization to plan developmental programmes and needs.

Gatakaa and Lumwangi (2023) studied the effect of personal characteristics mapping on retention of employees in Kenyan public universities. Data obtained were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques and the study established that personal characteristics mapping positively significantly influence employees' retention in Kenyan public universities.

Kaur, Geetika, Sayeeduzzafar and Pretty (2023) studied how motives and personal characteristics mapping affects team and work quality of employees in India using descriptive statistics. The ANOVA analysis and t-test results revealed that medium-level managers' talents had greater effect on employees' work quality and teamwork compared to lower and higher management levels. In addition, it was found that motives and personal characteristics mapping had significant variations among employees at varied levels of management.

Szafranski et al. (2022) probed evaluated how personal characteristics mapping affects the level of performance of employees in era of industrial revolution in India. Data obtained were analyzed via descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Findings showed that personal characteristics mapping positively significantly influence the level of employees' performance in India

Monari (2021) examined the impact of motives mapping on retention of employees of telecommunication companies in Kenya using descriptive survey design. Data were obtained from questionnaire and the obtained data were analyzed via descriptive and inferential statistical tools. Findings established that motives mapping positively significantly influence employees' retention in Kenya

Rotich (2020) investigated the influence of motives mapping on the retention of employees in Kenyan service sector using explanatory design. Questionnaires were used and data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical tools. The regression model showed that

motives mapping positively significantly the retention of employees of service organizations in Kenya.

Shivanjali and Tripti (2019) examined whether motives mapping influence employee retention in Kenya. Questionnaire was administered and data obtained were analyzed using correlation and regressions. Findings revealed that motives mapping significantly influence employees' retention.

Gowrishankka and Iyyappan (2017) investigated whether personal characteristics mapping impacts on the performance of organizations in Bangalore using survey design. The regression results revealed that personal characteristics mapping established expectations for organizational performance, thus resulting in a systematic method to improved job satisfaction and better retention of employees.

Ochieng (2016) carried out a study to assess the link between talent management practices and employees' retention at DHL supply chain in Kenya. The study used survey research design and findings revealed a strong positive significant link between talent management practices and employees' retention in Kenya. A study by Shraddha and Kumar (2016) on motives, skills and personal characteristics mappings as strategic tools for enhancing employees' performance in India using survey design; data obtained were analyzed using the principal component analysis and findings revealed that motives, skills and personal characteristics mapping significantly negatively influence the level of employee performance in India.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

This study used the cross-sectional survey design to enable it obtain relevant information from fragmented individuals (civil service commission employees in selected States of Niger Delta) on how motives and personal characteristics mapping influence employees' retention. The study population comprised all employees of three (3) selected civil service commissions in Niger Delta. Due to the infinite population of the study, the Bowley proportional sample size formula was employed in obtaining a sample size of six hundred (600) respondents. Thus, the unit of analysis were employees of three (3), out of the six (6) Niger Delta Development Commissions. The selected states in the Niger Delta include Delta, Edo and Rivers States

The study used questionnaire in obtaining perceptions of employees on how motives and personal characteristics mapping influence the retention of employees. The structured questionnaire was used and it was designed using five-point Likert scales as follows 1 = Strongly disagree and 5 = Strongly Agree, which showed the level of their agreement or disagreement on the items of questionnaire. Items on motives and personal characteristics mapping were adopted from the works of Shivanjali and Tripti (2019); Ashokkumar and Vanitha (2023). On the other hand, employee retention items were adapted from the works of Gatakaa and Lumwangi (2023). In addition, the questionnaire was administered on a face-to-face basis.

A pilot test was done using 10 per cent of the sample size of the study, thus amounting to sixty (60) respondents who do not form part of the investigation. The data collected in the pilot test

were correlated using Cronbach alpha. Cronbach alpha coefficients (Table 1) were above 0.5, thus the research instrument was considered reliable.

