



INFLUENCE OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES ON EMPLOYEE COMMITMENT IN PUBLIC HOSPITALS IN NAIROBI COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Health workers are indispensably important for the effective functioning of healthcare systems. However studies show that health care is one of the sectors highly affected by turnover in Kenya. Empirical studies show that Kenya's health system faces a variety of human resource problems, primarily an overall lack of personnel in key areas, which is worsened by high numbers of trained personnel leaving the health sector to work overseas as a result of lack of employee commitment. Kenya loses on average twenty (20) medical doctors each month through either brain drain or brain waste. Worse still, those personnel who stay put in their jobs are inequitably distributed between urban and rural areas. The study was guided by two research objectives which specifically seek to establish the influence of training and reward management on job design practices on employee commitment. The population of the study comprised and was limited to doctors, clinical officers, nurses and other technical people such as the pharmacists, lab technicians and radiologists from eight (8) public hospitals in Nairobi County who are directly concerned with provision of health care. The study adopted a descriptive research design and targeted all the 1477 health care staff from the eight (8) public health facilities in Nairobi County. The hospitals were selected purposively while stratified random sampling was used to select the health care staff. Stratified random and purposive sampling was used to select a total of one hundred (100) respondents from the various strata identified. With the help of the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) programme version 22, regression analysis was carried out and the results were used to test the relationship between the variables. The study established that there existed a strong positive relationship between the independent variables and dependent variable. The dependent variable could be explained by a change in the independent that were studied. The analysis showed that reward management practices had the strongest positive (correlation coefficient) influence on employee commitment in public hospitals. Additionally, training were positively correlated to employee commitment in public hospitals. Therefore HR practices did influence the commitment of employees in public health hospitals of Nairobi County.

Key Words: Training Practices, Reward Management, Employee Commitment

INTRODUCTION

The study aimed to establish the influence of human resource management practices on employee commitment in public hospitals of Nairobi County, Kenya. This chapter described a brief background of the study. It explored the statement of the problem, research objectives, research questions, scope of the study, justification of the study and limitations of the study. Today business has become more dynamic, turbulent and competitive than in the past due to globalization. The new economy is characterized by a volatile talent demand versus supply equation set against erratic attrition trends and boundless cutthroat competition. Organizations have a tougher time in finding, managing, retaining and nurturing talent (Thomas & Craig, 2007; Mohaptra, 2006).

Businesses therefore need to truly leverage on their workforce, whose skills and commitment is a competitive weapon and together create a competitive advantage for any organization ((Khatri, 2009; Marchington & Wilkinson, 2008). John and Elyse (2010) assert that no firm can achieve peak performance in the current throat cutting competitive business environment unless it strategically configures and makes optimal use of its employees. Success in today's competitive market depends less on advantages associated with economies of scale but on high involvement of human resource management practices. The competitor can imitate other resources like technology and capital but the human resource are unique and can never be imitated.

No organization in today's competitive world can perform at peak levels unless each employee is committed to the organization's objectives (Quresh, *et al*, 2010). It is no longer good enough to have employees who come to work faithfully every day (University of Pretoria *etd*-Coetzee, 2005). Employees on the other hand, want to be part of a successful organization which provides a good income, challenging jobs, the opportunity

for development and secure employment (John & Elyse, 2010).

When employees are not committed, innovation, the implementation of new ideas and initiatives will not be easy. An employee who is committed in the work place is of great value to the organization as they may need little or no supervision to accomplish the tasks assigned to them (Brow & Taylor, 2011). Committed employees remain within the organization therefore saving the organization of the costs required to recruit, train and develop new staff. In addition, high staff turnover decreases customer satisfaction due to discontinued service delivery (Scott, 2007).

