

Human Resource Management Practices and Retention of Employees in Machakos County, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Employees form the critical resources an organization or an institution has for actualizing its mandate. Creating conducive environment for the employees has been associated with improved productivity, as well as reduced turnover of employees. This study found out the role of HRM practices on retention of employees, with a focus on Machakos County. In the study it sought to determine the influence of career advancement practices on employee retention among the workers, evaluate the effects of remuneration practices on employees' retention, determine the influence of work-life balance practices embraced and determine the influence of work-environment practices on retention of employees in Machakos County. The study looked into four major HRM practice on employee retention that is work life balance, remuneration, career advancement and work-environment practices and their effects on retention of employees. Motivational strategies like better pay and allowances, a work life balance for employees like shift working schedules, career advancement in scholarships, training and development, have been associated with allowing employees to have freedom to be creative and innovative, and being involved in decision-making processes thus feeling part of the organization, owning the organizational processes, and thus being highly likely to remain at their employer. The research design used was descriptive survey research. Data was collected using questionnaires with both open and closed ended questions. The study looked into 464 respondents, from workers within the eleven departments forming the entire Machakos County Government, from where samples of 94 respondents were collected. The study achieved a 98% of the response rate. The reliability of the data collected was assured as the Cronbach's alpha was above 0.6, meaning the data was acceptable. The males made the most of the respondents at 56.5% while the majorities were aged 26-35 years (at 51.1%). On remuneration matters, allowances and salaries greatly influenced employee retention with an average mean of above 4.0. Career advancement practices including training and development, available opportunities and study leave, were felt to influence employee retention. The regression results show that the model was considered significant as some of the independent variables influenced the dependent variable (employee retention) as their p-value (significance value) was of 0.002. The four variables contributed to 13.7% of the factors that contributed to employee retention at the county government of Machakos. Recommendations include improving the working environment conditions, offering better remuneration packages, providing work-life balance, and providing career advancement opportunities.

Key Words: *Human Resource Management Practices, Career Advancement Practices, Remuneration Practices, Work-Life Balance, Work-Environment, Employees Retention, Machakos County*

DOI: 10.35942/ijcab.v3iVI.87

Cite this Article:

Ndonye, A., & Genga, P. (2019). Human Resource Management Practices and Retention of Employees in Machakos County, Kenya. *International Journal of Current Aspects*, 3(VI), 235-250. <https://doi.org/10.35942/ijcab.v3iVI.87>

1. Introduction

Staffing is exemplified as a sphere that is highly relevant and relied upon in the aspects of employment as a matter of fact it forms the backbone within which the employers rely on. It is diverse and has been applied in more than one area of the employment situation and other related work environment (Armstrong 2010). Staffing plays an important role in acquiring, retention of sufficient quantity and quality of workforce to have a positive impact on the organization's effectiveness in participating in the long-term and short-term goals of the organization. Maintaining the best performing employees is one of many organizations challenges. Society has now end up knowledge-based where human capital is regarded a key resource and vital to survival of business. In an era where skills competencies and understanding of personnel are amongst the most important aggressive facilitators, businesses cannot pass the importance of attracting and holding proficient workers (Minchington 2010). The new economy is characterized by a volatile demand for talent – supply equation set against erratic trends in attrition and unlimited cutthroat competition, and organizations have never had more time to find, manage and nurture talent (Cheese, Thomas and Craig 2007). According to (Mullin 2010) the employee model includes acquisitions involving recruitment processes resulting in the utilization of staff. It involves HR getting to determine the organizational gap required in terms of the quantity of staff required and their attributes in terms of knowledge and skills so as to satisfy job necessities effectively. In addition the employment policies and methods of assessment are used to identify the most suitable candidates for a particular job which is available in the organization.

Every nation's power depends largely on its productivity, which in turn relies upon the well-being of the people. (Misau, Al-Sadat & Gerei, 2010). A key limit to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is the absence of a properly trained and motivated workforce (Mischa et al 2008). The study looked into Machakos County performance during its first five years of devolution and how the human resource department worked on finding, managing and nurturing talented employees in the county. The study also looked into how Machakos County has been able to keep up with the other counties who have been actively working towards better remuneration and working conditions hence attracting the qualified employees to work in their counties. The study helped look into the possibility of high turnover of skilled employees in Machakos County to the private sector due to delay or lack of attractive compensation. There were also possibilities of slack career growth in the county amongst the employees that might be compounded by long working hours thus affecting their intention to remain with their current employer. Motivation includes things that influence a person to perform whereas inspirations are the prizes or motivating forces that are known to sharpen the pressure to meet these needs. They are additionally the methods by which conflicting needs ought to be accommodated or one need expanded in order to prioritize it over another. A business surrounding where proficient and successful administration execution is efficient in general creates a desire for quality management among most or all managers and workforce. Then a motivator is something that affects the behavior of an individual. What a person will do, obviously in any organized enterprise, makes a difference (Aloush, 2016).

