



Exploring Total Rewards Management and Employee Retention: Evidence from the Non-Profit/NGO Sector

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study uniquely integrates systematic review and qualitative analysis to contextualise TRM within the NGO environment, to understand how reward systems influence employees' decisions to remain with their organizations. **Methodology:** A qualitative approach was adopted, beginning with a systematic review of existing literature to identify reward practices linked to employee retention across sectors. This was followed by a thematic analysis of data drawn from a diverse range of non-profit/NGO organizations to examine prevailing TRM practices and their effects on employee retention. **Results and Findings:** The findings indicate that TRM practices are both directly and indirectly associated with employee retention. Employees are more likely to remain in organizations that offer well-balanced combinations of monetary and non-monetary rewards. The study also reveals that organizational context, including institutional characteristics, funding arrangements, and workforce composition, significantly moderates the effectiveness of TRM practices. **Novelty:** By integrating systematic review evidence with qualitative insights, this study introduces a novel approach to examining Talent Relationship Management (TRM) practices within the non-profit/NGO sector. **Originality:** This research contributes to the limited empirical literature on TRM in the non-profit/NGO sector, emphasizing the importance of context-specific reward strategies in fostering employee retention. **Conclusion:** The study concludes that strategically aligned and context-sensitive TRM practices are essential for improving employee retention and supporting sustainable talent management in non-profit/NGO organizations. **Type of Paper:** Research article.

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INTRODUCTION

This study aims to investigate the impact of Total Rewards Management (TRM) on employee retention in the non-profit/NGO sector. The research is motivated by the need to address labour shortages and their potential impact on the continuity of valuable projects in this sector. According to the latest NCVO (2023) data, there are around 140,500 voluntary organisations in England and Wales. There are 165,800 in America as well as approximately 1 million non-profit/NGO charities registered under the 501(c)(3) section of the Internal Revenue Service in the United States (Internal Revenue Service, 2018).

According to the UK Civil Society Almanac (2022); National Council of Nonprofits, 2021; Johnson *et al.*, 2020; Detrick *et al.*, 2020; Xu *et al.*, 2022, the non-profit/NGO sector has experienced significant growth over the past decade, despite this growth, labour shortages pose a challenge as the loss of valuable employees can lead to knowledge depletion, reduced productivity, lowered morale, recruitment and training costs, as well as discontinuity of its projects worth billions of investments. According to White, 2019; Johnson *et al.*, 2020; Detrick *et al.*, 2020, employee retention is crucial for organizations to mitigate turnover-related challenges and ensure project continuity however, there is a lack of substantial research on the specific impact of total rewards management on employee retention in the non-profit/NGO sector.

According to studies carried out by by Slatten *et al.*, 2020; Hassan, 2022; Dobson and Dozois, 2021; Alhmoud and Rjoub, 2019; Akhtar *et al.*, 2015; Miao *et al.*, 2013; Newman and Sheikh, 2012; Allen *et al.*, 2003; Young *et al.*, 1998, extensive literature has been developed to enhance the understanding of rewards systems and their potential influence on employee retention within organizations

Morover aligning TRM practices with Herzberg's model, organizations can better understand the intrinsic and extrinsic factors that impact employee engagement and retention. Hence, this study presents an opportunity to contribute significantly to the existing literature as it aims to fill this gap in knowledge and advance the understanding of the impact of bundling of total rewards practices can effectively reduce employee turnover within this sector. This study will address the following three research questions, leading to the achievement of the primary objective (Kross and Giust, 2019; Cronin and George, 2020).

RQ1: What is the current landscape of TRM practices in the non-profit/NGO sector?

