



**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND STAFF RETENTION IN PUBLIC HOSPITALS IN KENYA: A CASE STUDY OF GATUNDU DISTRICT HOSPITAL.**

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## RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND STAFF RETENTION IN PUBLIC HOSPITALS IN KENYA: A CASE STUDY OF GATUNDU DISTRICT HOSPITAL.

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### ABSTRACT

Staff retention is one of the key challenges that many organizations around the world, and specifically in Kenya, face today. For many organizations, link between human resource practices and employee performance has become a key challenge, and so firm's need to incorporate the HRM practices and employee retention if they want the organization's survival. The general objective of this study, is to assess the relationship between human resource management practices and staff retention in the healthcare sector in Kenya, Kiambu County. The three specific objectives of the study include; analyze the relationship between reward practices and staff retention in the Healthcare sector, to examine the relationship between training and staff retention in the Healthcare sector. The study adopted a case study research design. The study targeted 300 employees of Gatundu district hospital, from which a sample of 90 respondents was drawn for the study using 30% of the target population. This included doctors, nurses, clinical officers, administration staff and other paramedics the sample was selected through stratified sampling techniques. The researcher collected primary data using both structured and unstructured questionnaires whereas secondary data was collected through existing literature related to the current research topic under study. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistical tools namely frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation, while inferential statistical tools such as correlation and regression will be used to determine and explain variable relationship; through SPSS version 22 computer program. The study recommends the following to improve on employee performance and aid in motivation, attraction and retention of staff, the study recommends that the Ministry of health and other stakeholders like the public service commission (PSC) and salaries and remuneration commission (SRC) should conduct job evaluations, in order to determine the relative worth of jobs. The use of job evaluation reflects values of the organization and it should be up to date with the job it covers and should be non-discriminatory. The study also recommends that the Ministry of health and other government bodies like the salaries and remuneration commission, should put into consideration the use of financial and non-financial needs in order to fully satisfy different employee needs thus attaining the set goals and objectives. Rewards maybe intrinsic (self-generated factors such as, autonomy, recognition, advancement, training) or extrinsic (what is done to others for example pay, bonus and allowances etc.). In nature, depending with the employee. The management of the hospital should train the employees in order to equip them with knowledge, skills, and abilities, to effectively and efficiently perform their duties adequately. Training should be done on health and safety, public relations, use of new equipment, and managing diversity. The study recommends that the government should liaise with county governments on whether to devolve the health sector to the county or the national government to maintain the health sector, and expeditiously ensure to adequately pay the medical personnel better packages and pay the dues on time, because the personnel have families to take care of their basic needs. Future researchers should focus on other variables that may influence retention of medical personnel such as recruitment and selection, employee relations, empowerment, career development, leadership styles, work-life balance, promotions (career advancement), among others. This study was limited to public hospitals in Kenya using Gatundu district hospital as a case study. A similar study could be carried out in other organizations such as private hospitals to find out whether the same results will be obtained.

**Key Words:** Human Resource Management Practices, Staff Retention

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## INTRODUCTION

Organisations today constantly wrestle with revolutionary trends in the business world, such as accelerating product and technological changes, global competition, demographic changes, and at times they must strive to come up with strategies in order to attain competitive advantage. (Kirkpatrick, 2006). Due to this tumultuous business environment, one of the challenges facing many organisations is retention of critical (core) employees. Society has now become knowledge based, where clearly human capital is considered a strategic resource and indispensable to survival of business. (Armstrong, 2009).

An important element in business management practices, is to link human resource practices and business practices, to successfully motivate, attract and retain employees who survive organizational restructuring, downsizing and re-organising initiatives. For many organisations, employee performance has become a strategic issue because the ability to retain and motivate employees, who possess the right knowledge, skills and attitudes (KSA), are crucial for survival of an organization. Organisations strive to be the "employer of choice", by creating a positive environment in order to boost employee morale, thus improving employee performance. An employer of choice (Aesthetic factor), is an organization that outperforms its competition in the attraction, development, and retention of its employees with business required aptitude, often through innovative and compelling human resource practices. (Cole, 2005).

In an era of expanding globalization and increasing competition, organisations worldwide, have recognized that knowledge, skills and abilities of their employees represent a major source of competitive advantage (Lewis and Harris, 2005). Organisations working towards hiring and retaining top performers utilize hiring

assessments, behavioural interviewing, exit interviews, succession planning and mentoring programs. An open line of communication between an employee and his or her manager, is a critical goal in ensuring employee satisfaction. A manager, is the key in this retention strategy, aimed to increase employee performance. (Hume, 2004).

The Kenya health system has expanded rapidly as a result of commitment on the part of the post independent government to make modern healthcare services accessible and affordable. This expansion was achieved by increased government

allocations to the health sector. The ministry of health is responsible for national health policies. It is the main and largest provider of health services in the Kenyan healthcare system. The Minister of health in liaison with the permanent secretary, is responsible for planning, budgeting and development while the director of medical services is responsible for hospitals and health facilities, training and medical research. The medical practitioners and dentists board is responsible for approving private hospitals and clinics for overall supervision of the practice of medicine by qualified physicians and dentists in the country. (GOK, 2007).

There has been a health crisis in various counties in Kenya, and the government has attempted to develop new standards to improve working conditions in the public health sector and retain staff by offering better salary increments, providing them with opportunities to engage in private practice and giving them adequate training and development programmes. Despite these employee incentives, there is continuous loss of qualified professionals to other occupations and to international migration, driven by factors such as, poor pay incentives, limited career growth opportunities, and concerns about health and safety. Complicating this situation is a high level of unemployment among nurses and

clinical officers in the country, causing 'mismatches' in planning the health work force (Ndetie *et al*,2007).

Investment in human capital requires careful planning. Under the performance contracting programme, training and career progression ladders are important organizational strategies to develop and retain employees. As noted in the 2005, Human capital Index Report, career progression and reward practice is a key strategy to reduce turnover costs. In the past, career plans were primarily focused on leadership roles, organisations are now establishing, leadership development initiatives and career development initiatives early in the process of employee career development.

Kenya's health care system is structured in a step-wise manner so that complicated cases are referred to a higher level. Gaps in the system are filled by private and church run units. The structure thus consists of:

**Dispensaries:**The government runs dispensaries across the country and are the lowest point of contact with the public.

