

Identifying and Analyzing Individual Factors in Creating a Conducive Environment for Retaining Human Capital and Enhancing Organizational Productivity

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This study aims to identify and analyze individual factors among employees that contribute to creating a conducive environment for retaining human capital and enhancing organizational productivity within the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC).

Methodology: A qualitative research design was employed, utilizing semi-structured interviews with 15 participants selected through purposive sampling. The participants included NIOC elites, consultants, and external advisors. Data were collected until theoretical saturation was achieved and analyzed using NVivo software. Thematic analysis was conducted to identify key themes and subthemes.

Findings: Four main themes were identified: equal job opportunities, creating a creative environment, communication and participation, and leadership and trust. Subcategories within these themes included fair recruitment, career advancement, diversity and inclusion, innovation encouragement, flexible workspaces, professional development, transparent communication, feedback mechanisms, trustworthy leadership, and empowerment. Participants emphasized the importance of transparent hiring processes, diversity policies, innovation support, effective communication, and ethical leadership in enhancing employee satisfaction and productivity.

Conclusion: The study highlights the critical role of both individual and organizational factors in creating a supportive environment for employee retention and productivity. Implementing fair recruitment practices, promoting diversity and inclusion, fostering innovation, ensuring effective communication, and ethical leadership are essential strategies for organizations.

Keywords: *Human capital retention, organizational productivity, equal job opportunities, creative work environment, effective communication, leadership and trust, National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC).*

1 Introduction

Human capital is widely recognized as a key driver of organizational success. Employees' skills, knowledge, and abilities are vital for achieving competitive advantage and sustaining organizational performance (Danneels & Sethi, 2011). However, retaining talented employees is challenging, especially in environments characterized by rapid change and uncertainty (Danneels & Sethi, 2011). Factors such as job satisfaction, organizational culture, and leadership play crucial roles in employee retention and productivity (Imran et al., 2015; Jamkhaneh et al., 2018).

Equal job opportunities are fundamental to creating a supportive and fair work environment. Fair recruitment practices, career advancement opportunities, and diversity and inclusion policies ensure that all employees have the chance to succeed. Research has shown that transparent hiring processes and merit-based selection can significantly enhance employee satisfaction and organizational loyalty (Aprilina, 2023). Moreover, promoting diversity and inclusion not only improves the workplace culture but also drives innovation and productivity (Huang & Wu, 2010).

A creative work environment is essential for fostering innovation and enhancing productivity. Encouraging innovation, providing flexible workspaces, and supporting professional development are key elements in this regard. Studies have demonstrated that environments that encourage idea generation and provide recognition for innovative contributions lead to higher employee engagement and productivity (Hanaysha, 2016). Additionally, flexible work arrangements, such as hybrid working models, have been found to improve employee satisfaction and perceived productivity (Aprilina, 2023).

Effective communication and active participation are crucial for building a cohesive and productive workforce. Transparent communication channels, regular feedback mechanisms, and opportunities for team collaboration enhance trust and engagement among employees. Research indicates that clear and open communication helps in aligning employees with organizational goals and reduces the likelihood of misunderstandings (Mohiuddin et al., 2022). Furthermore, involving employees in decision-making processes fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility, leading to higher productivity (Choi & Ruona, 2010).

Leadership plays a pivotal role in shaping the organizational climate and influencing employee behavior.

Trustworthy leadership, empowerment, and clear vision are critical for motivating employees and driving performance. Studies have shown that ethical and transparent leadership builds trust and enhances organizational commitment (Ariansyah et al., 2022). Empowering employees by delegating authority and encouraging initiative fosters a supportive environment that promotes productivity (Zamiri et al., 2020). Moreover, leaders who communicate a clear vision and direction provide employees with a sense of purpose and motivation (Medina & Medina, 2017).

Organizational factors, including culture, structure, and policies, significantly influence employee productivity. A positive organizational culture that supports innovation and continuous learning can drive performance and competitiveness (Schuldt & Gomes, 2020). Organizational structures that facilitate flexibility and adaptability enable employees to respond effectively to changes in the external environment (Huang et al., 2010). Furthermore, policies that promote work-life balance and employee well-being contribute to higher job satisfaction and productivity (Mrayyan, 2019).