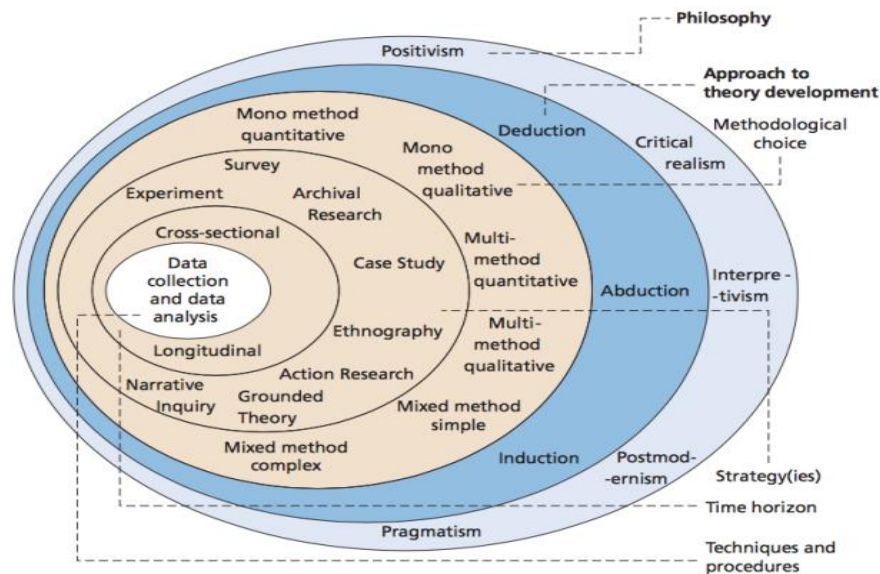
RQ2: What TRM practices influence employee retention in the non-profit/NGO sector?

RQ3: What contextual factors moderate the relationship between TRM practices and employee retention in non-profit/NGO organizations?

By answering these questions, the study provides valuable insights for academic researchers and industry leaders and human resource practitioners in the nonprofit/NGO sector by examining the rewards and incentives influencing employees' decisions to stay or leave these organizations. This study fills the research gap by contributing to existing knowledge and offering evidence-based strategies for talent retention in the nonprofit/NGO context.

METHOD

This study explores the philosophical and methodological underpinnings utilized by the researcher to meet the research objectives. This systematic literature review discusses the rationale behind the tool and philosophy selection, provides insights into the research recruitment procedures and ethical considerations during data collection, and outlines the data analysis process. The methodology follows the research onion framework proposed by Saunders *et al.*

Figure 1: Research Onion (Saunders, et al., 2023, P.131).

Due to denied access to organization for primary data collection at the last minute, this study had to employ a stand-alone (Pare *et al.*, 2015; Templier and Pare; 2015) systematic literature review to examine the impact of total reward management on employee retention in the non-profit/NGO sector. While a systematic literature review has weaknesses such as subjective reviewer judgment, potential scope limitations, and the absence of a predefined protocol, it offers cost and time savings, provides valuable insights by comprehensively evaluating existing research, identifying gaps, inconsistencies, limitations, reducing repetitive studies, and informing the development of a robust theoretical framework and research methodology (Polanin *et al.*, 2020; Bryman, 2016).

The main source of information in this area of the study will be articles from various peer-reviewed journals as they include the strongest, most dependable, and critical theory (Mohamed Shaffril *et al.*, 2020). Considering issues of scientific integrity as expressed by Horbach and Halffman (2018) articles sourced would be from only reputable journals as they have been well vetted as recommended by Horn, (2012, pp 51).

Through a structured analysis of peer-reviewed journal articles, existing research findings would be analysed to identify key themes and insights as recommended by Mohamed Shaffril *et al.*, (2020). The systematic review methodology is justified for its rigorous nature, minimizing bias, ensuring transparency, and providing a comprehensive overview of existing literature (Xiao and Watson, 2019).

Researcher only included studies that provided guidance on the impact of total rewards management on non-profit/NGO employees' retention. Literature reviews on other sectors were excluded from this study. Studies had to be peer-reviewed articles published in qualitative, quantitative, conceptual, or mixed methods journals. Considering the dearth of research on employee retention via rewards offering in the non-profit/NGO sector (Mer *et al.*, 2022), the selected timeframe for the included studies was from 2000 to 2023. Priority was given to studies conducted in the United Kingdom, followed by the United States, and then international studies. The literature included in this review was limited to English-language publications. Additionally, efforts were made to include articles that addressed underrepresented populations. The reference page of the included articles was reviewed to identify other relevant articles that met the inclusion criteria for this systematic review.