**Private clinics:**Most private clinics in the community are run by nurses. In 2011 there were 65,000 nurses on their council's register.

**Sub-district hospitals:**These are similar to health centers with addition of a surgery unit for Caesarian section and other procedures. Many are managed by clinical officers.

### **Statement of the problem**

In 2013, Kenyan doctors stepped up a nationwide strike over better pay, and working conditions, converging in the capital and leaving many patients unattended in state hospitals. About 2,300 members of their doctors union had stopped

work in the country, to ensure that their demands of increment of 300 percent payrise (KMPDU,2013). The striking doctors said that they are poorly paid, and take home an average of 75,000 per month, compared to other Kenyan professionals as well as with their peers in countries such as Botswana and South Africa who receive 252,700 per month. (Reuters Africa).

Medical personnel are moving from one hospital to another, from one county hospital to another and some are even moving out to work in other countries, e.g. U.S.A, Malaysia and South Africa. According to Ministry of Health, staffing trends 2005-2009 indicated that the rate of medical personnel that have exited during the same period stands at doctors 972, clinical officers 356, nurses 1,964, nursing officer 461, and medical lab technologists were 185. (MOH, 2009).

Nurses and doctors in public hospitals in Kenya, have also been striking due to salary delays, which are occasioned by squabbles between the national government and county government on who should pay medical personnel, where the devolved governments are pushing for the devolution of healthcare function in the county. Poor working and living conditions has also been cited as a great demotivator by nurses in public hospitals, where they are given a meagre house allowance to cater for their housing needs, and also lack of the basic equipments, such as gloves, theatres, aprons, needles and medication which has negatively affected operations in public hospitals in Kenya. (KNUN,2013).

Nurses and doctors in Public hospitals in Kenya, have been on strike, due to lack of training and development opportunities occasioned by the emergence of new machines (cancer and x-ray machines) where they really need the training to acquire knowledge, skills, and abilities to efficiently tackle their duties and responsibility. There is also

the shortage of beds and mattresses in public hospitals in Kenya, where one bed is shared between 2 to 3 patients in public hospitals, and this has been a real challenge in the healthcare sector. (KMPDU,2015).

Lack of Career progression ladders (Promotions), has also been a contentious issue with doctors and nurses in public hospitals in Kenya. Many medical personnel, in public hospitals in Kenya, cite that they have worked for more than 5 years in their respective capacities and positions, without being promoted, some have worked for more than 15 years, and they have remained in the same job group for decades, and this has led to go-slows and strikes in public hospitals in Kenya. Poor industrial relations in the healthcare sector, has hampered services in various public county hospitals in Kenya, especially Nairobi county, Meru county, Nakuru County, and Busia county respectively where medical personnel are on strike due to lack of career progression ladders. (KNUN,2015)

Kamau (2013), conducted a study on effectiveness of retention strategies in managing labour turnover in public hospitals in Kenya, and recommended the use of reward management strategies, adequate training and development opportunities, flexible communication structure and amicable working conditions as retention strategies that need to be adopted to curb turnover and boost employee retention.

Udi, (2010) established that lack of adequate reward and compensation and lack of career development in terms of promotion influenced employees to leave. Studies by (Radivoev, 2005; Daly *et al.* 2006; Omari *et al.*, Gaiduk *et al.*, 2009) as cited by Ng'ethe (2013) indicated that employee retention is a pertinent issue globally, but there is no consensus on which factors are critical in influencing staff retention among the various organisations.

## **Objectives of the study**

The general objective of this study was to investigate the relationship between human resource management practices and staff retention in public hospitals in Kenya. A case study of Gatundu District Hospital in Kiambu county; The following were specific objectives of this study; To establish the relationship between reward practice and employee training and staff retention in Gatundu district hospital

## **Research questions**

- 1) What is the relationship between reward practice and staff retention in Gatundu district hospital?
- 2) What is the relationship between employee training and staff retention in Gatundu district hospital?

## **Scope of the study**

The researcher concentrated on public hospitals in Kenya, specifically Gatundu district hospital staff. This includes doctors, nurses, clinical officers, Administration staff and other paramedics. The coverage area will be in Gatundu district hospital, in Gatundu town, in Kiambu county. The study specifically sought to analyse the relationship between reward practice and employee training practice on staff retention. It will also look to identify and recommend further possible actions points that the hospital might be able to use to improve employee performance and staff retention.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Theoretical framework**

**Motivation-hygiene theory (Two-factor theory) by Fredrick Herzberg**

In 1959, Frederick Herzberg, a behavioral scientist proposed a two-factor theory or the motivator-hygiene theory. According to Herzberg, there are some job factors that result in satisfaction while there are other job factors that prevent dissatisfaction. (Dartey-Baah & Amoako, 2011). Hygiene factors are those job factors which are essential for existence of motivation at workplace. These do not lead to positive satisfaction for long-term. But if these factors are absent or if these factors are non-existent at workplace, then they lead to dissatisfaction. In other words, hygiene factors are those factors which when adequate/reasonable in a job, pacify the employees and do not make them dissatisfied. These factors are extrinsic to work. Hygiene factors are also called as dissatisfiers or maintenance factors as they are required to avoid dissatisfaction (Lyria et al, 2014). These factors describe the job environment/scenario. The hygiene factors symbolized the physiological needs which the individuals wanted and expected to be fulfilled. Hygiene factors include: Pay - The pay or salary structure should be appropriate and reasonable. It must be equal and competitive to those in the same industry in the same domain. Company Policies and administrative policies - The company policies should not be too rigid. They should be fair and clear. It should include flexible working hours, dress code, breaks, vacation, etc. Fringe benefits - The employees should be offered health care plans (mediclaime), benefits for the family members, employee help programmes, etc. Physical Working conditions - The working conditions should be safe, clean and hygienic. The work equipments should be updated and well-maintained. Status - The employees' status within the organization should be familiar and retained. Interpersonal relations - The relationship of the employees with his peers, superiors and subordinates should be appropriate and acceptable. There should be no conflict or humiliation element present. Job Security - The

organization must provide job security to the employees.