A review of existing literature highlights the importance of both individual and organizational factors in influencing employee retention and productivity. Studies have shown that organizational justice, job security, and job satisfaction are key determinants of productivity (Imran et al., 2015). Furthermore, the adoption of innovative practices and technologies is influenced by organizational characteristics such as culture and leadership (Hameed et al., 2012).

The role of hybrid working models in enhancing employee satisfaction and productivity has been emphasized in recent research (Aprilina, 2023). Flexible work arrangements not only improve work-life balance but also enable employees to perform at their best. Additionally, the influence of personal and organizational factors on researchers' attitudes towards sustainable research productivity has been explored, highlighting the importance of supportive organizational environments (Ghabban et al., 2019).

In conclusion, creating a conducive environment for retaining human capital and enhancing organizational productivity requires a comprehensive approach that addresses both individual and organizational factors. Fair job opportunities, a creative work environment, effective communication, and trustworthy leadership are critical elements in this process. By understanding and addressing these factors, organizations can implement strategies that not only retain valuable employees but also enhance their

productivity and contribute to overall organizational success.

This study provides valuable insights into the factors influencing employee retention and productivity at NIOC. The findings highlight the importance of creating a supportive and inclusive work environment that fosters innovation and engagement. Future research should explore these factors in different organizational contexts to develop a more generalizable understanding of the best practices for enhancing human capital retention and organizational productivity.

2 Methods and Materials

2.1 Study Design and Participants

This study employs a qualitative research design to explore and analyze individual factors among employees that contribute to creating a conducive environment for retaining human capital and enhancing organizational productivity. The qualitative approach was chosen due to its effectiveness in gaining deep insights into personal experiences and perceptions.

The statistical population for this research comprised individuals from three distinct categories within the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC):

Elites within the Company: This group includes selectively recruited elites such as top scorers in national entrance exams and members of the National Elites Foundation.

Consultants, Assistants, and Retirees: Individuals who have previously served in high-level decision-making positions within NIOC.

External Consultants and Contractors: External consultants and contractors, including advisors to ministers and other high-level external consultants involved in various NIOC projects.

The study employed purposive sampling to select participants who could provide the most relevant and insightful data. The sample size was determined based on the principle of theoretical saturation, which was achieved after conducting interviews with 15 participants. Theoretical saturation occurs when no new information or themes are observed in the data, indicating that a comprehensive understanding of the research topic has been reached.

2.2 Data Collection

The primary method of data collection in this study was semi-structured interviews. This approach allows for in-depth exploration of the participants' views while providing the flexibility to probe further based on their responses. The interview guide included open-ended questions designed to elicit detailed information about the participants' experiences and perspectives related to human capital retention and productivity enhancement.

2.3 Data Analysis

Data collected from the interviews were analyzed using NVivo software. NVivo is a qualitative data analysis (QDA) software that helps in organizing, coding, and analyzing large volumes of qualitative data. The analysis process involved several steps:

Transcription: Each interview was transcribed verbatim to ensure accuracy.

Coding: The transcripts were imported into NVivo, where they were systematically coded. Initial coding categories were derived from the interview guide, while additional codes emerged during the data analysis process.

Thematic Analysis: The coded data were analyzed to identify key themes and patterns. Thematic analysis enabled the researchers to construct a coherent narrative around the factors influencing human capital retention and productivity.

By utilizing NVivo software, the research ensured a rigorous and systematic approach to data analysis, enhancing the reliability and validity of the findings. The combination of purposive sampling, semi-structured interviews, and sophisticated data analysis techniques allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the individual factors that contribute to a supportive environment for human capital retention and organizational productivity.

3 Findings and Results

The study included 15 participants, each selected through purposive sampling to provide diverse insights into the factors influencing human capital retention and organizational productivity within the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC). The participants were categorized into three groups: NIOC elites, consultants and retirees, and external advisors. There were five participants in the NIOC elites category, including top scorers in national entrance exams and members of the National Elites Foundation. Another five participants were consultants, assistants, and

retirees who previously held high-level decision-making positions within NIOC. The remaining five participants were external advisors and contractors involved in various NIOC projects. The gender distribution among the participants was

relatively balanced, with eight males and seven females. The age range of the participants varied, with four individuals aged 30-40, six individuals aged 41-50, and five individuals aged 51-60.