Employee compensation has been a neglected area in HRM that has significant influence on how employees can be retained (Gupta & Shaw 2014). Employee Compensation is also used as an incentive for attracting and retaining skilled workers. Indeed, enrolling as far as the expense and time included is costly. Companies are interested in ensuring very low turnover, if any for execution and client certainty. Reward frameworks are one of the key ways an organization's managers will communicate something specific concerning what they assume is crucial. A lot of the manner in which individuals carry on is affected by the manner in which they are estimated and remunerated. Generally most reward and acknowledgment programs were unclear and often given in response to an administrator perception when an employee performed exceptionally well (Farndale, Scullion, & Sparrow, 2010). According to (Blyth, 2008) There were usually no set principles to measure exceptional performance, and anything could have meant having a good attitude, helping another division or being consistently reliable. This is no longer the case in current hierarchical settings as organizations comprehend the great gains resulting from connecting rewards, work fulfillment, inspiration and overall performance to their business strategy. HR practices and remuneration varies, the explanations behind this high turnover are: low-talented and low-paid work, unsocial working hours, low occupation fulfillment and absence of professional advance inside every institution (Farndale, Scullion, & Sparrow, 2010). In the government sector, the turnover culture was created and strengthened due to monotonous kind of work without any activity involvement that motivates employees, with mostly the young generation who are energetic and willing to work in multinational organisation according to worldwide research, multinational companies experience less turn over by young people compared to government sector (Hong et al 2012). This leads to a gap between qualified employees in government organizations and multinationals known to attract and retain best employees by offering their employees a work-life balance, good salary and allowance remuneration, and career progress, this is part of the standards of the working group and believes that employees often hold on to career growth when they enter the job market.

The study was guided by Maslow's Needs theory (Tanner, 2015). Maslow suggested that there were five levels from the most important to least i.e. biological, safety, belongingness, self-esteem, self-actualization. It is an inspiration theory that has been applied to the problem of finding academic performance determinants. This theory depends on human conduct that they tend not to work viably and successfully when people's needs are not met at work. This research is required because of the complex nature of the motivation aspect (Dörnyei, Ibrahim, & Muir, 2015). Motivation includes things that instigate a person to perform while motivators are the proses or motivations recognized that sharpen the drive to satisfy those desires. They are likewise the methods by which conflicting needs can be accommodated or one need increased in order to prioritize it over another. A business surrounding where administrative execution is productive and successful will tend to create a desire for top notch management among most managers and staff. Then a motivator is something that influences the conduct of a person. What an individual will do, obviously in any organized enterprise, makes a difference motivation (Dörnyei, Ibrahim, & Muir, 2015).

Retention is about managing an organization's employee outflow. This includes voluntary activities like resignation and dominant involuntary measures through redundancy programs or alternative styles of dismissal. The outstanding goal is to reduce the loss from the organization of valued staff through strategic and tactical measures while allowing the organization to scale back the cost of employment wherever circumstances dictate. To reduce the relative turnover rate, a

spread of management techniques is used. According to (Cascio, 2014), bonuses additionally to regular pay had a lot of influence than regular pay will increase on reducing turnover. Recent contributions to the literature have enhanced understanding of the triggers resulting in to turnover, but they are difficult to use as a tool for management decision, as the necessary data are not normally available. Regular job evaluation and compensation within the county has not been performed through a continuous examination of the job targets in consistent to the jobs availed to the relevant employees, consideration of the case scenario the issue of the finance team within the relevant departments, have not been evaluated on the basis of their excellence and integrity within this encompasses the professionalism within which they have prepared financial statements, and how the salient financial statements have demonstrated transparency and accountability within the user departments, the lack of evaluation has played a key role in terms of ensuring those who have performed according to the set targets are not compensated (Tanner, 2015). The study helped in reflecting the issue of salaries and allowances which enhance the aspects of job security within the employee set up in Machakos County.