Electronic databases was searched using Boolean operators to combine the following keywords on Web of Science, Google Scholar and EBSCO as recommended by Xiao and Watson (2019): "rewards management", "total rewards", "total rewards management", "rewards bundling",

"intrinsic rewards", "extrinsic rewards", "employee retention", "talent retention", "workforce retention", "employee intention to stay", "employee turnover", "employee attrition", "non-profit", "NGO, non-governmental organisations", "total rewards in NGO", "rewards in non-profit", "turnover in nonprofit/NGO", "retention in non-profit/NGO" and "intrinsic/extrinsic rewards in non-profit/NGO".

The initial assessment of studies was based on their titles, and those indicating a discussion of the effect of intrinsic or extrinsic rewards offering on employee retention were further evaluated by obtaining their full references, including author, year, title, and abstract. In cases where relevant articles were not accessible through the initial databases, the University of Portsmouth library was utilized.

The initial search on Google Scholar used the following broad keywords "total rewards in non-profit/NGOS" and "reasons for turnover in non-profit/NGOS". Then keywords were refined and search on EBSCOhost using keywords "nonprofit employee retention" returned 39,958 studies while "nonprofit employee turnover" returned 43,764 studies and "total rewards in non-profit/NGOS" returned 5 studies.

A search on google scholar using keywords "nonprofit employee retention" returned 94,600 studies while "nonprofit employee turnover" returned 176,000 studies, and "total rewards in non-profit/NGOS" returned 560 studies. The search on EBSCOhost using keywords "non-profit/NGOS retention practices" "turnover in non-profit/NGOS," and "total rewards in non-profit/NGOS" returned 653 records of peer-reviewed articles. In total, fifty-two potential studies were identified after title screening from all search engines.

The fifty-two studies had their abstract reviewed to determine their relevance to the research topic, specifically the literature review and findings. Only one researcher conducted assessments of the manuscripts. Out of the fifty-two studies, three was further removed for not being peer reviewed. Out of the forty-nine left, thirty-two were considered relevant, and the full-text articles were obtained for further quality assessment.

The full-text articles were skimmed to assess the quality and eligibility of the thirty-two studies. Journal articles with no peer review were not included in the review. Online presentations and reports were largely excluded due to the absence of a peer-review process. Only a small number of high-quality reports with well-cited references were included.

The researcher independently conducted the quality and eligibility assessment and any discrepancies in findings were analysed and resolved. To enhance reliability and validity, the coding process was validated by obtaining feedback from academic peers. After reviewing, five studies were excluded; one lacked guidance on review methodology, two were not in English and full text for two studies could not be found. In total, twenty-seven studies were included from the initial search for further analysis in the next stage.

Each study provided information on five subtopics: basic pay, compensation and benefits, career growth and development, employee recognition initiatives, and work-life balance in non-profit/NGOs. Data extraction and coding were performed using NVivo software.

Researchers initially extracted information from the articles independently and established consensus on the extraction criteria. Challenges in decision-making were resolved through the researcher's independent judgment, although it is advisable to involve two researchers for quality assessment and eligibility (Xiao and Watson, 2019). In the absence of this, to enhance reliability and validity, the coding process was validated by obtaining feedback from academic peers and engaging in discussions with the study supervisor.

Thematic analysis was employed to analyse the collected data, allowing for the identification of patterns, themes, and relationships to derive meaningful insights (Xiao and Watson, 2019; Mohamed Shaffril *et al.*, 2020; Horn, 2012, *pp.* 200-201). Initially, the data was systematically coded to categorize key concepts and ideas related to total reward management and employee retention. Subsequently, themes emerged through an iterative process of data immersion, coding, and theme

development (Xiao and Watson, 2019). Finally, the identified themes were interpreted and synthesized, considering their similarity to existing literature findings in other sectors, to address the research questions and objectives of the study (Horn, 2012, p. 211-212; Xiao and Watson, 2019).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the analysis and discussion of peer-reviewed journal articles sampled for this study, focusing on effective total rewards practices for stimulating employee retention in non-profit/NGOs. The systematic review aimed to identify evidence-based practices and their effectiveness in the sector. Utilizing the total rewards model allowed for the exploration of relevant themes and concepts, uncovering key insights on the perceptions and practices of total rewards management in relation to employee retention in the sector. Results were derived from a thematic analysis of data collected from twenty-three peer reviewed journal articles, categorized into five themes: basic pay, compensation and benefits, career development, employee recognition, and work-life balance. See Appendix Iv for the thematic coding table. A total of twenty-three (23) studies met the inclusion criteria. Some of the studies were used in two categories, for example, basic salary and retention, or career development and retention Kang *et al.*, (2014). Studies focused on basic pay, compensation and benefits, career development, employee recognition, and work-life balance.