Table 1

Themes, Subcategories, and Concepts

Category	Subcategory	Concepts
Equal Job Opportunities	Fair Recruitment	Transparent hiring processes, Merit-based selection, Non-discrimination
	Career Advancement	Performance appraisals, Mentorship programs, Equal promotion opportunities
	Diversity and Inclusion	Policies for inclusion, Diversity training, Support groups
	Equal Pay	Pay audits, Salary transparency, Gender pay gap initiatives
	Anti-Discrimination Policies	Anti-bias training, Grievance procedures, Policy enforcement
	Accessibility	Workplace accommodations, Assistive technologies, Inclusive design
Creating a Creative Environment	Innovation Encouragement	Idea generation sessions, Innovation funds, Recognition programs
	Flexible Workspaces	Open office plans, Collaborative tools, Remote work options
	Professional Development	Training programs, Skill workshops, Knowledge sharing
	Autonomy	Empowered teams, Independent projects, Decision-making authority
	Recognition and Rewards	Incentive programs, Employee awards, Public acknowledgment
Communication and Participation	Inspirational Surroundings	Aesthetic office design, Ergonomic furniture, Creative décor
	Transparent Communication	Regular updates, Open forums, Clear messaging
	Feedback Mechanisms	Suggestion boxes, Regular surveys, Open-door policies
	Team Collaboration	Cross-functional teams, Collaborative platforms, Joint projects
	Employee Involvement	Decision-making inclusion, Employee committees, Participatory management
Leadership and Trust	Conflict Resolution	Mediation services, Conflict management training, Clear protocols
	Social Interaction	Team building activities, Social events, Community spaces
	Trustworthy Leadership	Ethical behavior, Consistent actions, Transparency
	Empowerment	Delegation of authority, Encouragement of initiative, Supportive leadership
	Vision and Direction	Clear vision statements, Strategic goals, Roadmaps
	Accountability	Performance reviews, Clear expectations, Consequences for actions
	Supportive Environment	Emotional support, Work-life balance policies, Open communication
	Integrity	Honesty, Ethical decision-making, Accountability
Role Modeling	Leading by example, Demonstrating values, Mentorship	

Equal Job Opportunities

Fair Recruitment: Ensuring transparent hiring processes and merit-based selection is crucial for equal job opportunities. One participant noted, "Our company has made significant strides in non-discrimination during recruitment, which has resulted in a more diverse and talented workforce."

Career Advancement: Performance appraisals and mentorship programs are key to providing equal promotion opportunities. Another interviewee emphasized, "Mentorship has played a vital role in my career growth, ensuring I had equal opportunities to advance."

Diversity and Inclusion: Policies for inclusion and diversity training are essential. One employee shared, "Support groups and diversity training sessions have significantly improved our workplace culture."

Equal Pay: Conducting pay audits and promoting salary transparency help bridge the gender pay gap. A participant

mentioned, "Implementing salary transparency has brought to light discrepancies that needed addressing."

Anti-Discrimination Policies: Anti-bias training and grievance procedures are crucial. An interviewee stated, "Effective grievance procedures have made it easier to report and resolve discrimination issues."

Accessibility: Providing workplace accommodations and assistive technologies is necessary. One respondent highlighted, "The introduction of assistive technologies has made our work environment more inclusive."

Creating a Creative Environment

Innovation Encouragement: Idea generation sessions and innovation funds motivate creativity. A participant remarked, "Our innovation funds have supported numerous groundbreaking projects."

Flexible Workspaces: Open office plans and collaborative tools enhance creativity. An employee noted, "The flexibility to work remotely has significantly boosted my productivity and creativity."

Professional Development: Training programs and skill workshops are important. One interviewee commented, "Professional development opportunities have greatly enhanced my skills and job satisfaction."

Autonomy: Empowering teams and providing decision-making authority foster innovation. A participant shared, "Having the autonomy to make decisions has been crucial for my team's success."