Machakos County is one of the 47 counties in Kenya. It has eight constituencies. It borders counties like Embu to the North, Kirinyaga and Murang'a to the North West, Makueni to the south, Kitui to the East, Kiambu and Nairobi to the West, and Kajiado to the South West. The county stretches from latitudes 0° 45' south to 1° 31' South and longitudes 36° 45' east to 37° 45' east. It has an elevation of between 1000 and 1600 meters above the sea levels. The county has an estimated population of 1,098,600 citizens as contained in 264,500 households. Machakos County covers an area of 6,208 square kilometer with a population density of 177 persons per square kilometer. The Machakos County has eleven functional departments that include finance and revenue; lands, urban development, energy and natural resources; tourism, sports and culture; and education, youth and social welfare. The other departments include decentralized units, county administration and energy; trade, economic planning, investment and industrialization; water and irrigation; health and emergency services; and transport, roads, public works and housing. The two other departments that were covered included agriculture, livestock and fisheries, and public service, labor, ICT and cooperative development. The sampled respondents were shared proportionally among the departments.

2. Statement of the Problem

There is need for employees at the county government after the devolution of the National government. The county is expected to attract and retain the best pool of candidates, competing with the private sector which is known to have a competitive remuneration and career growth packages. The county governments will be required to look into the HRM. Many employees perceive practices such as recognition for good performance, promotional opportunities, professional growth, compensation and incentives as motivating factors (Chapoda, 2014). The counties have not yet developed appraisal systems to motivate and reward outstanding employees. Developing an assessment system is critical to management efforts to attract, retain and motivate employees (Dash et al., 2008). A study by Alande (2014) on the role of HRM in the devolved units showed that the county governments have neglected the human resource departments in major decisions, lack of training and development of county officers. The study further asserted that many counties have not yet prepared how to handle the increasing demands of the staff in the wake of devolution. Alande (2014) and Munyiva-Kinyili (2015) further indicated that hiring of the right people, training them and investing in their career advancement was a necessary motivation factor, a component that was missing in many counties. Namambwe

(2012) also pointed out that HRM in counties and startups faced many challenges including attracting the right people and the cost of training staff to acquire new skills that ultimately affected their retention at their workplace. The studies by Alande (2014), Munyiva-Kinyili (2015) and Namambwe (2012) concluded that it was necessary to reconsider how employees were managed in terms of career progress, remuneration, work-life balance and work environment, factors that had a major impact on staff retention.

County governments have been plagued by challenges such as inadequate facilities, poor cash flow, long hiring procedures and difficult to secure high qualified personnel. This has led to various county governments having disputes with the employees due to poor reward systems which have seen doctors going on strike. In this relation, (Mutiso, 2013) highlighted the relationship between HRM practices and the quality of services provided by the Kenyan county governments. She notes that for quality services to be delivered, the employees must be well compensated, trained and developed. The identified problem was the display of unsatisfied employees through strikes, and the identified gap is the new area of employees where there were no studies on the effects of HRM practices on their assigned roles delivery. In particular, none was done in Machakos County on the responsibility of HRM practices for retaining employees. The researcher sought to find out the impact of compensation, professional success, work place and work-life balance practices on employee retention in Machakos County is this limited information on HRM practices.

3. Objective of the Study

The study's general purpose was to investigate the role of human resource (HR) practices in employee retention with specific reference to the government of Machakos County.

The specific objectives of the study were;

- i. To examine the influence of career advancement practices on employee retention among the workers in Machakos County government.
- ii. To examine the effects of remuneration practices on employee retention in Machakos County government.
- iii. To establish the influence of work-life balance practices embraced by the Machakos County government on employee retention
- iv. To establish the influence of work-environment practices on retention of employees in Machakos County

4. Theoretical Review

The chapter begins with introduction of employee motivation concept. Using Maslow Hierarchy of Needs Theory, Employee Compensation (Mullins, 1996) and Stacy Adams equity theory, retention can be explained; these concepts are encapsulated in this chapter two.

4.1 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory

The hierarchy of needs theory is the psychologist Abraham Maslow's most frequently mentioned theory of motivation. The human needs were illustrated ascending from lower to higher and concluded that it ceases to be a motivator when one set of needs is satisfied. Maslow's Needs Theory (Mullins, 1968) guided the study. It is a motivation theory that has been applied to the problem of finding academic performance determinants. The theory is based on human behavior

that they tend not to function effectively and efficiently when people's needs are not met at work. The researcher looked into Machakos county human resource body considering various needs of the employees, through acts of compensation in relation to awarding them with good salary packages, the employee welfare awareness regarding issues like family security and their medical position. Individuals are inspired by wild needs, as indicated by Maslow, and certain lower needs must be met before the higher needs can be tended to. When individuals ' needs are met, either through characteristics or outwards inspiration, they utilize their potential, qualities, aptitudes and time to enhance administrative center performance. The theory of hierarchy of needs applied to the study in that it provides motivating factors that when employees get them, they are able to remain as employees of Machakos County. Employees are likely to move in search of better positions with relatively higher remuneration perks, better working environment, and a conducive work-life balance. The theory thus shows that Machakos County workers need to achieve their needs, whether basic or luxurious needs.