Motivational factors- According to Herzberg, the hygiene factors cannot be regarded as motivators. (Stello, 2011). The motivational factors yield positive satisfaction. These factors are inherent to work. These factors motivate the employees for a superior performance. These factors are called satisfiers. These are factors involved in performing the job. Employees find these factors intrinsically rewarding. The motivators symbolized the psychological needs that were perceived as an additional benefit. Motivational factors include: Recognition - The employees should be praised and recognized for their accomplishments by the managers. Sense of achievement - The employees must have a sense of achievement. This depends on the job. There must be a fruit of some sort in the job. Growth and promotional opportunities - There must be growth and advancement opportunities in an organization to motivate the employees to perform well. Responsibility - The employees must hold themselves responsible for the work. The managers should give them ownership of the work. They should minimize control but retain accountability. Meaningfulness of the work - The work itself should be meaningful, interesting and challenging for the employee to perform and to get motivated (Kibui et al, 2014).

### **Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory**

Maslows hierarchy of needs is the most widely mentioned theory of motivation and satisfaction (Wehrich and koontz, 2001). Building on humanistic psychology and the clinical experience, Abraham Maslow argued that an individual's motivational requirements could be ordered as hierarchy. Once a given level of needs is satisfied, it no longer helps to motivate. Thus, next higher level of need has to be activated in order to motivate and thereby satisfy the individual. Maslow (

1943), identified five levels of needs hierarchy: physical needs, (food, clothing, shelter, sex) safety needs which means physical protection, social needs which involves developing, close associations with others, self esteem needs, that is prestige given by others and self actualization, which is self fulfillment and accomplishment through personal growth. (Winger & Norman, 2010). Organisations' therefore, must identify the needs, that an employee has, at a particular time and try to satisfy them. They must also identify the needs, that have already been satisfied and avoid over satisfying, thus creating lack of balance between the needs. It is argued by different writers, that if these needs are not met in their order, may affect employee performance, as they strain to meet their needs in different ways, example they may spend most of their time looking for greener pastures, where they will be paid more salary and gain other benefits. Safety is also very important to an individual at the work place, being comfortable with where you work, motivates you to work well and achieve your goals. poor ventilation, lack of fire exits, poor maintenance of machines, lack of drainage, slippery floor, poor sanitation among others, are some of the problems that may affect employee safety at the work place as stipulated by the Government of Kenya. ( OSHA, 2007).

The Maslow motivation theory is typically represented by 5 steps: Physiological needs - such as hunger, thirst, and sleep. Safety needs - such as security, protection from danger and freedom from pain. Social needs - sometimes also referred to as love needs such as friendship, giving and receiving love, engaging in social activities and group membership. Esteem needs - these include both self-respect and the esteem of others. For example, the desire for self-confidence and achievement, and recognition and appreciation. Self-actualization - This is about the desire to develop and realize your full

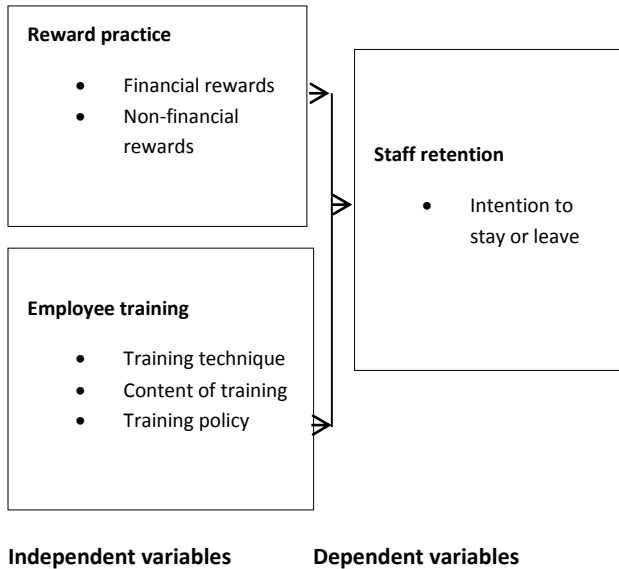
potential. To become everything you can be. (Worlu & Chidozie, 2012).

### 2.2.3 Vroom Expectancy theory

It assumes that behaviour results from conscious choices among alternatives whose purpose it is to maximize pleasure and minimize pain. (Winger & Norman, 2010). Together with Edward Lawler and Lyman Porter, Victor Vroom suggested that the relationship between people's behavior at work and their goals was not as simple as was first imagined by other scientists. Vroom realized that an employee's performance is based on individual factors such as personality, skills, knowledge, experience and abilities. The theory suggests that although individuals may have different sets of goals, they can be motivated if they believe that: There is a positive correlation between efforts and performance, Favorable performance will result in a desirable reward. The reward will satisfy an important need. The desire to satisfy the need is strong enough to make the effort worthwhile. ( Nzuve, 2009). The theory is based upon the following beliefs: Valence: Valence refers to the emotional orientations people hold with respect to outcomes [rewards]. The depth of the want of an employee for extrinsic [money, promotion, time-off, benefits] or intrinsic [satisfaction] rewards). Management must discover what employees value. Expectancy: Employees have different expectations and levels of confidence about what they are capable of doing. Management must discover what resources, training, or supervision employees need. Instrumentality :The perception of employees as to whether they will actually get what they desire even if it has been promised by a manager. Management must ensure that promises of rewards are fulfilled and that employees are aware of that. Vroom suggests that an employee's beliefs about Expectancy, Instrumentality, and Valence interact psychologically to create a motivational

force ,such that the employee acts in ways that bring pleasure and avoid pain.( Bernard,2010).

**Conceptual framework**



**Figure 1:** Conceptual framework

**Review of variables**

**a) Reward practice**

Reward strategies,are concerned with the formulation and implementation of practices and policies, the purposes of which are to reward people fairly, equitably and consistently, in accordance with their value to the organization and thus help the organization to achieve its strategic goals. It deals with the design,implementationand maintenance of reward systems (reward processes, practices and procedures), that aim to meet the needs of both the organization and its stakeholders.The aims of reward practice are to:reward people according to what the organization values and wants to pay for;reward people for the value they create; reward the right things to convey the right message about what is important in terms of behaviours and outcomes;develop a performance culture;motivate peopleand obtain their commitment and

engagement, help to attract and retain the high quality people the organization needs, create total reward processes that recognize the importance of both financial and non-financial rewards, develop a positive employment relationship and psychological contract,align reward practices with both business goals and employeevalues,as Cole (2005) emphasizes, the alignment of your reward practices, with employee values and needs, is every bit as important as alignment with business goals, operate fairly – people feel that they are treated justly in accordance with what is due to them because of their value to the organization: Jaques (1961);apply equitably – people are rewarded appropriately in relation to others within the organization, relativities between jobs are measured as objectively as possible and equal pay is provided for work of equal value;function consistently – decisions on pay do not vary arbitrarily and without due cause between different people or at different times;operate transparently – people understand how reward processes operate.