Recognition and Rewards: Incentive programs and employee awards are essential. One respondent stated, "Being recognized for my contributions has motivated me to excel further."

Inspirational Surroundings: Aesthetic office design and creative décor inspire employees. An interviewee mentioned, "Our creatively designed office spaces have a positive impact on our daily work."

Communication and Participation

Transparent Communication: Regular updates and open forums ensure clarity. A participant noted, "Open forums have made it easier for us to stay informed and engaged."

Feedback Mechanisms: Suggestion boxes and regular surveys provide valuable insights. One employee shared, "Regular surveys have given us a platform to voice our concerns and suggestions."

Team Collaboration: Cross-functional teams and collaborative platforms enhance teamwork. An interviewee remarked, "Collaborative platforms have streamlined our project management processes."

Employee Involvement: Inclusion in decision-making and participatory management are vital. A participant emphasized, "Being involved in decision-making processes has made me feel valued and heard."

Conflict Resolution: Mediation services and conflict management training are necessary. One respondent stated, "Conflict management training has equipped us with the skills to handle workplace disputes effectively."

Social Interaction: Team building activities and social events foster camaraderie. An employee commented, "Social events have strengthened our team bonds."

Leadership and Trust

Trustworthy Leadership: Ethical behavior and consistent actions build trust. A participant noted, "Our leadership's transparency has fostered a trustworthy environment."

Empowerment: Delegating authority and encouraging initiative are essential. One interviewee shared, "Empowerment from leadership has allowed us to take ownership of our projects."

Vision and Direction: Clear vision statements and strategic goals guide employees. A participant mentioned, "Having a clear vision has aligned our efforts towards common goals."

Accountability: Performance reviews and clear expectations ensure responsibility. One respondent remarked, "Regular performance reviews have clarified expectations and responsibilities."

Supportive Environment: Providing emotional support and work-life balance policies is crucial. An interviewee stated, "Our supportive work environment has significantly improved my well-being."

Integrity: Honesty and ethical decision-making are foundational. A participant emphasized, "Integrity in leadership has set a positive example for the entire organization."

Role Modeling: Leading by example and demonstrating values inspire employees. One employee shared, "Our leaders' commitment to our core values has been truly inspiring."

These insights from the interviews highlight the critical factors and subcategories that contribute to a supportive environment for retaining human capital and enhancing organizational productivity.

4 Discussion and Conclusion

The results of this study identified and analyzed the key individual factors that contribute to creating a conducive environment for retaining human capital and enhancing organizational productivity within the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC). The findings were categorized into four main themes: equal job opportunities, creating a creative environment, communication and participation, and leadership and trust. Each theme, along with its subcategories, provided a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing employee retention and productivity.

The study found that fair recruitment practices, career advancement opportunities, diversity and inclusion policies, equal pay, anti-discrimination policies, and accessibility are crucial for providing equal job opportunities. Participants emphasized the importance of transparent hiring processes and merit-based selection, which align with previous research indicating that such practices enhance employee satisfaction and organizational loyalty (Aprilina, 2023). The promotion of diversity and inclusion was also highlighted as a key factor, supporting findings by Huang and Wu (2010),

who noted that diverse workplaces drive innovation and productivity (Huang & Wu, 2010).

Innovation encouragement, flexible workspaces, professional development, autonomy, recognition and rewards, and inspirational surroundings were identified as essential elements for creating a creative work environment. Participants noted that environments that support idea generation and provide recognition for innovative contributions lead to higher engagement and productivity. This aligns with Hanaysha (2016), who found that innovation encouragement and recognition significantly enhance employee motivation and performance (Hanaysha, 2016). The positive impact of flexible work arrangements, such as hybrid working models, on employee satisfaction and perceived productivity was also supported by Aprilina (2023) (Aprilina, 2023).

Effective communication and active participation were found to be critical for building a cohesive and productive workforce. Transparent communication channels, regular feedback mechanisms, and opportunities for team collaboration were emphasized by participants. This is consistent with Mohiuddin et al. (2022), who found that clear and open communication helps align employees with organizational goals and reduces misunderstandings (Mohiuddin et al., 2022). The involvement of employees in decision-making processes was also highlighted, supporting Choi and Ruona (2010), who noted that participatory management fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility among employees (Choi & Ruona, 2010).