4.2 Stacey Adam's Equity Theory

According to (Gupta, 2011), individual needs to be dealt with decently at work. It is expected that personnel don't work in a vacuum and guarantee that workers weigh what they put into a job situation (contribution) against what they receive in return (result) and then compare their contribution - result ratio of relevant others that they compare with. On the off chance that the proportions are equivalent, a condition of value is said to exist; they feel their circumstance is reasonable and equity wins. If the ratio is unjustifiable, there is imbalance. That is, workers in general consider themselves to being compensated and endeavor to redress the imbalance. Therefore the theory attests that the dimension of inspiration of employees relies upon the observation that whenever compared with others, they are treated fairly for task related efforts. According to the theory, the inspiration level of an individual is correlated with the management's perception of equity, fairness and justice. Value exists if the info yield proportion of the employee is equivalent with that of other peers in the expert network (Robbins & Decenzo, 2012). However, if their proportions are seen to be lower than other inequities, the worker become miserable and would be inspired to discover ways to accomplish value. In quest for superior and more equitable workplace, the worker may see the current workplace and tradition as hopeless and may carry out the responsibility as they stand. The theory subsequently manages the comprehension of what can impact an employee to leave or stay and continue to compare what employees earn in other comparable organizations in order to accomplish a reasonable information result proportions. This in turn contributes to the portability of work inside and outside the organization. Equity theory argues that the level of motivation of an individual is connected with his or her impression of value, reasonableness and equity as managed, an aspect that influences how employees relate to the management of Machakos County. The study was supported by this theory as it points that employees are motivated by the factors that influence their working conditions including remuneration, work-life balance, and work-environment.

5. Empirical Literature Review

It needs individual with the correct aptitudes, leaning and capacities to fill in the structure after the structural design of an organization is set up. Individuals are the most significant asset of an organization since individuals make or undermine the reputation of an organization in quality of products or service. The administration capacity of staffing include keeping an eye on the

organizational structure through successful and appropriate determination, evaluation and improvement of work force to fill the job planned into the structure (Coetzee, & Stoltz, 2015). To remain aggressive, business must react successfully to change. Over a period of change, the right staff can convey an organization and guarantee its future achievement. Powerful HRM is important to the achievement of all organizations as a result of the significance of employing and keeping up a loyal and able staff. Actually, all managers are HR managers, although a portion of these exercises in enormous organizations might be completed by HR Specialists. Strong HRM practices will frame a company's workforce into an inspired and submitted team equipped of administering change and accomplishing structured objectives (Haider et al., 2015).

Continuous performance is equally important in the established organizations and the new organizations. There must be enrolment, selection and staff development in a new organization. Each administrator is involved in various staffing activities in a running organization. Administrators guide and train workers and continuously evaluate their performance, thus improving employee performance (Oladapo, 2014). Having the right kind of employees is of utmost importance to the organization. They should be adequately trained to minimize poor performance and errors. They also need to be induced by offering incentives to show higher productivity and quality. Many factors such as educational level, needs, and socio-cultural factors shape the behavior of individuals. Mentoring, scholarships and upward mobility are aspects of professional success that have positive effect on maintaining proficient employees. Employee professional success is a formalized, organized experience, and planned efforts are being made to achieve the balance between organizational workforce requirements and individual career needs. According to (Coetzee, & Stoltz, 2015) HR professionals face challenges in deciding professional success practices that would improve employee engagement as they feel appreciated, and help organizations to maintain employees as they are inspired to work hard and committed to organization vision and mission to attain a competitive advantage. According to (Ibrahim, Hashim, & Rahman, 2018) According to (Choo et al., 2016) organizations desire in order to reinforce their bond with employees; they need to invest in employee development.

The lack of personal career growth in organizations leads to a career stagnation that leads to unhappy workers hence increased turnover of employees (Presbitero, Roxas and Chadee, 2016). Many workers are in organizations that provide them with limited upward mobility opportunities in the organization in terms of upward movement. Career stagnation is seen as a major contributing factor in organizational quitting for employees. Human Resource professionals are responsible for managing the career plateau and thus minimizing the turnover of employees. Employee career stagnation is likely to result in higher labor turnover because they want to advance their careers elsewhere in the environment (Oladapo, 2014). According to (Chaponda, 2014) Employees who have reached the career stagnation have a high chance of resign due to reduced opportunities within the present organization. Maslow's need theory hierarchy involving a group of managers over a five-year period (Coetzee, & Stoltz, 2015) Strong evidence of hierarchy was not found. They found that their physiological and security needs tend to decrease in importance as managers advance in organizations and their need for affiliation esteem and self-actualization tends to increase. However, they insisted that the upward movement and the need for prominence were the result of upward career changes and lower order needs satisfaction.