One of the main reasons why there is high turnover rate, by employees all over the globe in various sectors ,is the fact that they require to be adequately paid,andtherefore,poor rewards and incentives,make employees’ to quit their jobs,in search for greener pastures elsewhere.Financial methods are away of motivating the workforce,it has several ways to encourage people to work hard in various organisations.There are various reward strategies,used to motivate and attract staff and they are,financial and non-financial rewards.( Dessler,2008).This methods depend with an individual,in sense that there are those who are satisfied with financial rewards, which comprise of fixed and variable pay,additionalpay,bonus,commission,and profit sharing,while others are satisfied with non financialrewards,whichinclude,quality



working life, responsibility, praise, achievement, personal development and recognition. Some people or organisations think that financial methods are the best way to motivate all workers'.

However, financial rewards are not always the most suitable way to motivate workers, and moreover, not all workers feel motivated by the use of money. In most cases, it depends on the work environment, which either employees find to be conducive or non-conducive. (Nzuve, 2009). A conducive work environment can motivate an employee intrinsically, which would lead to greater performance, thus boosting the productivity levels of the organization. The use of reward systems by the firm can lead to improved productivity, a well satisfied group of employees, high morale and improved industrial relations between the management and the employees.

(Bernadin, 2003).

An organisation's employees provide an important edge for competitive advantage. The strategic management of human resources can play a key role in an organisation's survival. A firm's reward plan plays a pivotal role in recruiting, motivating and retaining employees, and thus helps in attaining a competitive advantage. Tight integration between rewards practice and employee performance enables organisations to align rewards with performance, ensuring the highest return on human capital investment. An organization can create plans, assign compensation, and analyse how you pay for performance. Protecting employees from arbitrary treatment, through a formal grievance handling procedure, may also motivate them to work harder, because they can expect their efforts to be fairly rewarded (Armstrong, 2009). Organisations want to attract, motivate, and retain high performing employees through strategic planning, allocation and communicating compensation programs.

## **b) Employee Training practice**

It is defined as an attempt to improve on employees' performance, on currently held job or one which is related to it. (Armstrong, 2009). Training is a process for the benefit of skill and effectiveness, in terms of their skills, knowledge and attitude as building blocks towards the achievement of wider organizational goals, to improve organizational efficiency (Dessler, 2008). It can also be defined as a systematic process of altering behaviour of employees, in a direction that will achieve organizational goals (Bernadin, 2003). Training is necessary to keep up with rapidly changing technology, which quickly renders skills obsolete. Training provides employees with specific skills or helps to correct deficiencies in their performances, while development is an effort to provide employees with abilities the organization will need in the future (Bernard, 2012). Organisations today have to ensure that they adequately train their employees, in order to increase performance level and avert turnover, and increase their knowledge, attitude and skill base, to be able to accomplish their tasks efficiently and effectively thus attaining organisations goals and objectives. Training an employee enhances their feelings of belongingness and being valued by the organization, due to time and money spent to develop one's skills. This motivates an employee to work harder and better, with hope of career advancement. Learning and development enhances individual's personal competence, adaptability and employability (Armstrong, 2009). Learning can be promoted through training, which promotes employees' skill acquisition and improvement. Armstrong further observed that learning is the planned and systematic modification of behavior through events, programmes and instructions which enable individuals to achieve the level of knowledge, skill and competence needed to carry out their work effectively (Armstrong, 2009).

Training and development opportunities are the most important reasons, why employees', remain in the organisation, especially the youthful ones.(Ng'ethe et al,2012).Training must be a systematic process,hinged on effectively administered performance appraisals,identification of training needs,and establishment of a competence framework that addresses organizational goals (Bernard,2012).Training and development widens compatibility with opportunities for advancement contingent upon one's ability to efficiently tackle new levels of responsibility and challenges, hence it is an investment in human capital whether initiated by the individual or the organization ( Bernard,2012).

Organisation's should ensure to adequately train their employees, in order to reduce turnover and increase employee performance.Firms should use better training methods,which should comprise of either on-job training method, which comprises of, job instruction training,job rotation,orientation,coaching and on-the job projects.Also, off-job training method,comprise of sponsored courses,lectures,tutorials,distant learning,case study analysis,simulation exercises and private training(carins,2009).Training is a very important asset,because it is beneficial in this ways and it helps the firm to gain competitive advantage, satisfaction,employee motivation,efficiency in processes resulting in financial gain,enhance a firm's image,helps in risk management,it leads to improved productivity,leads to reduction of mistakes and accidents and also leads to improved task expertise.( Armstrong,2006).

Croucher ( 2008), emphasizes that employee development, requires a shared responsibility among the organization and the employees.The firm should ensure that policies and programs, facilitate the continuing development of employees,by working with employees to,assess and provide feedback on their skills and interests,training and

development activities that match their career development objectives and job needs;use the training and development catalogue,as a tool to tell employees about training and development opportunities,in the organization,and to create an annual development plan;enact policies and practices that support employee development;follow up with employees after a learning activity to intergrate new skills and knowledge into their responsibilities.Employees take initiative to assess skills and interests,and seek development opportunities that match needs;employees work hand in hand with the organization,to identify training and development objectives as a result, the organization experiences employees with upgraded skills set,working efficiently to attain set goals and objectives,and this has a high effect on,morale,career satisfaction,creativity,increased productivity and motivation. ( Deb,2006).