In the following sections of the literature review, we will explore the current landscape of TRM practices in the NGO sector, investigate the correlation between TRM practices and employee retention rates in the NGO sector and attempt to uncover what contextual factors moderate the relationship between TRM practices and employee retention in non-profit/NGO organizations. By delving into these areas of research questions, we can gain a comprehensive understanding of how TRM can positively impact employee retention in the unique context of NGOs (Cronin and George, 2023).

Basic Pay

The research findings from studies by Kang *et al.* (2014), Slatten *et al.* (2020), Khan and Shahzadi (2022), and Siddique *et al.* (2022) illuminate the positive relationship between basic pay and employee retention. Kang *et al.* (2014) found that higher wage levels and wage increases were associated with a higher likelihood of employees leaving nonprofit organizations for other sectors. Slatten *et al.* (2020) emphasized, on the other hand, the importance of fair salaries in demonstrating appreciation for employees and reducing turnover. Leete (2000) suggested that wage equity and perceptions of employer fairness play a more significant role in nonprofit employee retention than the wage itself. Khan and Shahzadi (2022) revealed a significant correlation between employee turnover and the pay package offered by NGOs in Pakistan. Siddique *et al.* (2022) highlighted the significance of ensuring economic security through tangible wages in enhancing employee retention.

These findings corroborate the conclusions drawn in various other sectors, which suggest a strong association between basic pay and employee retention and links to moderating factors like communication and fairness (Hoque *et al.*, 2017; Dias *et al.*, 2022). Gerhart *et al.* (2009) conducted a meta-analysis highlighting the positive relationship between pay-for-performance practices and employee retention. However, potential drawbacks such as a competitive and individualistic culture and increased stress and burnout were neglected. Scheller and Harrison (2018) emphasized the importance of transparent communication, clarity regarding pay, and aligning pay with diverse workforce needs in fostering employee retention. On the other hand, other studies (Woodhams *et al.*, 2015) failed to delve into complexities such as wage gap, work value evaluation, and market demand in achieving true fairness.

These conclusions highlight the significance of competitive wages, fair salaries, wage equity, and economic security in reducing turnover and enhancing employee retention. While the background data offers broader perspectives on pay-for-performance practices, communication,

and fairness, the research outcomes provide more targeted insights into the unique dynamics of basic pay in the nonprofit/NGO context. In summary, the research findings on basic pay and employee retention in the nonprofit/NGO sector emphasize the importance of competitive wages, fair salaries, wage equity, and economic security. These insights align with the broader understanding of pay-for-performance practices, communication, and fairness discussed in the background data. However, it is crucial to consider the complexities of achieving true fairness and aligning pay with market demands to effectively address turnover and retention challenges in the nonprofit/NGO sector.

Compensations and benefits

The study conclusions shed light on the relationship between employee compensation and retention in the nonprofit/NGO sector. Studies by Kang et al. (2014), Alterman et al. (2021), Slatten et al. (2020), Stater and Stater (2018), and Nugroho (2023) all highlight the significance of fair compensation, pay equity, comprehensive benefits, and incentives in enhancing employee retention. These results emphasize the importance of aligning compensation practices with industry standards, considering employees' specific needs, acknowledging financial constraints of non-profit/NGO organisations, and ensuring transparent communication regarding incentives and benefits within the sector.

Prior data corroborates these studies' insights into the positive impact of employee compensation in retention. Akhtar et al. (2015) and Yamamoto (2019) highlight the crucial role of compensation and benefits in employee retention across major organizations. Dias et al. (2022), and Scheller and Harrison (2018) provide insights that haven't been acknowledged in the research conclusions concerning the complexities associated with administering monetary rewards, such as competitive disadvantages, individual differences and pay secrecy (Alterman *et al.*, 2021). However, and the importance of transparent communication and aligning benefits with diverse workforce needs was acknowledged in both prior data and research outcomes (Scheller and Harrison, 2018; Alterman *et al.*, 2021). In prior literature by Rai *et al.* (2019), the importance of employees' perception of organizational justice in influencing their retention was addressed.