The strength of any nation depends largely on its productivity which in turn depends on the well-being of the population (Misau, Al-Sadat & Gerei, 2010). Mischaet *al.*, (2008) observed that a key constraint to achieving the MDGs is the absence of a properly trained and motivated workforce. Health workers are vitally important for the effective functioning of healthcare systems (Ndetei, Khasakhala & Omolo, 2008). Inadequate health workforce contributes to the general deterioration of health indicators (Dolvo 1999; Dolvo, 2002; Dolvo, 2003). Loss of clinical staff from low and middle-income countries is crippling the already fragile health care systems. Health worker retention is critical for health system performance (Mischaet *al.*, 2008)

In conclusion, it worth emphasizing that since organizations get their work accomplished through employees who perform different tasks, it is imperative that employee commitment is carefully nurtured. Good human resource management practices lead to high employee commitment and different researches in USA and now Britain justify this (Marchington & Wilkinson, 2008). Organizations should adopt and apply practices that result in employee commitment if they are to secure a niche in the business competition today since committed employees

are increasingly becoming a valued asset in organizations.

These revelations prompted the researcher to empirically investigate the influence of human resource management practices such as training, work-life balance, reward management and Job design on employee commitment of healthcare professionals in public hospitals of Nairobi County, Kenya.

Concept of Human Resource Management Practices and of Employee Commitment

The human resource is a living and active input that operates the other factors of production. It is people who create organizations, make them survive and prosper. Their special management cannot be neglected as other components of the organization are likely to suffer. Without people, organizations could not function. Human Resource Management (HRM) is an approach to manage human resource of an organization. It is composed of the policies, practices, and systems that influence employees, behaviour, attitude and performance (Gerhart& Wright, 2007; Armstrong, 2009). Employee mobility should be carefully monitored because organizations suffer a great deal when they lose their employees to the competition.

Torrington, Hall, Taylor and Atkinson (2011) and Branham (2005) drawing on a research undertaken by the Saratoga Institute identified the seven hidden reasons why employees leave organizations. Job or workplace not living up to expectation, mismatch between the person and the job, too little coaching and feedback, too few growth and advancement opportunities, feeling devalued and unrecognized, stress from overwork and work-life imbalance, loss of trust and confidence in senior leaders are the push and pull factors that have led to brain drain of health professionals from African countries. This has impaired the already weak health systems, making it extremely difficult for countries in the

Region to achieve the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (UN, 2000; UNDP, 2004).

The push and pull factors are in the human resource management concept referred to as HR practices. Armstrong (2010) argues that HRM entails informal approaches used in people management. These approaches signifies HRM practices and includes sophisticated selection methods, work life balance, appraisal, training, teamwork, communications, empowerment, performance related pay and employment security. Busienei (2013) suggested a number of human resource management practices, termed as best practices, (extensive training, work life balance, employment security, diffusion of information, team working, reduction of status differences, performance related and incentive pay) which he believed could improve employee commitment..

In summary, it may be argued that while there is a growing body of theory and empirical research demonstrating relationships between HRM policies, practices, collective employee attributes, and employee outcomes, additional studies in this area are needed (Purcell and Kinnie, 2007). Although it is accepted that HRM practices is positively related to employee performance, there is great need for additional evidence to support these different contexts (Gerhart& Wright, 2007).

To fill this gap and to further examine the process through which HRM practices impact employee commitment, it is important to conduct analysis in Kenyan context. Thus, the purpose of this paper was to investigate how HRM practices influence employee commitment in public hospitals and for a better understanding of the relationship between these two variables in Kenyan public hospitals context.

Employee commitment is a fundamental concept within the workplace and it is therefore necessary to understand the relationship against its determinants. Several studies have been done on

employee commitment some of these studies include a study by Suliman and Illes (2010) who tested gender correlation as one of the variables and in agreement with Savery & Syme (2006), women were found to be more committed in their work involvement. Asthawapa (2009) too noticed that women tend to be more committed to organizations than men. Savery & Syme (2006) as well as Ugboro and Obeng (2009) identified that gender is one of the variables that could bring about a high level of committed employees and their findings found out that gender is significantly associated with commitment.

Armstrong (2012) posits a negative relationship between organizational commitment and age of the respondent. His results contradicted the findings of a study by Luthans & Sommer (2009) who found that age is significantly associated with commitment. Angel and Perry (2006) in a similar research concluded that generally, age tend to be positively correlated with organizational commitment. Similar sentiments were supported by Lok (2009) and Steers (2007) in their studies that age has a significant and positive impact on organization commitment.