There is tumultuous change in the business environment,as a result of macro-economic variables,which comprise of,political-legal factors, changes in technology,socio-cultural factors,and economic factors,and this rapid change,requires a skilled workforce ,which is knowledgeable, where employees are creative,flexible and adaptive.The core duties of a human resource manager,is to ensure that there is adequate training opportunities,for employee development.The human resource manager, helps employees achieve their personal growth,within the organization and beyond,and also ensure to offer training opportunities, to encourage and motivate their employees for growth.( Kirkpatrick,2006).Gatundu district hospital in partnership with the Ministry of Health,have developed a training strategy,which involves learning and development opportunities. Training will focus on currently held job,or one which is related to it, whereas development prepares the employees for future responsibilities.

( Mathis,2005).The hospital has also endeared to provide new employees with training opportunities, and effective orientation programmes,in order to motivate them to attain both personal and financial goals and objectives.(Berry,2010 ).It is necessary,to train high performers for potential new positions,recognize the knowledge gaps, and implement initiatives,to boost their competencies and motivate,attract and retain them.

In order to attain high productivity in the firm,it requires the firm to develop a training need analysis,to assess training needs according to its employees.Training should be associated with learning and development plans,to attain competitive advantage over its competitors.firm'sshould ensure to offer training,learning,coaching and feedback programs,to equip the workforce with knowledge,skills,and attitude to increase performance ( wright,2005) .One key factor in motivating the employees, is the opportunity the employees want to continue to grow and develop job and career enhancing skills,the opportunity for employees to grow and develop through training,is a strategic asset in employee motivation and performance.

### **c) Staff retention**

Employee retention is an effort by employers to encourage valued employees to remain with their organization.A large part of keeping valued employees is attracting the right people to the organization in the first place by the use of an effective workforce plan and recruitment and selection practices.Once you attract the right people,some strategies are useful in retaining them.(Armstrong,2009).

Creating an amicable and conducive working environment, makes the employees to work and stay in the organization.In this way,the organization becomes an employer of choice, employees

individual needs are met ,there are good prospects linked to training, appraisal and working with a good boss who listens and gives some autonomy, but helps with coaching and guidance, cole ( 2002). Reputation of an organization , working environment, location, career opportunities available, scope of learning new skills, terms and conditions of employment all play an efficient role in the retention of employees.(Armstrong,2009).

Employee turnover can be costly and disruptive.This calls for measures to retain employees. Retention strategies should be factored right at the initial stages of recruitment and selection. Retention strategy takes into account the retention issues the organization is facing and sets out ways in which these issues can be addressed. The management can make the work place a pleasant and rewarding place,in which working is possible.Issues that might push people towards exit should be fixed.(Armstrong,2009).

Cole ( 2002), proposed the use of risk analysis to quantify the seriousness of losing key people or key posts becoming vacant.Risk analysis can be carried out by initially identifying potential risk areas-the key people who may leave and for each of them, as individuals or groups estimate the likelihood of this occurring, how serious the effects of a loss would be on the business; and the ease with which a replacement could be made and the replacement costs. Major reasons for turnover include: attractive remuneration, career growth opportunities,better working conditions and training and development opportunities among others.

Some indications of reasons for leaving and therefore where action needs to be taken can be provided by exit interviews,but they are fallible.More reliance can be placed on the results of attitude opinions or surveys to identify any areas of dissatisfaction.The retention plan should propose actions that would focus on each of the areas in

which lack of commitment and dissatisfaction can arise ( Ng'ethe, 2012). Concerted action is required to retain talented people, but there are limits to what any organization can do. It is also necessary to encourage the greatest contribution from existing talent and to value them accordingly.

Staff retention is of interest to employers because of the implications of high staff turnover. Cole (2002) argues that retention of employees needs to be managed and identified remuneration, development, career opportunity, work environment, performance management, and work, family and flex time as areas that have an effect on retention of employees. Studies have identified an array of factors that influence employee retention. Gaiduk et al ( 2009) observed that previous studies have found that employee intentions to remain within an organization are influenced by three major groups of variables which are: employee personal characteristics such as gender, age, position level; the nature of an employees current job; and adequate working arrangements including such aspects as the quality of current supervision, opportunities for promotion, available training, and quality of communication within the organization.

Previous research has identified several factors relating to employee retention, situated on both organizational and employee levels. On the organizational side, factors influencing retention appear to be the existence of challenging and meaningful work, opportunities for advancement, empowerment, responsibility, managerial integrity and quality and new opportunities ( Birt et al., 2004). Walker (2001) also identified seven factors which can encourage retention and they include: compensation and appreciation of the work performed, the provision of challenging work, opportunities to learn, positive relationships with colleagues, recognition of capabilities and performance contributions, good life work balance and good communication within the

organization. Armstrong ( 2009), states that, when combined with selective promotion and salary action, the learning and development process is a strong retention activity.

Hytter( 2007) demonstrated that workplace factors such as rewards, leadership style, career opportunities, training and development of skills, physical working conditions, and work life balance, have an indirect influence on retention. The fact that effective training, and opportunities to learn and develop, enhances employee retention, is also confirmed by other researchers such as Arnold ( 2005).

The high cost that comes with turnover has highlighted the need for organisations to make retention of staff their strategic priority. Other sectors, not only the healthcare sector have experienced turnover of employees. Retention entails preventing people from leaving an organization to work elsewhere. Preventing persons from leaving, is not an easy task. It requires an organization and the various stakeholders , to give attention to the employee market and to fully understand what people are seeking from the working environment in order to retain them. (Armstrong, 2009).

### **Empirical study**

According to Kayando ( 2009), turnover rate could be both positive and negative to an organization. If the organization is losing 20% of the people considered as top performers, then the turnover is definitely negative, but if the majority of people leaving are “ bottom performers”, then a high turnover rate is positive. This is the measure that every organization should monitor, the high performance turnover rate. Kayando insists that the most challenging task is maintaining the high performer turnover at 5% or below, this is because the high performers care the most for their jobs, they are also the most easily disappointed and frustrated. High performance

employees, also tend to have standards, demand a great deal for themselves and others and are also sticklers for details. Kayando also suggests various strategies that can be employed to retain top performers, some of these include, provision of adequate resources such as technology and support staff so as to enable the employees do their work at an optimum level of quality, leveraging talent i.e matching the work they do with their talent, flexibility in terms of work schedules and policies, recognition ( whereby employees are adequately compensated and rewarded for their efforts and accomplishments e.g through bonus plans, incentive pay and pay-for performance programs) and finally development support, where employees are given opportunities to further their professional and personal development.