Through financial and non-financial incentives, workers can be motivated. The right kind of climate should be created to help workers achieve the organizational goals. By carrying out effective HRM practices and retention, management can demonstrate the importance it attaches to the staff working in the company (Choo et al., 2016). This increases the morale of the employees and requires management to determine the workforce requirements well in advance. Management must train and develop existing managers to advance their careers. In the future, this will meet the company's requirements.

Allowances, wages and incentives are remuneration aspects that lead to retention of employees. Better pay packages are one of the most important retention factors because they meet the financial and material requirements (Pek-Greer, Wallace, & Al-Ansaari, 2016). Wages dissatisfaction is one of the key factors de-motivating employees' commitment to their organization and careers and hence their decision to stay or plan to leave (Haider et al., 2015). Also as noted by (Terera & Ngirande 2014) better remuneration plays a vital role in attracting and holding smart workers, particularly those employees who provide exceptional performance or distinctive skills that are indispensable to the organization because the company invests more in coaching and development. Terms and conditions of service to employees in an organization, but other factors are often important (Kossivi, Xu, & Kalgora, 2016). Due to uncompetitive, inequitable and unfair pay systems rise in employee turnover is experienced. This requires companies to conduct regular market surveys to ensure that the wages and benefits they pay are competitive and labor market comparable. Good and competitive pay structure has probably encouraged staff to stay longer. Organization should therefore provide their employees with competitive remuneration packages as a means of encouraging employee retention strategy.

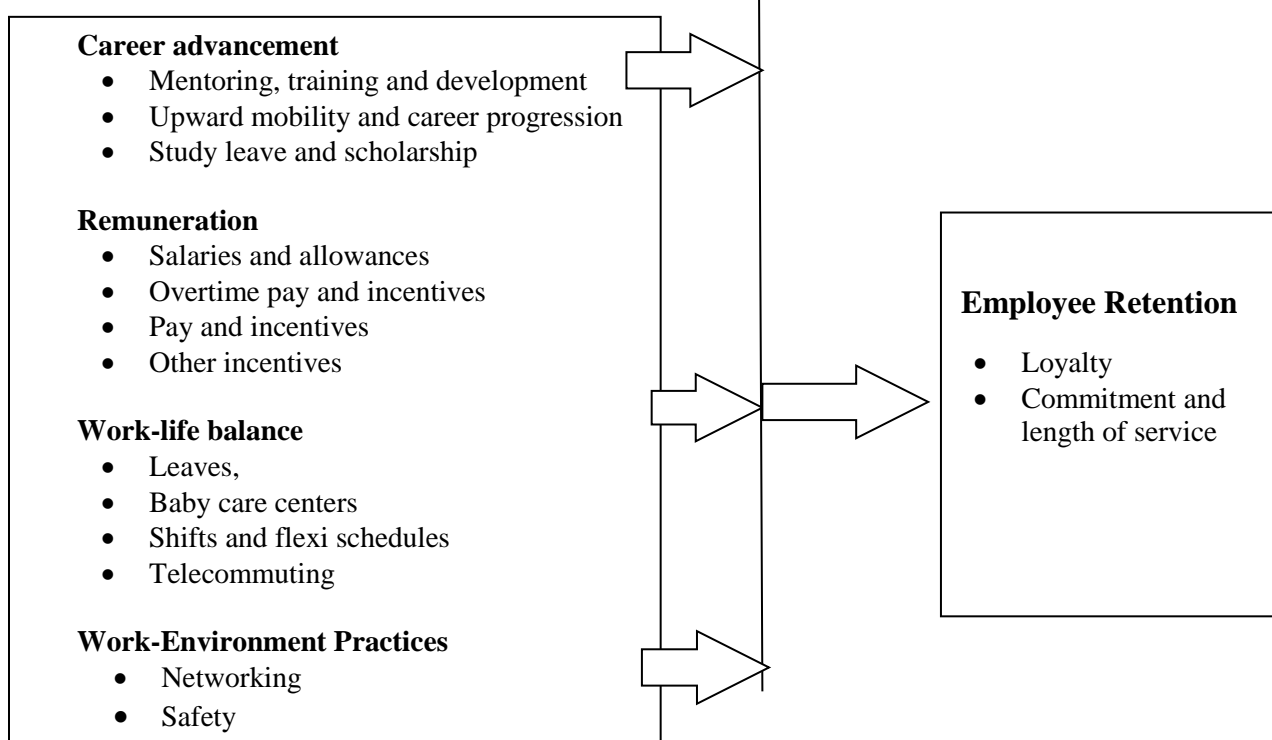
Singaporean childcare survey investigated 202 qualified childcare teachers through questionnaires and other 21 teachers on in-depth interviews about the dominant factors affecting job satisfaction and retention of employees in the childcare sector (Pek-Greer, Wallace & Al-Ansaari, 2016). The study found that the teachers wanted to be rewarded and that they wanted the human resource department to have fair practices towards their welfare. It was also noted that employee benefits and remuneration had high effects in improving satisfaction and retention. The findings were also supported by (Terera & Ngirande, 2014) who indicated that rewards had a significantly higher impact on influencing employee satisfactions and consequently implying that employees would remain with their current employers. The study focused on 180 nurses who participated in the study informing the findings about employee retention (Terera & Ngirande, 2014). Several organizations have set up shift schedules, telecommuting and baby care centers to improve employee satisfaction and thus reduce absenteeism. Work-life balance centers on structuring an adaptable and flexible workplace by giving childcare facilities and access to families in the organization (Munsamy & Bosch-Venter, 2009). Employees endeavor to strike a balance to satisfy the requests of the working life and meeting the duties of family life and get-togethers. Those who neglect to do so either leave the organization and thus increase the attrition rate or become less productive. They likewise feel despondent on the personal front. Organizational culture assumes a significant task in supporting workers in this cross-roads; high culture has an interceding impact in connecting working life approaches and practices with the maintenance of ability. Work-life balance programs can possibly altogether improve the spirit of employees, diminish absenteeism and hold organizational information, particularly in troublesome financial times, which also helps to reduce the organization's enrollment and training costs (Baral & Bhargava, 2010).