Table 1: Cronbach Alpha Coefficients

Variables	Coefficients
Employee Retention (EMPRET)	0.80
Motives Mapping (MOVS)	0.76
Personal Characteristics Mapping (PERCHA)	0.67

Source: Researcher's Computation (2024)

In this study, the dependent variable is employee retention while the independent variables are motives and personal characteristics mapping. In view of this, multiple regression models was estimated as follows:

$$\text{EMPRET} = f(\text{MOVS}, \text{PERCHA}) \quad - \quad \text{Eq. 1}$$

$$\text{EMPRET} = \beta_0 + \beta_1\text{MOVS} + \beta_2\text{PERCHA} + \varepsilon \quad - \quad \text{Eq. 2}$$

Where: EMPRET is employee retention; MOVS is motive mapping; PERCHA is personal characteristics mapping; β_0 - β_2 intercepts of regression; ε is error term. Data obtained were analyzed in the following order: Descriptive Statistics (simple percentage, frequency count, mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum values and Pearson correlation); Post-estimation Statistics (variance inflation factor); and Inferential Statistics (multiple regression model). As noted by Okoro and Egbinike (2017); Okoro and Egberi (2020), multiple regression models are suitable for empirical analysis. The analysis was carried out with the aid of STATA 13.0 package.

4 RESULTS

Table 2: Bio-Data of Respondents

S/N	Variables	Items	Number=524	Percent
1	Gender	Male	307	58.6%
		Female	217	41.4%
		Total	524	100%
2	Age Brackets	25-30years	62	11.8%
		31-35years	99	18.9%
		36-40years	201	38.4%
		41-45years	59	11.3%
		46-50years	50	9.54%
		51-55years	38	7.25%
		56years & above	15	2.81%
		Total	524	100%
3	Marital Status	Married	338	64.5%
		Single	176	33.6%
		Unmarried but living with spouse	3	0.6%
		Divorced	7	1.3%
		Total	524	100%

4	Educational qualification	OND	46	8.8%
		B.Sc./HND	313	59.7%
		M.Sc./MBA	127	24.2%
		Others	38	7.3%
		Total	524	100%

Source: Researcher's Computation (2024)

Presented in Table 2 are bio-data of respondents; six hundred (600) copies of questionnaire were administered out of which, five hundred and twenty-four (524) were fully retrieved. The result indicated that 307 (58.6%) and 217 (41.4%) of the respondents are male and female respectively; an indication that most of the respondents were male. The analysis also revealed that 62 (11.8%) and 99 (18.9%) of the respondents are within age brackets 26-30years and 31-35years respectively while 201 (38.4%) and 59(11.3%) are 36-40years and 41-45years respectively; the remaining respondents 50 (9.54%), 38(7.25%) and 15(2.81%) fall within age brackets 46-50years, 51-55years and 56years and above respectively.

It was observed that 338 (64.5%) and 176 (33.6%) are married and single respectively while few of the respondents indicated that they are unmarried but living with spouse 3(0.6%) and divorced 7 (1.3%) respectively. It was also shown that 46 (8.8%) and 313 (59.7%) of the respondents had obtained OND and B.Sc./HND qualifications respectively while 127 (24.2%) had obtained M.Sc./MBA. This clearly indicate that the respondents are educated and may be able to comprehend the items in the questionnaire.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics

Variables	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min. Value	Max. Value
Employee Retention	2.7100	0.7341	1	5
Motives Mapping	2.5533	0.9042	1	5
Personal Characteristics Mapping	2.6044	0.8600	1	5

Source: Researcher's Computation (2024)

Table 3 revealed that variables of motives and personal characteristics mapping had mean scores of 2.60 and 2.55 while employee retention scored 2.71; the standard deviation value of 0.7341, 0.8600 and 0.9042 for employee retention, motives and personal characteristics mapping implied that respondents perceived that competency mapping is somewhat practiced and a way of retaining employees. Furthermore, the minimum and maximum values of 1 and 5 suggest that questionnaire items were designed on a 5-point scale.

Table 4: Pearson Correlation

Variables	Employee Retention	Motives Mapping	Personal Characteristics Mapping
Employee Retention	1.0000		
Motives Mapping	0.0359	1.0000	1.0000
Personal Characteristics Mapping	0.0447	0.0482	

Source: Researcher's Computation (2024)

Table 4 revealed that Pearson coefficients are 0.0359 (motives) and 0.0447 (personal characteristics); the results indicated that there is a positive relationship between motives and personal characteristics mapping and employee retention.