Abduljilil, Yazam and Ahmid ( 2011) conducted a study to investigate the role of employee retention in organizational performance and derived from the outcomes of the study that employee retention has a mediating role in the linking of between HRM practices and organizational performance.

### **Critique of literature relevant to the study**

According to Gross ( 2007), understanding what motivates a person to look for another position is an important step to good performance. In creating an effective retention strategy, compensation and benefits are certainly factors in a person's performance, but a conducive workplace environment where employees feel valued is critical.

Kayando ( 2009), in his research on labour turnover, suggests various strategies that may be employed to retain top performers. Some of these include: provision of conducive working environment, so as to enable the employees to do their work at an optimum level of quality, leveraging talent, flexibility in terms of work schedules and policies, recognition schemes, etc, this research

however did not include training as a way of increasing productivity in the organization.

### **Research gaps**

Most studies that have been found on staff retention strategies have been limited to its linkage to organizational performance, and this has been conducted mostly in developed nations such as United States and Asia. ( Harness, 2009). Other studies conducted in Africa, Kenya included in relation to medical staff retention are biased towards retention of nurses. ( Kirago, 2011). To fill this gap and to further examine this relationship, it is important to conduct research on medical staff retention in developing countries and in particular Kenya.

A study by Ng'ethe ( 2013) found out that remuneration in intention to leave were inconsistent with pertinent literature and results of previous studies thus preparing ground for paradigm shift in such factors in relation to the population studied. However, the study focused on remuneration which only involves financial incentives thus the need to focus on compensation which entails other incentives which are not financial. From the above study, it was found out that promotion influenced retention of academic staff in Kenyan universities. This brings out the need to establish whether the same findings apply in the health sector.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Research design**

The study adopted a case study design method. This is deemed appropriate since it provides detailed examination of a single subject, group or phenomena to understand the study area and make conclusions.

### **Target population**

Population refers to the entire group of people or things of interest that the researcher wishes to

investigate (Mugenda,2003). Data available from Gatundu district hospital reveals that there are 300 employees in the hospital.

### **Sample and sampling technique**

Sampling is a process of selecting a number of individuals or objects from a population such that the selected group contains elements that are representative of characteristics found in the entire group. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) 30 % of the accessible population can represent the total population. The accessible population in Gatundu district hospital is 300 and the sample size is calculated to 90. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select the sample. stratified sampling, groups a population into homogeneous subjects that share similar characteristics to ensure equitable representation of population in the sample ( Mugenda&Mugenda 2003).

### **Data collection methods**

The two major sources of data collection techniques that was used by the researcher include primary and secondary sources

### **Data collection procedure**

The researcher obtained an introduction letter from the university which was presented to Gatundu district hospital, to allow him carry out the study. The researcher then moves into the area of study, identify the target population and proceed to select the respondents. The researcher then administered the questionnaires, collected data sorted, prepared the data for analysis and analysed the data using SPSS version 22.

### **Data analysis**

Kothari,( 2004) maintains that when making the results known, simple descriptive statistics such as percentages have an advantage of a more complex statistics, therefore qualitative data collected through the questionnaires was analysed by the use of quantitative approach of descriptive statistics to analyse and summarise data. This entails the frequencies and percentages, mean and standard deviation. While inferential statistical tools such as co-relation and regression was used to determine and explain variables relationship, through SPSS version 22 computer programme which is the most current version in the market. The research findings were then presented using tables and charts.

## **RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Response Rate**

In this study a total of 90 questionnaires were distributed, a total of 63 questionnaires were returned representing a response rate of 70%. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), a 50% response rate is appropriate for analysis.

### **Reliability Analysis**

Cronbach's Alpha was used to test reliability of the proposed constructs. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) a coefficient of 0.80 or more implies high degree of reliability of the data.. The research findings indicated that reward practices had a coefficient of 0.814, employee training had a coefficient 0.886 and staff retention had a coefficient of 0.812.

**Table 1:** Reliability Tests of the factors.

Factors	Reliability Cronbach's Alpha	Comments
Reward practices	0.814	Accepted
Employee training	0.886	Accepted
Staff retention	0.812	Accepted

### **Demographic Characteristics of the respondents**

Demographic information for respondents from Gatundu District Hospital, are presented in this section.

In this section of the study the respondents were asked to indicate their gender. According to the research findings 42(68%) of the respondents were female while 20(32%) were male. This shows that Gatundu District Health Centre has a higher number of females than male employees.

On education level, the findings showed, 33(53.2%) of the respondents were degree holders, 24(38.7%) of them were diploma holders, 4(6.5%) were masters holders while 1(1.6%) of the respondents was a certificate holder.

In this section of the study the respondents were asked to indicate the number of years they have worked in Gatundu District health centre. From research findings Majority of the respondents 48.4% have worked for 10 to 15 years, 29.0% have worked for a period of 5 to 10 years, 12.9% indicate they have worked for a period of 1 to 5 years while 9.7% have worked for over 15 years.

### **Analysis of the Study Variables**

#### **a) Reward Practices**

The study sought to establish the respondents' level of agreement with the given statements which

indicates the relationship between reward practices and staff retention at Gatundu hospital. According to research findings in Table 2, the respondents strongly agreed that they are committed to the hospital because of the motivation programmes that are provided as indicated by ( mean = 1.00 and Std. Deviation = 0.000). The respondents also strongly agreed that the Ministry of Health provides both financial and non-financial rewards which make them work harder by (mean = 1.02 and Std. Deviation = 0.126 ). The respondents agreed that the allowances they get for working overtime are motivating as indicated by ( mean = 1.644 and Std. Deviation = 3.68).

The results agree with those of Vrooms theory on expectancy. Employees will perform their duties and responsibilities when they attach their emotional orientations to the outcomes ( rewards), where we have intrinsic motivation ( self generated factors such as achievement, autonomy, praise, recognition ) and extrinsic factors ( what is done to us to boost employee performance and overall motivation, attraction and retention of staff, and this involves pay packages, bonus, allowances, profit sharing plans). The government should promote the use of reward management strategies such as financial and non-financial rewards to motivate, attract, and retain top talent in the health sector Previous empirical studies appear to be in agreement with these findings. Past research has shown that poor reward incentives has made the employees to quit their jobs, due to inadequate pay. (Kamau, 2013).