A study on the impacts of employee benefits on employee work motivation and productivity done by Chankova (2006) found out that five benefits namely; yearend bonuses, dividends, pensions, individual annual vacations, paid leaves and medical compensation gave the greatest impact towards the employee's performance. Chao *et al.*, (2011) found that 92% of employers offer the yearend bonuses which are also the employee's priority followed by the holidays and leave, entertainment, medical benefits and food /drink facilities and meals subsidies.

The health care system in the developing countries faces many problems, employee commitment being one of the majors. The system is structurally and systemically fragile and weak to provide effective service where it is most needed. Brain drain appears to have complicated the

situation and made matters worse (Oyelere, 2007). In deed the availability of health personnel in Africa is considerably worse than in other regions of the world and it is one of the major stumbling blocks to the delivery of adequate healthcare (Chankova, 2006).

Pang, Lansang and Haines (2008) estimates that 23,000 health care professionals emigrate annually from Africa. There are more African scientists and engineers in the USA than in Africa. According to UNECA some 127,000 highly qualified African professionals left the continent between 1960 and 1989. By contrast, North and South America, which together have 14% of the world's population but only 10% of the global disease burden, employ 37% of the global health workforce and contribute over 50% of the pool of global health expenditure (WHO, 2006).

There is a tendency for developed countries faced with decreasing numbers of nationally trained medical personnel to recruit already-trained individuals from other nations by enticing them with incentives. Zimbabwe, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda has been particularly affected by this problem. In 2001, out of approximately 730 nursing graduates in Zimbabwe, more than one third (237) of them relocated to the United Kingdom. This was a dramatic increase from 1997, when only 26 (approximately 6.2%) of the 422 nursing program graduates migrated to the United Kingdom. This leads to the loss of skilled workers in developing countries and can be very damaging, since the education systems in developing countries are training individuals for occupations in the medical profession, yet is not able to retain them (WHO, 2006).

Developing countries face significant challenges in areas such as number, composition and distribution of health care workers. Migration of health workers from the developing countries and to be specific from the East African region has led to the declining trends in health and development

status and break the vicious cycle of poverty and ill-health. Given the diversity of the health systems across Africa, improvement would be contingent upon the convergence of commitment, expertise, and resources throughout the system. Improved health status leads to increased productivity, educational performance, life expectancy, savings and investments, and decreased debts and expenditure on health care. Ultimately this would lead to greater equity, economic return, and social and political stability. Therefore, improved health is a key factor for human development (WHO, 2006).

Kenya's health system faces a variety of human resource problems, primarily an overall lack of personnel in key areas, which is worsened by high numbers of trained personnel leaving the health sector to work overseas. Furthermore, those personnel who remain put are inequitably distributed between urban and rural areas (Dambisya, 2007). In Kenya the brain drain of medical professionals is threatening the very existence of the country's health services. Kenya loses on average 20 medical doctors each month through either brain drain or brain waste (Ndetei et al., 2008).

The emigration rate of doctors currently stands at 51% with main destination being the UK; while the emigration rate of nurses is 8%. Hunt (2009) asserts that nurses in most healthcare organizations have some of the highest levels of direct patient contact than other employees. As a result, they play a pivotal role in the financial performance of these organizations (Boudreau, & Ramstad, 2007). The financial cost of losing a single nurse has been calculated to be equal to about twice the nurse's annual salary (Atencio, Cohen, Gorenberg, 2007). The average hospital is estimated to lose highly about US\$300,000 per year for each percentage increase in annual nurse turnover (Kirigia et al, 2006), while on average for every doctor that emigrates, a country loses about US\$ 517,931 (Price Waterhouse Coopers, 2007).