Trustworthy leadership, empowerment, vision and direction, accountability, supportive environment, integrity, and role modeling were identified as pivotal for motivating employees and driving performance. Participants highlighted the importance of ethical and transparent leadership in building trust and enhancing organizational commitment. This is supported by Ariansyah and Sulaiman (2022), who found that ethical leadership builds trust and loyalty among employees (Ariansyah et al., 2022). Empowerment was also noted as a key factor, aligning with Zamiri et al. (2020), who emphasized the importance of delegating authority and encouraging initiative for fostering a supportive work environment (Zamiri et al., 2020).

The study found that organizational culture, structure, and policies significantly influence employee productivity. A positive organizational culture that supports innovation and continuous learning was found to drive performance and competitiveness. This finding aligns with Schuldt and Gomes (2020), who noted that supportive organizational

cultures enhance innovation and performance (Schuldt & Gomes, 2020). Flexible and adaptable organizational structures were also highlighted, supporting Huang et al. (2010), who found that such structures enable employees to respond effectively to changes in the external environment (Huang et al., 2010). Policies promoting work-life balance and employee well-being were found to contribute to higher job satisfaction and productivity, consistent with Mrayyan (2019) (Mrayyan, 2019).

While this study provides valuable insights into the factors influencing employee retention and productivity, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the study was conducted within a single organization, the National Iranian Oil Company, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other organizational contexts. Second, the sample size was relatively small, with 15 participants, which may not fully capture the diversity of experiences and perspectives within the organization. Third, the data were collected using semi-structured interviews, which may be subject to biases such as social desirability bias, where participants may provide responses they believe are expected rather than their true feelings and experiences. Finally, the qualitative nature of the study means that the findings are descriptive and exploratory, rather than providing statistical generalizations.

Future research should aim to address these limitations by conducting similar studies in different organizational contexts and with larger sample sizes. Comparative studies across different industries and cultural settings would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing employee retention and productivity. Additionally, future research could employ mixed-methods approaches, combining qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques, to provide a more robust and generalizable understanding of the phenomena. Longitudinal studies could also be valuable, examining how the identified factors evolve over time and their long-term impact on employee retention and productivity. Furthermore, investigating the role of technological advancements and digital transformation in shaping work environments and employee experiences would be a valuable area for future research.

The findings of this study have practical implications for organizations aiming to enhance employee retention and productivity. Firstly, organizations should implement fair recruitment practices and promote diversity and inclusion to create an equitable work environment. Transparent hiring processes, merit-based selection, and policies supporting

diversity and inclusion can enhance employee satisfaction and organizational loyalty. Secondly, fostering a creative work environment is essential. Organizations should encourage innovation, provide flexible workspaces, and support professional development to enhance employee engagement and productivity. Recognition and rewards for innovative contributions can also motivate employees to perform at their best. Thirdly, effective communication and active participation should be prioritized. Transparent communication channels, regular feedback mechanisms, and opportunities for team collaboration can build a cohesive and productive workforce. Involving employees in decision-making processes can foster a sense of ownership and responsibility. Lastly, leadership plays a critical role in shaping the organizational climate. Ethical and transparent leadership, empowerment, and clear vision and direction are essential for motivating employees and driving performance. Providing a supportive environment, promoting integrity, and role modeling can enhance organizational commitment and productivity.

In conclusion, creating a conducive environment for retaining human capital and enhancing organizational productivity requires a comprehensive approach that addresses both individual and organizational factors. By understanding and addressing these factors, organizations

can implement strategies that not only retain valuable employees but also enhance their productivity and contribute to overall organizational success. The insights from this study provide a foundation for future research and practical recommendations for organizations aiming to achieve these goals.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors of this article declared no conflict of interest.

Authors Contributions

All authors have contributed significantly to the research process and the development of the manuscript.

Ethical Considerations

In this research, ethical standards including obtaining informed consent, ensuring privacy and confidentiality were observed.

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