Evidently, the background data offers broader perspectives on compensation and benefits across organizations, by aligning compensation practices with industry standards, considering perceptions of justice (Rai *et al.*, 2019; Cao *et al.*, 2013), employees' needs, and ensuring transparent communication (Scheller and Harrison, 2018), nonprofit/NGO organizations can enhance employee retention and create a stable and motivated workforce. However, it is crucial to address the complexities associated with administering monetary rewards and consider the unique dynamics of the nonprofit/NGO sector to effectively retain talent and foster employee satisfaction.

Recognition and praise

Scholars within the non-profit/NGO sector have validated the correlation between employee recognition and employee retention. Mohd Zin et al. (2022) found empirical evidence supporting the link between employee recognition programs and staff retention in Malaysian non-profit organizations. Similarly, Bassous (2014) highlights that recognition is important to nonprofit workers and can complement extrinsic motivation without crowding it out when administered effectively for retention. Siddique *et al.* (2022) concluded that when employees feel valued and appreciated, it can ultimately enhance their retention. Furthermore, Knapp et al. (2017) found that recognition and appreciation significantly influence turnover intentions among full-time workers in nonprofit organizations.

Prior literature by Bhakuni and Saxena (2023), Halim *et al.*, (2020), Sija (2022), Tirta & Erika, (2020), and Noor *et al.* (2020) demonstrate the positive impact of recognition and appreciation programs in reducing employee turnover intentions. They emphasised that employee's value

recognition in various forms, such as verbal praise, written appreciation, public acknowledgment, or awards ceremonies, as it fosters a sense of value and loyalty towards the organization.

Conversely, it is important to note the potential challenges and limitations associated with recognition, as cautioned by Brun and Dugas (2008), such as inadequate compensation, limited scope, potential inequity, overemphasis on recognition, and lack of sustained engagement. These were not acknowledged in research findings.

Career growth and development

Career growth and development opportunities have been demonstrated as having an impact on employee retention in study data by Kang *et al.*, (2014), Njoroge & Nzulwa, (2019), Siddique *et al.*, (2022), Stater & Stater (2018), Bhakuni and Saxena (2023). Stater and Stater (2018), on the other hand, identified that learning opportunities significantly reduce turnover intentions, although they did not shed light on the impact of career development generally.

Several scholars in prior literature have confirmed this association between career growth and development and employee retention as found within the non-profit/NGO sector (Rasheed *et al.*, 2020; Bhakuni and Saxena, 2023). Knapp *et al.* (2017) linked growth opportunities to turnover intentions in nonprofit organizations. Kang *et al.* (2014) highlighted growth and development in reducing turnover in nonprofits. Akinyi (2014) emphasized training for retention in NGOs. Stater and Stater (2018), on the other hand, identified that learning opportunities significantly reduce turnover intentions. Bakuwa *et al.* (2013) found that learning and development impact staff satisfaction and retention within the sector.

While Akinyi (2014) suggests that there is no universal strategy for personnel retention, Bhakuni and Saxena (2023) acknowledge limited resources for implementation and the need to consider individual preferences and goals within the nonprofit/NGO organisations. However, neither study addresses concerns related to increased marketability and its impact on retention. Within these studies, retention concerns regarding increased marketability were not addressed.

Work life balance

Prior literature studies by De Menezes and Kelliher (2017), Pregolato *et al* (2017), Krishna *et al.* (2022), Iqbal *et al.* (2022), Wong *et al.* (2020), and Rodríguez-Sánchez *et al.* (2020) indicate that when organizations prioritize and invest in improving the quality of work life for employees, it can lead to increased job satisfaction and engagement. Quality of work life programs can enhance employee participation, involvement, and responsibility, ultimately contributing to their retention as stated by SHRM (2022), CIPD (2021), Turnea and Prodan (2020) and Mer *et al.*, (2022).

The investigative outcomes from studies by Akinyi, (2014); Juaneda-Ayensa *et al.*, (2017); Njoroge & Nzulwa (2019); Ndukw & Ofondu (2018); Musinya (2021) all corroborate the prior literature findings, linking work life balance initiatives to employee retention within the non-profit/NGO sector. These results emphasize the positive impact of work-life balance initiatives such as flexible work arrangements, family-friendly policies, and wellness programs on employees' intention to stay.