Statements	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev
I am committed to the hospital because of the motivation programmes that they provide.	63	1	1	1.00	0.000
The Ministry of health provides both financial and non-financial rewards which make me work harder.	63	1	2	1.02	0.126
The allowances I get for working overtime are motivating.	63	1	5	1.644	3.68

**Table 2:** Reward practices

**b) Employee Training**

The study sought to establish the respondents' level of agreement with the variables on relationship between employee training and staff retention. According to research findings in Table 3; the respondents strongly agreed that the training provided broadens their knowledge which makes the appreciated by (mean = 1.00 and Std. deviation = 0.000). They also strongly agreed that the training content provided by the hospital and the Ministry of Health is easy to understand as indicated by (mean = 1.00 and Std. deviation = 0.000). The respondents strongly agreed that, the hospital conducts a training need assessment for its employees indicated by ( mean =1.00 and Std. deviation = 0.000). They also strongly agreed that the training they receive

increases their prospects of career growth as indicated by (mean = 1.00 and Std. deviation= 0.000).The respondents strongly agreed that, the hospital has an effective performance appraisal mechanism indicated by (mean =1.02 and Std. deviation = 0.126).

Previous empirical studies appear to be in agreement with these findings. A study done by Ng'ethe (2013) also established that training should be conducted to employees, inorder to equip them with knowledge, skills and abilities to efficiently perform duties adequately, and the younger employees rooted for training opportunities as a great motivator to performance and also training acts as a retention strategy.

Statement	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev
The training provided broadens my knowledge about my work which makes me appreciated.	63	1	1	1.00	0.000
The training content provided by the hospital and the Ministry of Health is easy to understand	63	1	1	1.00	0.000



The hospital conducts a training need assessment for its employees	63	1	1	1.00	0.000
The training I receive increases my prospects of career growth	63	1	1	1.00	0.000
The hospital has an effective performance appraisal mechanism	63	1	2	1.02	0.126

**Table 3: Employee Training**

**c) Findings on Staff retention/ intention to leave**

The researcher intends to investigate whether the medical personnel in Gatundu district hospital are contemplating to stay or leave the hospital under the current prevailing conditions, their rate of retention and whether turnover may reduce if reward management practice and employee training were addressed. The study sought to establish respondents' level of agreement with variables measuring staff retention. According to research

findings in Table 4.6; the respondents' strongly agreed that they love their job and have no intention of quitting by (mean =1.05 and Std. deviation= 0.378). The respondents strongly agreed that they are satisfied with their current job position that they hold in the hospital indicated by ( mean =1.38 and Std. deviation=1.007). The respondents also strongly agreed that the hospital is an employer of choice by ( mean = 1.03 and Std. deviation = 0.252. They also indicated that they plan to stay in this job position for atleast 5 years by ( mean = 1.02 and Std. deviation= 0.126 ).

Statement	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std Dev
I love my job and have no intention of quitting this hospital	63	1	4	1.05	0.378
I am satisfied with my current job position that I hold in the hospital.	63	1	5	1.38	1.007
I am in this hospital because it is an employer of choice	63	1	3	1.03	0.252
I plan to stay in this job position for atleast 5 years	63	1	2	1.02	0.126

**Table 4: staff retention**

**Correlation and Regression Analysis**

**Correlation analysis**

Multiple correlations were conducted for this study. Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient (PPMCC) was obtained between staff retention and Reward practices and employee training of the employees at 95% confidence interval and 5% level of significance. Correlation coefficient is usually represented by letter (r) and its values lies between -1 and +1. The sign (- and +) indicates the direction between two variables. Correlation coefficient of +1

indicates a very strong positive linear relationship between two variables.

Correlation coefficient of -1 indicates a very strong negative linear relationship between two variables. A value of 0 indicates the variables are independent hence no relationship. As indicated above if the significance value is less than 0.05 ( $p < 0.05$ ) then it is considered statistically significant. If the significance value is greater than 0.05 ( $p > 0.05$ ) the relationship is not statistically significant.

**Table 5:** Correlation matrix

		Reward Practices	Training	Staff retention
Staff retention	Pearson Correlation	.449**	.271*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.032	
	N	63	63	63

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 5 indicates that the correlation between staff retention and reward practices, employee training and health safety. The findings shows that there is positive relationship and statistically significant between staff retention and reward practices ( $r=0.449$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ).

The findings indicates that there is weaker positive relationship which is statistically significant between staff retention and employee training ( $r=0.271$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ).

### Regression Analysis

In this study regression analysis was conducted to determine whether there was statistical relationship between the variables. For this case multiple regression was used since more than two independent variables were involved (Kothari, 2004). The study conducted multiple regression analysis so as to establish whether there is a relationship between human resource management practices and staff retention at Gatundu district hospital.

**Table 6:** Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square
1	.675	.647	.650

a.predictors(constant)reward practice,employee training,health and safety

b.dependent variable:staff retention

R-square is the Coefficient of determination that explains the extent to which changes in the dependent variable can be explained by the change in the independent variables or the percentage of variation in the dependent variable (staff retention) that is explained by all the three independent variables (Reward Practices, Employee Training).

From Table 6, the value of Adjusted R-Square is 0.650. This implies that, 65% of variation of staff retention was explained by Reward Practices, Employee Training and Health and Safety. From the findings, there is remaining 35% which implies that there are factors not studied in this study that affects staff retention in Gatundu District Hospital.

**Table 7: ANOVA test**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1.651	2	.550	7.993	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	4.063	60	.069		
	Total	5.714	62			

a. Dependent Variable: Staff retention

b. Predictors: (Constant) Training, Reward practices

The ANOVA test is used to determine whether the model is important in predicting the staff retention. At 0.05 level of significance the ANOVA test indicated that in this model the independent variables namely;

Reward Practices, Employee Training and Health and are important in predicting staff retention as indicated by significance value=0.000 which is less than 0.05 level of significance ( $p=0.000 < 0.05$ ).

**Table 8: Coefficients of multiple determination of the variables**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	-2.174	.957		-2.271	.027
	Reward Practices	.116	.046	-.286	-2.499	.015
	Employee Training	3.512	.940	.426	3.735	.000

a. Dependent Variable: staff retention

According to results in Table 8; at 5% level of significance, all independent variables were found to be significant predictors of dependent variable. For reward practices the significance value is 0.015 which is less than 0.05; for employee training (0.000<0.05).