The Government of Kenya is committed to the improvement of the health and welfare of all its citizens. Strengthening the health system is at the core of the Government of Kenya's reform agenda. Over the years, the government has taken important steps towards the fulfillment of this goal by providing health services within easy reach of Kenyans. The "beyond zero mobile clinics" is one such initiative of bringing health services close to the citizens. It has also placed considerable emphasis on preventive, promotive and rehabilitative health services without ignoring curative services. Among the initiatives/actions taken is the development of the Kenya Health Policy Framework (KHPF 1994-2010), the launch of Vision 2030, and the enactment of a new constitution in 2010 which devolved health into the County Governments. These have greatly influenced the health status of Kenyans and the structure in which health services are provided.

Statement of the Problem

Health care provision is one critical profession which determines the lives of individuals – it borders on life and death, and hence the commitment required of health care professionals and employees must be of high standards. However studies show that health care is one of the sectors highly affected by turnover. Empirical studies show that Kenya's health system faces a variety of human resource problems such as an overall lack of personnel in key areas, worsened by high numbers of trained personnel leaving the health sector to work overseas (Dambisya, 2007). Indeed studies show that Kenya loses on average 20 medical doctors each month through either brain drain or brain waste (Ndetei et al, 2008). Furthermore, those personnel who remain are inequitably distributed between urban and rural areas. If the current alarming trend of poaching scarce human resources for health from Kenya continues, the chances of achieving the Millennium Development Goals on health and Kenya vision 2030 would remain bleak.

Lack of commitment, poor performance, absenteeism, neglect of duties, restless Medical and Paramedical personnel, reports of intensified resignations, continuing massive exodus among medics at all levels to work in countries abroad and by doctors and health care providers have created a never ending public outcry over the quality and nature of healthcare services explains the reasons for the rot in health care facilities especially in public hospitals of Kenya. It has also left a trail of pain among the patients and the affected families (Atambo, Kabare, Munene & Nyamwamu, 2012). All these make loud statements and points centrally to commitment and begs the question whether the HRM practices has any effect on the commitment of these employees (World Bank Report 2004; Purcell et al, 2007).

Theoretical and empirical studies have shown that there are many push and pull factors affecting employee commitment among them human resource management practices such as remuneration (Dockel, 2003; Bierrglee, Nguyen, Clenney & Taylor 2009), career advancement (Gupta, 2008 and Mello, 2009), work-life balance (Kar and Misra, 2013), work environment, (Winterton, 2011) , employee relations, job design, recruitment and selection among others. Armstrong (2009); Deci and Ryan (2008) and by Jamwa (2005) explain that employee commitment is built and tapped through well executed Human Resource Management (HRM) practices and by mutually consistent policies.

While all these empirical literatures have alluded to HRM practices as determinants of the employee commitment, none of them further expounds on how exactly HRM practices affect employee commitment, not underscoring the fact that most public hospitals in Kenya have their own HR function. It is against this backdrop that this study seeks to establish the influence of HRM practices on employee commitment in public hospitals of Nairobi County, Kenya.

Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this study was to establish the influence of human resource management practices on employee commitment in public hospitals in Nairobi County, Kenya. The specific objectives were:

- To establish how training practices affect employee commitment in public hospitals of Nairobi County; Kenya.
- To find out how Reward Management practices affect employee commitment in public hospitals of Nairobi County; Kenya.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

Gary Becker's Human Capital Theory

According to Gary Becker's Human Capital Theory of 1964, 'human capital corresponds to any stock of knowledge or characteristics the worker has (either innate or acquired) that contributes to his or her productivity'. It postulates that expenditure on training and education is costly and should be considered an investment since it is undertaken with a view to increasing personal productivity. Human capital represents the human factor in the organization; the combined intelligence, skills and expertise that gives the organization its distinctive character (Armstrong, 2009). Armstrong (2012) also concur that human capital theory is concerned with how people in an organization contribute their knowledge, skills and abilities to enhancing organizational capability and the significance of that contribution.