Obtaining a work-life balance plays a major role in the employee's decision to stay with the organization, as an organization offering daycare centers and family holidays at the end of the financial year to ensure the best performance of its employees (Ahmad & Omar, 2010). They claim that the conflict between these human activity dimensions can cause both job dissatisfaction and hence an intention to leave the organization as well as conflict with family members and family activities. Organizations have introduced supervisory support, flexible work time, family culture and employee support associated with increased retention of employees (Munsamy & Venter, 2009). The authors also examined the relationship between the intention of employee turnover and organizational support, concluding that the intention of employee turnover is reduced by organizational support. Studies have shown that organizations should adopt work-life balance practices to increase the commitment of employees and thus maintain the best performance (Ahmad & Omar, 2010). These practices include flexible scheduling such as flexible scheduling, which allows employees to vary their start and finish times provided they work a certain number of hours.

Flexible time allows employees, provided a certain number of hours are worked, to determine the start and end times of their working day. This can empower them to address family or individual responsibilities/crises (empower staff to react to predictable and surprising conditions), amid the day or by beginning and end of previous work or after the hour of rush (Katie, 2011). Work-environment practices to be included are ensuring of safe working environment that conforms to the OSH (occupational health and safety) legislation. People enjoy to work in an environment where positive environment is embraced as it allows them to have maximum contribution towards their assigned roles. Aspects indicated as critical are office space, tools and equipment for work, and hours of work. Safety in workplace has been associated with positive attitude towards work, and thus having the mentality of staying at the job position (Katie, 2011). From the industry perspective, it was noted that a workplace with noise, and exposure to toxic substances is likely to reduce performance of workers and expose them to sicknesses and other occupational hazards that are likely to demotivate employees, thus increasing the chances of intending to leave job. Staffs interact with other employees and clients with their engagement moves from physical to psychological (Hashim et al., n.d.). The physiological environment consists of support from the management, stressors, workload, decision and attitude among the workers and the management. The authors indicated that a stressful environment leads to low levels of satisfaction.

6. Conceptual framework

Is a model of representation where a researcher conceptualizes or represents relationships between variables in the study and shows the relationship diagrammatically or graphically (Orodho, 2005). The following therefore is a diagrammatic representation identifying the variables under this study and outlining their relationships. The information is shown on.

Independent variables**Dependent variable****Figure 1 Conceptual Frameworks***Source: (Author, 2019)*

From the conceptual framework, the four independent variables include remuneration, work-life balance, career advancement and work-environment practices, which are expected to have a direct or indirect association with employee retention. Allowances and salary and overtime and incentives are part of the remuneration prospects that are believed to influence employee retention. For instance, when workers get salaries enough to take care of their basic needs, they are likely to remain in their current position. When the employee have incentives from the management, they are likely to remain at the organization. Work-life balance is influenced by employees having leaves, baby-care centers, shifts and flexible schedules at their workplace, and telecommuting among other services that attract and retain employees at their place of work. The aspects are then associated with influencing employee retention, either their presence leading to retention of staff, or their absence leading to more employee turnover. Career development aspects include mentoring, training and development, study leaves and scholarships, and career upward mobility. The aspects are then associated with employee retention based on whether the employees are accessing the career development opportunities or not. The fourth independent variable is work environment practices that are associated with employee retention. The work-environment practices include office space and equipment, protective materials, technology, interaction with other staffs, and ventilation and lighting. When staff are able to access and enjoy work-environment practices, then they are likely to be influenced to remain at their workplace.