Where, is Y the dependent variable (staff retention at Gatundu District Hospital ),  $X_1$  is Reward Practices,  $X_2$  is Employee Training.

As per the SPSS generated regression Table 4.10 the equation ( $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \epsilon$ ) becomes:  
 $Y = 2.174 + 0.116X_1 + 3.512X_2$

According to the equation taking all factors constant; the staff retention at Gatundu District Hospital was 2.174. A unit increase in Reward Practices led to a 0.116 increase in the staff retention at Gatundu District Hospital. A unit increase of employee training would lead to a 3.512 increase in staff retention at Gatundu District Hospital. Therefore according to the study findings employee training contributes more to staff retention at Gatundu District Hospital.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

**Objective one:** To establish the relationship between reward practice and staff retention in Gatundu district hospital.

Medical personnel in public hospitals in Kenya, have been striking due to poor reward incentives and salary delays occasioned by squabbles between county and national government. Reward incentives mainly involve financial rewards (bonus, allowances, contingent pay, pay, profit sharing plans, paid leave, sick pay etc), non-financial rewards (recognition, praise, worship, autonomy, career opportunities and growth). The government should ensure to disburse cash to pay medical personnel in counties on time, and conduct surveys to assess opinion of staff on rewards and ascertain whether it has a positive or negative impact with staff retention.

**Objective two:** To examine the relationship between employee training and staff retention in Gatundu district hospital.

Training is a process for the benefit of skill and effectiveness, in terms of their skills, knowledge and attitude as building blocks towards the achievement of wider organizational goals, to improve organizational efficiency (Dessler, 2008). Training is necessary to keep up with rapidly changing technology, which quickly renders skills obsolete. Training provides employees with specific skills or helps to correct deficiencies in their performances, while development is an effort to provide employees with abilities the organization will need in the future (Bernard, 2012). Medical personnel have to be thoroughly trained to attain these merits which include, reduced labour turnover, increased job satisfaction, employee motivation, efficiency in processes resulting in financial gain, enhance a firm's image, helps in risk management, it leads to improved productivity, leads to reduction of mistakes and accidents and also leads to improved task expertise.

## Conclusions

From the research findings presented in chapter four and summary above the study concludes that there is a significant positive relationship between reward practices, employee training and staff retention at Gatundu District Hospital.

Reward practices are used by the Ministry of health to motivate, attract and retain the workforce. The G.O.K has to ensure to incorporate better reward management strategies, such as job evaluation, pay and grade structures, market analysis strategies, introduction of financial and non-financial rewards, and evaluation of the reward management practices. The G.O.K should also ensure to offer medical personnel better employee incentives and contingent pay schemes and career progression

ladders( Promotions), to motivate,attract and retain them towards working hard to attain set goals and objectives.The relevance of reward practices include:-motivate,energise and direct behavior,it can change the way people think about work,attracts and retain high performing culture,boosts living standards of employees and the society where they live in,employees see money in what it can buy,employee satisfaction with pay is correlated with organization commitment and trust in management.

Training opportunities should also be evaluated by the management in order to boost performance.Training increases individual knowledgebase,acquisition of skills and abilities to effectively and efficiently attain set goals and objectives.Through training programmes,it leads to improving productivity,leads to task expertise,increased efficiency in processes resulting in financial gain,it helps in risk management( training on diversity,training on health and safety,training on sexual harassment) ,it leads in reduction of accidents and mistakes,it will give employees in different parts of the hospital the ability to exchange views and ideas,this helps to promote a common identity and may generate new solutions to work,leads to increased career opportunities where employees are promoted to various positions in the hospital,it leads to increased employee motivation and job satisfaction.Training can also lead to Hawthorne studies effect,where productivity will increase when employees are given attention.

### **Recommendations**

On the basis of the summary of the findings and the conclusions,the following recommendations were made.The recommendations will help the various stakeholders who include,the management, Board of Public hospitals in Kenya,the Government of Kenya,the Ministry of health,Directorate of medical services,union members ( KMPDU,KNUN), and

various commissions ( Public Service Commission,Salaries review commission) and also the recommendations could be used by various sectors e.g energy sector,manufacturing. and mining sectors.

The study also recommends that the Ministry of health and other government bodies like the salaries and remuneration commission, should put into consideration the use of financial and non –financial needs in order to fully satisfy different employee needs thus attaining the set goals and objectives.Rewards maybe intrinsic(self generated factors such as, autonomy, recognition, advancement, training) or extrinsic ( what is done to others e.g. pay, bonus, allowances etc). in nature, depending with the employee.

The management of the hospital should train the employees in order to equip them with knowledge, skills, abilities, to effectively and efficiently perform their duties adequately.Training should be done on health and safety, public relations, use of new equipment, and managing diversity.

The study recommends that the government should liaise with county governments on whether to devolve the health sector to the county or the national government to maintain the health sector, and expeditiously ensure to adequately pay the medical personnel better packages and pay the dues on time,because the personnel have families to take care of their basic needs.

The Government of Kenya should partner with other stakeholders like Aga Khan hospital,safaricom,Philips,Samsung and Nokia, and issue medical personnel in public hospitals with tablets,smartphones,and laptops,to promote paperless healthcare as a result of digitization,and this will help in saving time when one is looking for

medical files of patients, and through this digitization, it will save on time and cost.

The government should release adequate funds to the ministry of health and directorate of medical services in the coming budget, in order for the money to be used to train the medical personnel in public hospitals in Kenya to equip them with knowledge and skills thus boosting productivity.

The management of Gatundu hospital should conduct proper training to new staff and efficient orientation programmes in the hospital, in order to reduce newness anxiety, and foster productivity in the workplace.

**Suggestions for further research**

This study was limited to the relationship between human resource management practices and staff retention, and it brought out three factors, reward practice and employee training. Future researchers should focus on other variables that may influence retention of medical personnel such as recruitment and selection, employee relations, empowerment, career development, leadership styles, work-life balance, promotions (career advancement), among others.

This study was limited to public hospitals in Kenya using Gatundu district hospital as a case study. A similar study could be carried out in other organisations such as private hospitals to find out whether the same results will be obtained.

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