Torrington (2008) explains that human capital signifies the combined intelligence and experience of staff as a source of competitive advantage that cannot be imitated by rivals. The significance of human capital theory is that it regards people as assets and stresses that investment by organizations in people will generate worthwhile returns. Bratton & Gold (2007), on the other hand posit that people's performance and the results achieved can be considered as a return on

investment and can be assessed in terms of costs and benefits. Wilton (2011), argues that the benefits of training and development to the organization include a range of positive HR outcomes such as improved quality of employed labour, reduced turnover and enhanced employee commitment.

Johnson and Christensen (2010) view on the theory of human capital in relation to general and specific training is that, the more specific the training is, the less likely the turnover will occur. As the skills attained become more specific the likelihood that the employee will terminate the employment relationship decreases. The more training is able to contribute to the development of these purely specific skills, then the more committed employees will become. If employees do not feel valued and treated as worthwhile assets through training as postulated by this theory, then they will look for employers elsewhere who would be willing to invest on them through training and development. Based on this view, people are worth investing in as a form of Capital which clearly points to training.

Victor Vroom's Expectancy Theory

Victor vroom's expectancy theory (1964), asserts that individuals have different sets of goals and can be motivated if they have certain expectations. This theory is about choice. It argues that the strength of a tendency to act in a certain way depends on the strength of an expectation that the act will be followed by a given outcome and on the attractiveness of the outcome to the individual. It includes three variables namely, attractiveness, performance-reward linkage and effort -performance linkage. Thus, whether one has the desire to produce at any given time depends on one's particular goals and one's perception of the relative worth of performance as a path to the attainment of those goals.

According to Wilton (2011), this theory suggests that employee motivation to perform depends on

the individual's specific needs and the expectation of fulfilling those needs through productive behaviour. According to Davey et al (2008), the expectancy theory developed by Edward Tolman in the 1930s is based on cognitive processes and motivation where people engage in certain behaviour(s) because they expect or belief they will get something good in return. Edward Tolman describes it as a goal directed behaviour. By the words of Armstrong (2012), motivation theory explains the factors that affect goal directed behaviour and therefore influences the approaches used in HRM to enhance engagement such as Training and Development.

Armstrong (2012) contends that this theory focuses on the content of motivation in the shape of needs whereby an unsatisfied need creates tension and a state of disequilibrium. To restore the balance a goal is identified that will satisfy the need. Behaviour is therefore motivated by unsatisfied needs. Going by Waweru (1984) a need that has not been satisfied is a motivator. Ability to satisfy employees' basic needs can be classified in the first category of needs in the Abraham Maslow's 1954 hierarchy of needs. Waweru (1984) points out that with a decreasing land resource and with the prevailing level of unemployment in Kenya, paid employment or jobs have become the only means of livelihood. A guarantee of these jobs is essential. Security or safety in one's job remains one very important employment practice that employers should adopt in order to keep their employees committed.

Any employee in an employment relationship expects so much in return for the services that they offer/lender. Once their expectations are met, their level of commitment/engagement to the job is increased and their intention to leave the job is decreased. The opposite of this statement is also true. The expectancy theory stresses the extent to which an employee's goals and objectives match the organizations goals and

objectives. The more the two are aligned, the higher the commitment and retention rate.

Frederick Herzberg Motivation-Hygiene Theory

Frederick Herzberg (1923-2000), a clinical psychologist and pioneer of 'job enrichment', is regarded as one of the great original thinkers in management and motivational theory. Herzberg's et al (1968) two factor theory that identifies two groups of factors (intrinsic-work itself and extrinsic or hygiene factors) that affect job satisfaction and eventually commitment. Herzberg was the first to show that satisfaction and dissatisfaction at work nearly always arose from different factors, and were not simply opposing reactions to the same factors, as had always previously been (and still now by the unenlightened) believed (Herzberg, 1968).

Herzberg theory is based on the assumption that true motivation comes from within a person and not from KITA factors. He argues that KITA/extrinsic factors provide only short-run success because the motivator factors that determine whether there is satisfaction or no satisfaction are intrinsic to the job itself, and do not result from carrot and stick incentives. Herzberg argued that job enrichment is required for intrinsic motivation, and that it is a continuous management process. According to Herzberg the job should have sufficient challenge to utilize the full ability of the employee, Employees who demonstrate increasing levels of ability should be given increasing levels of responsibility and if a job cannot be designed to use an employee's full abilities, then the firm should consider automating the task or replacing the employee with one who has a lower level of skill.