7. Research Methodology

Descriptive survey research was the approached in this study. A descriptive study aims at obtaining information describing existing phenomena by asking individuals about their perceptions, attitudes, behaviors or values (Maxwell, 2012). Descriptive survey research aims at producing statistical information on educational aspects of interest to policymakers and educators (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2016). The study fitted into the descriptive survey research design provisions because the researcher collected data and reported how things were without any variables being manipulated. Participants in this study completed a structured questionnaire enabling the researcher to obtain descriptive data about their perceptions as they relate to research questions. On the other hand, interview guides were also employed in data collection to complement the data from questionnaires. The study targeted a population of about 464 employees of Machakos County Government within the headquarters of the county. From the population, then the sample was calculated. The target populations, who also double up as units of analysis, were the workers of Machakos County. The eleven departments associated with Machakos County were represented in the study. Ministers and senior management were sought to participate in the key informant interviews while the majority of the workers within the county headquarters filled in the questionnaires. Special attention was given to managers in the section of human resources as they have first experience with the staff turnover and performance.

The procedure for sampling included establishing the targeted population of workers, who in this case four hundred employees are working for Machakos County government, then from the target population, a sample was used to support data collection. Once the sample had been identified, senior persons in each of the eleven departments were purposively selected to participate in key informant interviews while the other workers participated in filling in the questionnaires. The random sampled individuals were then requested to fill in the questionnaires anonymously for accurate information. Simple random sampling involved giving each and every item in the population an equal chance of inclusion in the sample (Morse, 2016). From the population of 464 workers within Machakos County headquarters, the following approach as borrowed from (Trotter II, 2012) and (Fishers, 2015) was adopted as follows;

The estimation of the sample size was obtained using the exact statistical Fishers test with a confidence interval of 95% and the formula for n . The approach was best suited for situations where the sample size is large or the exact number of target population is an estimate (not well known) and thus a smaller sample of population is picked to represent the larger population. Using descriptive analysis the data was analyzed and presented in tables, charts, and graphs. The variables in the study were measured and analyzed using statistical procedure specified by SPSS software computer program. Both quantitative and qualitative data were generated from the questionnaire and the key informant interview guide. Descriptive statistics were used to help analyze quantitative data by using mean scores, frequencies and percentages and the data were presented in tables, charts and graphs. Qualitative data from open ended questions and from the KIIs will be thematically presented in narrative form and tables. The data was then coded and organized into themes and use description of behavior and context in which it occurs. The researcher ensured that all questionnaires were completely answered. SPSS was used in processing the data through running regression analysis to establish relationship between independent and dependent variables.

8. Data Analysis Results

The regression analysis was supported by the model summary, the ANOVA (analysis of variance) analysis and the regression coefficients. The regression coefficients, ANOVA table and model summary help explain the relationship between the variables, the independent and the dependent variables. The summary was presented on table 1 as shown;

Table 1 Model Summary

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
0.418a	0.175	0.137	0.864

Predictors: (Constant), Work environment, Remuneration, Career advancement, Work life balance

Dependent Variable: Human resource management average

Source: Research Data (2019)

It was found that the four independent variables contributed to 13.7% of the decisions by employees to stay at the county. Retention of employees at the county was significantly influenced by the four independent variables. The analysis of variance (ANOVA) summary shows the relevance of the whole model. A single or all the independent variables in a model can be significant influencers of the dependent variable. In case of one variable being significant, the model is many a times considered significant. The summary of the model is shown on table 2;

Table 2 ANOVA Summary

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	13.758	4	3.439	4.603	.002b
Residual	65.011	87	0.747		
Total	78.769	91			

Dependent Variable: Human resource management average

Predictors: (Constant), Work environment average, Remuneration average, Career advancement, Work life balance

Source: (Research data, 2019)

From the ANOVA summary, the model was considered significant as the p-value was 0.02, below the limit of 0.05. The model was thus considered to be used to explain the relationship between the independent and the dependent variables. The regression coefficients show the relationship between the dependent and the independent variables. They help in explaining how an independent variable is related to the dependent variable. The independent variable can either be significant predictor of the dependent variables or not based on whether the significant value (p-value) is below or above 0.05. The summary of the results was shown on table 3;