Table 5: Variance Inflation Factor

Variables	VIF	1/VIF
Personal Characteristics Mapping	1.31	0.7633
Motives Mapping	1.22	0.8196
Mean VIF	1.27	

Source: Researcher's Computation (2024)

Table 5 showed that mean VIF is 1.27, which is less than accepted mean VIF of 10; an indication of absence of multicollinearity problem in the model of motives and personal characteristics mapping and employee retention. As noted by Ososuakpor and Okoro (2023); Okoro and Ekwueme, C.M. (2020); Okoro and Ekwueme, (2018), VIF result below 10.0 is considered suitable.

Table 6: Multiple Regressions for Motives, Personal Characteristics Mapping and Employee Retention

F-Value	= 18.44	
Prob-F	= 0.000	
R-Squared	= 0.800	
R-Squared Adjusted	= 0.700	
Parameters	Coefficients	t-value/Probability
Personal Characteristics Mapping (PERCHA)	0.3490	6.91 (0.000)
Motives Mapping (MOVS)	0.2383	5.22 (0.000)
_Constant	0.3484	12.47 (0.000)

Source: Researcher's Computation (2024)

Table 6 showed the multiple regressions for motives and personal characteristics and employee retention. R^2 is 0.800, indicating that motives and personal characteristics mapping variables jointly explained about 80% of the systematic variations in employee retention; this mean that there are few other variables that can predict employee retention to about 20% which were not included in the study's variables. Hence, the model of motives and personal characteristics mapping and employee retention provides good fit to the data since the unexplained variation is just 20%. The F-value is 18.44 and Prob.-F is 0000 which is less than 5% significance level; this implies that motives and personal characteristics mapping significantly affect employee retention.

Discussion of Results

In both public and private organizations, retaining talented workforce is a critical issue because employees form a major part of any organization. However, due to globalization, and shortages

of skilled labour force, most organizations are finding it cumbersome to retain talented and valued employees (Gatakaa & Lumwangi, 2023; and Rotich, 2020). Hence, employees' turnover is stirring against a milieu of numerous HRM intervention mechanisms to improve employees' retention.

The objective of this study was to examine whether motives and personal characteristics mapping influence the level of employees' retention in the civil service commission of selected States in Niger Delta and this was informed by the human capital paradigm. The study employed cross-sectional design and self-administered questionnaires. Data obtained were analyzed using descriptive, post-estimation and inferential statistics to assess how motives and personal characteristics affect employees' retention

From the multiple regression models, ($R^2 = 0.800$) showed that motives and personal characteristics mapping account for 80% variation in employees' retention. Also, the study revealed that there is a positive significant relationship between motives and personal characteristics mapping and employees' retention in civil service commission in selected States of Niger Delta. The findings were supported by Kaur, et al, (2023); Szafranski et al, (2022); Monari, (2021); Rotich, (2020); Shivanjali and Tripti (2019); Gowrishankka and Iyyappan (2017) who established that motives and personal characteristics mapping significantly positively affects employees' retention and other work-related outcomes.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this study, we examined the effect of motives and personal characteristics mapping on employees' retention of civil service commission in selected States in Niger Delta. Using the results obtained from the multiple regression models, it was concluded that motives and personal characteristics positively and significantly affect employees' retention.

The policy implication is that when human resource managers are able to identify the motives and personal characteristics (integrity, dedication, emotional intelligence, leadership skill, creativity and willingness to learn), it can help them retain a talented workforce that can make them realize organizational goals. On basis of the findings, recommendations were given as follows:

- (1) Competency management should be considered as a vital component of strategic HRM for enhancing employees' retention; this can be achieved by ensuring that strategic human resource managers should consider personal characteristics during selection, recruitment, placement and career development phases of employees
- (2) The civil service commission should improve mapping on employee motives; this can be realized by introducing new ways of mapping out the motives (intrinsic, extrinsic, social, achievement motivations, etc.) of employees during phases of selection, and place of employees.

This study contributes to knowledge using the human capital theory in explaining the link between motives and personal characteristics mapping and employees' retention. Also, the

study contributes to knowledge by establishing that motives and personal characteristics significantly positively influence the level of employee retention in civil service commission.

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