According to Armstrong (2012), the theory has influenced approaches to job design such as job enrichment which calls for autonomy for the employee when carrying out their work. As a result, Herzberg had immense influence on the job enrichment movement, which sought to

design jobs in a way that would maximize the opportunities to obtain intrinsic satisfaction from work and thus improve quality of working life and employee commitment (Herzberg, 1968). His work can be seen in common with that of Elton Mayo (known for the Hawthorne Experiments), of Abraham Maslow (developer of the hierarchy of needs) and of Douglas McGregor (creator of Theory X and Theory Y) as a reaction to F W Taylor's Scientific Management theories. The relevance of Frederick Herzberg Motivation-Hygiene Theory in this study lies in the understanding that any organization's management should provide hygiene factors to the job to avoid employee dissatisfaction. Intrinsic factors to the job should be provided as well in order for employees to be satisfied with their jobs and thus increase their commitment to their jobs and their retention rates as well.

Conceptual Framework

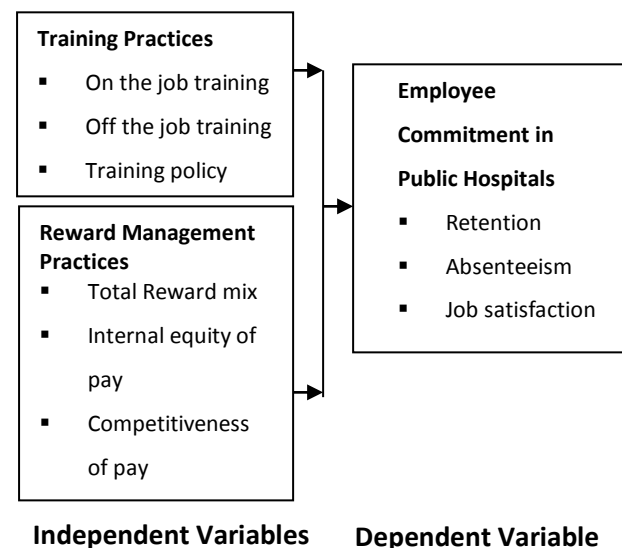


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Training Practices

Training is of growing importance to companies seeking to gain an advantage among competitors (Armstrong, 2012). Training is a hallmark of good management and a task that managers ignore at their own peril. It improves employees' skills, enhances their personal development and their ability to perform duties better (Dessler, 2008).

Training and development can serve as additional levers for enhancing engagement and commitment. A person-organization fit is fostered through training which is vital for developing productive and dedicated employees. Employee training practices emphasizes to the management that commitment is a two way process in that employees cannot be expected to be committed to the organization unless the management demonstrates that it is committed to them and recognizes their contributions as stakeholders (Vance, 2006).

Training is a complex human resource practice that can significantly impact on a company's success (Colarelli & Montei, 2006). It is one of several human resource practices that can have a considerable impact on employee commitment. It seeks to improve employee investment, increase reciprocity, help employee identify with the organization, and serves to limit alternative employment options which will in return enhance the employee's commitment to the company (Patrick Owens' 2006). Better skilled workers are more dedicated to their work as compared to their less skilled counterparts (Abdullah & Djebavni, 2011; Kabir, 2011).

If employees cannot foresee their path of career development in their current organization, there are chances that they will leave the organization as soon as they get an opportunity (Bratton & Gold, 2007). Training is a mutually beneficial concept to both the employees and employers because it gives imperative outcomes to both. To gain and maintain competitive advantage organizations require talented and productive employees and these employees need career development to enhance and cultivate their competencies (Prince, 2008).

A certain loyalty that is forged when employers give an employee an opportunity they feel is above their current level. Allowing employees to take a step up from their current position shows that you recognize the potential they hold, and

that you are willing to invest in their growth in the future. It is worth noting that, employees who grow and learn new things never get bored (Martin, 2009). When workers receive self-development training, the level of their job satisfaction is higher than those without such training (Cole, 2008).