Table 3 Regression Coefficients

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.227	0.827		1.484	0.141
Remuneration	0.043	0.15	0.03	0.289	0.043
Work life balance	-0.094	0.243	-0.06	-0.387	0.039
Career advancement	0.124	0.191	0.097	0.651	0.517
Work environment	0.526	0.237	0.379	2.224	0.029

Dependent Variable: Human resource management average

Source: (Research data, 2019)

The regression coefficients indicate that out of four independent variables, three were significant predictors of employee retention at the county government of Machakos. It was found that remuneration practices were significant predictors of retention of employees at Machakos County as it had a significant p-value of 0.043. Work-life balance was also another factor that was found to be a significant predictor of employee retention at the Machakos County as it had a p-value of 0.039, which is below the limit of 0.05 needed for the variable to be significant predictor of the dependent variable. Work environment was also found to be a significant predictor of employee retention with a significant value of 0.029. Career advancement was not a significant predictor of employee retention as the p-value was 0.517, way above the limit of 0.05. This indicated that employees were not opting to stay working at the county to get career advancements or promotions. From the equation; Employee Retention (Y) = a (constant) + b₁ *(career advancement practices=X₁) + b₂ *(work-life balance practices =X₂) + b₃ *(remuneration practices=X₃) + b₄ * (Work-environment practices=X₄) + E; It can be replaced as follows; Employee Retention (Y) = 1.227 + 0.043 (Remuneration) - 0.094 (Work-life balance) + 0.124 (Career Advancement) + 0.526 (Work Environment) + Error. The resultant model was thus; Employee Retention (Y) = 1.227 + 0.043 (b₁) - 0.094 (b₂) + 0.124 (b₃) + 0.526 (b₄) + Error

9. Conclusion

The study concluded that the human resource management practices were associated with employees' retention. HRM activities that were favoring employees like encouraging salaries, allowances and good working environment positively influenced employee retention. In cases the HRM poorly performed career advancement, or did not create good working environment, then there was a higher likelihood of having a higher staff turnover. From the regression model, it was observed that remuneration, career advancement and work environment were positively associated with employee retention while the work-life balance was negatively associated with employee retention. The four variables contribute to 13.7% of the changes in employee retention. Remuneration was found to significantly influence employee retention. Respondents agreed that the components measured under remuneration including the allowances, salaries, overtime pay and incentives influenced employee retention. With all the variables having a mean of above 4.0, then all the sub-variables were associated with increased employee retention.

Work-life balance was also associated with employee retention. Despite the regression model indicating that there was negative association, majority of the respondents felt that paid leaves, baby care centers, shift schedules and telecommuting were associated with increased employee

retention. The concept of telecommuting attracted about 22.6% of the respondents who felt that the concept was not adding to employee retention at the Machakos County. On career advancement, the factors included training and development, available opportunities, scholarship opportunities and available opportunities for study leave influence employee retention. The four sub-variables were found to influence employee retention to a great extent as the means for the sub-variables were 4.0 and above. Training and development of the staff was associated with increased employee retention. It was also found that a sizeable number of respondents at 10.9% felt that scholarships were not significant in ensuring employee retention. Work environment was found to influence employee retention. The five components of good working environment, having personal protective equipment (PPE), adequate ventilation and lighting, staff interactions and technology at workplace were felt to improve staff retention. Good working environment was supported by 93.5% of the respondents who indicated that it influenced employee retention. The variable of work environment was thus found to influence employee retention. The focus of the employee retention was on the loyalty and length of service that were viewed to encourage employees staying at the workplace.

10. Recommendations


The conclusions of the study point to the need to focus on the many components of human resource management practices in a bid to ensure fair and conducive environment for the employees. Many employees feel that they need to be catered for to increase their productivity. On the remuneration aspects, harmonizing allowances for the staff across the levels was recommended. Factoring salaries for the staff was also recommended. Different staffs across the levels need to have harmonized salaries where the package is commensurate to the level and responsibilities assigned. Overtime pay needs to be factored in for the staff to improve their morale and consequently stay with the employer. On work-life balance, inclusion of baby care centers especially at the headquarters would provide a comfortable working environment for the nursing and lactating mothers. It would be encouraged that the county employs shifts schedules to offer flexible working conditions for the staff. On career advancement and employee retention, it would be recommended that the county provides more training and development opportunities for the employees. It would be recommended that the county provides scholarship opportunities for the staff to further their skills. This is likely to promote staff retention at the country level. Work environment component needs to be factored in especially creating a good working environment and providing PPE to the staff. Creating conducive working environment encourages the staff to work, improve their productivity and consequently lead to increased benefits for the staff.

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