Furthermore, while Ndukw & Ofondu (2018) specifically cautions against a one-size-fits-all approach, Pregolato *et al* (2017) suggests a generational consideration, and Ndukw & Ofondu (2018) acknowledge a gender-specific needs in rewards administration. All of these highlight the importance of tailoring flexible schedules to address the diverse requirements of different individuals which have not been addressed in the study outcomes. However, it is important to acknowledge the potential limitations and challenges involved in accommodating individual work-life balance preferences such as the potential negative impact on productivity and neglect of organizational demands (SHRM, 2022; CIPD, 2021; Turnea and Prodan, 2020) which were not considered in research findings.

In summary, the analysis underscores the significance of work-life balance initiatives in promoting employee retention within the non-profit sector. Organizations that prioritize work-life balance can create a positive work environment, enhance employee satisfaction and well-being, and ultimately contribute to higher retention rates. However, it is crucial to consider individual needs and constraints when designing and implementing work-life balance policies to ensure their efficacy and inclusivity.

Extrinsic and intrinsic bundling

According to the study by Bassous, (2014) workers in faith-based nonprofits are primarily motivated by higher-level needs like social connections, esteem, and self-actualization. The study found that extrinsic motivators, fair compensation, and recognition can complement intrinsic motivation but not overrule it. Similarly, in the study by Bakuwa *et al.*, (2013) investigative outcomes highlight the significance of non-monetary factors in fostering an engaged and committed workforce within organizations.

These research observations appear to support the assertion made by Herzberg's (1965) two-factor theory, which suggests that while the absence of monetary rewards can lead to dissatisfaction, their presence alone does not necessarily lead to satisfaction. Consequently, the factors that drive employee satisfaction and retention in the workplace differ from those that cause dissatisfaction (Hiam, 2003). Several studies by Chen *et al.*, (2023), Slatten *et al.*, (2020), Ojediran and Adebayo (2023), and Siddique *et al.*, (2022) equally supports these study conclusions. These research outcomes also support earlier works on the social exchange theory, according to Blau (1964), demonstrating that TRM practices providing attractive rewards and benefits foster commitment and loyalty.

In summary, multiple studies have identified total rewards factors and best practices to enhance employee retention in the non-profit/NGO sector. These studies primarily focused on organizational and employee factors associated with job satisfaction, commitment, engagement, and their impact on retention. Evidence suggests that the bundling of various total reward elements contribute to improved retention rates. Organizations in the non-profit/NGO sector can positively impact employee retention by adopting specific total reward strategies, especially when combining intrinsic and extrinsic elements that align with individuals' desires and circumstances. Existing evidence demonstrates a significant positive impact of total reward practices on workforce retention. By synthesizing this research, we aim to inform HR practitioners, managers, and policymakers in the NGO sector about effective strategies for retaining talented individuals.

CONCLUSION

The predominant purpose of this systematic literature review was to identify total reward practices relevant to the non-profit/NGO sector organisations that could enhance employee retention. This chapter discusses the findings that have emerged based on the analysis of the data obtained from the research data. As outlined in Chapter 1, this inquiry identified three specific research questions from the prior literature. The first was to determine the current landscape of TRM practices in the non-profit/NGO sector. The second was to uncover what TRM practices influence employee retention in the non-profit/NGO sector. The third was to understand the contextual factors that moderate the relationship between TRM practices and employee retention in non-profit/NGO organizations. These questions are addressed below focusing on total rewards elements like basic pay, compensation and benefits, career growth, work-life balance, and employee recognition specific to the sector.

When analysing the question on the current landscape of TRM practices in the non-profit/NGO sector, the research result showed that the five elements of TRM; basic pay, compensations, recognition and appreciation programs, career growth and development

opportunities and work-life balance initiatives were in operation in the sector. Prior literature review provided an overview of TRM practices in different sectors and highlighted the unique characteristics and challenges of these sectors such as lack of knowledge of TRM, demographics, employee preferences, limited financial resources, and diverse workforce compositions. These prior study conclusions align with research results, suggesting that similar practices are adopted in the non-profit/NGO sector. However, studies indicate that due to financial restraints, some non-profit/NGOs may find it difficult to offer rewards like career development and competitive wages and compensation with for profit organizations.

Furthermore, when analysing what TRM practices influence employee retention in the non-profit/NGO sector. The prior literature investigative insights from studies indicate that no single reward on its own could retain employee hence they proposed a bundling of both intrinsic rewards for satisfaction, engagement that would result in retention. Similarly, this study results by Slatten *et al.*, (2020), Kang *et al.*, (2014), Akinyi, (2014), Juaneda-Ayensa *et al.*, (2017), Njoroge & Nzulwa, (2019), and Musinya, (2021), corroborates these finding. The collected research data aligns with previous studies in other sectors, suggesting that all elements of total rewards exert an influence on employee retention, notably, bundling intrinsic and extrinsic rewards together propagates a stronger relationship with retention outcomes within the non-profit/NGO sector. The focus was extensive; thus, this review answered this question.

Conversely, when analysing the question on what contextual factors moderate the relationship between TRM practices and employee retention in NGO/non-profit organizations, comprehensive findings were made. In prior literature review emphasis was on factors like pay secrecy, employee perception of distributive justice and fairness, gender and generational differences, transparent communication, limited resources for implementation and individual preferences.

Similarly in the research finding, contextual factors such as limited financial resources, organisational justice, fairness and industry wage equity, rewards preference by age and gender and strategic communication, were indicated. These contextual factors influence the effectiveness of TRM practices in promoting employee retention. These results therefore indicate that contextual variations within the non-profit/NGO sector should be considered when designing and implementing TRM practices.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering the outcomes of this study, the challenges recognised in the sector and limitations of research, the following recommendations are made for industry leaders, HR practitioners in the sector and future researchers as well.

Industry leaders in the non-profit/NGO sector need to consistently scrutinise the rewards they offer, implementing effective total rewards management strategies, which include developing comprehensive and competitive pay and compensation packages aligned with industry standards and employee needs, considering factors like fair wages, pay equity, and benefits. Additionally, investing in non-monetary rewards such as professional development opportunities, flexible work arrangements, and recognition programs contributes to employee satisfaction. Transparent communication channels regarding compensation and benefits, along with clear communication of reward philosophy, performance expectations, and growth opportunities, foster trust and help employees understand the value of their rewards. The resulting effects of these are threefold: improves the quality of employee rewards provided, yield significant satisfaction, productivity and engagement for its workforce, and increase retention.

HR practitioners in the non-profit/NGO sector play a crucial role in implementing and optimizing total rewards management practices. To enhance retention rates and create a supportive work environment, it is recommended that HR practitioners in this sector focus on several key

strategies. Firstly, conducting regular compensation reviews and benchmarking exercises ensures that compensation practices remain competitive and aligned with industry standards. Secondly, recognizing the diverse workforce within the sector and tailoring rewards to individual extrinsic and intrinsic needs helps meet employees' preferences and foster a sense of value. Lastly, fostering a culture of continuous feedback and recognition through regular performance feedback and dialogue between supervisors and employees contributes to employee growth and improvement. By implementing these recommendations, HR practitioners can contribute to enhancing retention rates and creating a supportive and rewarding work environment within the non-profit/NGO sector.

Furthermore, HR practitioners should embrace AI-driven rewards management systems to optimize the administration of rewards. By utilizing AI, processes such as salary calculations, performance evaluations, and recognition programs can be automated and streamlined. This improves efficiency, accuracy, and fairness, ultimately contributing to enhanced retention rates. It is important to carefully select AI tools that align with organizational values and provide proper training and support to employees. Leveraging AI in rewards management allows HR practitioners to free up time for strategic initiatives while increasing objectivity and accuracy in reward allocation.

Future researchers can contribute to understanding total rewards management and its impact on retention in the non-profit/NGO sector by exploring the effectiveness of specific components, such as non-monetary rewards or innovative incentive programs, to gain a nuanced understanding of the factors influencing retention. They should investigate how organizational culture, values, and mission alignment affect the effectiveness of total rewards management in retaining employees, enabling organizations to create a retention-focused environment. Additionally, conducting longitudinal studies to evaluate the long-term impact of total rewards management on retention rates will provide insights into the sustainability and effectiveness of different reward strategies over time.

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