Commitment of employees occurs through a process of placing side bet. When an employee has made a side bet, he/she has stacked something of value to him/her that will decrease the employee's intent to leave an organization. The side bet philosophy invokes reciprocity in that an investment that is made today and an expectation that a benefit will be achieved at some future point. This is also referred to as the social exchange theory. This exchange paradigm or relationship between an individual and the organization definitely increases the employee's commitment to the organization and vice versa (Schnake et al, 2007).

Employees view training as a 'gift' that employees makes them exert more effort, become more productive, and have a greater sense of debt to the organization. It makes employees feel like 'insiders' into the organization. The idea of 'gift' and 'insider' parallels closely to the concept of reciprocity. Training builds a sense of debt or reciprocity to the organization and will lead to an increase in commitment. The premise behind reciprocity is that an employee will help the organization, because the organization helped them. This holds that employees should not only help the company but should not hurt it because the company helped the employee (Johnson & Chrostensen, 2010; Barrett & O'Connell, 2011).

The main objective of conducting these training programs is to improve employees' skills, learn new ideas, become more confident and efficient in production, and communicate well with the team and groups. Training helps to minimize staff attrition because of the job performance security. Training correlate with a 70% increase in

employee retention rates. Training benefits (tangible or intangible) correlate with higher levels of consistency, competency, productivity, adaptability, independence, and loyalty in employees at any age (Ng, Lam, Lee, Ng, & Ong 2011; Deckop, Konrad, Perlmutter, & Freely, 2006; (Hunjraet *al.*, 2010; Kabir, 2011; Buckley, 2009; Jiang & Iles, 2011).

The relevancy of training also plays a role in establishing employee commitment. Employees enter into training programs with specific expectations and needs. The result of training programs that do not meet the expectations and needs of participants may bring about lower commitment, negative attitude change, and an increase in turnover. On the centrally, employees that viewed training as the “most relevant” to their current jobs were able to attain more positive commitment outcomes and had less of intent to quit. In order to use training as a mechanism to build commitment, organizations need to ensure that trainings are relevant, are communicated effectively, and are able to meet the expectations of the employees participating (Armstrong, 2012). The studies above provide an affirmation that training can be attached to employee commitment and that there is a positive co-relation between training and employee commitment.

Reward Management Practices

Reward Management is about how people are rewarded in accordance with their value in the organization. It is concerned with both financial and non-financial rewards. Reward management is concerned with designing, implementing and maintaining reward systems towards improved organization, team and individual performance (Armstrong, 2009). A reward policy should seek to serve the following purposes; attract sufficient and suitable employees, retain employees who are satisfactory and lastly to reward employees for effort, loyalty, experience and achievement (Cole, 2008).

Reward or compensation is a systematic approach to providing monetary value to employees in exchange for the work they do. Compensation may be used to achieve several purposes among them job satisfaction, recruit and retain qualified staff, increase and maintain the morale of staff, reward and encourage peak performance, achieve internal and external equity, reduce turnover and encourage company loyalty (Cole, 2008). High Performance work practices (including compensation) have a statistically significant relationship with employee outcomes and corporate financial performance (Huselid, 2009). Significantly, positive correlation has been reported between compensation practices and perceived employee commitment (Taseema & Soeters 2006).

Employment relationships are centrally influenced and guided by remuneration. How much one is paid in an employment relationship and in what form matters to a great extent (Byars & Rue, 2008; Torrington, Hall, Taylor and Atkinson, 2011). Compensation is a major determinant of both profitability and competitive advantage. Organizations design competitive reward packages which serve to attract, retain and motivate staff, while at the same time keeping a lid on the costs so as to ensure the organization's commercial and financial viability, (Torrington, Hall, Taylor & Atkinson, 2011; Byars & Rue, 2008). Proper reward management can help organizations motivate people and obtain their commitment and engagement, attract and retain high quality people, develop positive psychological contract with the organization, and develop a performance culture among others (Armstrong, 2008).

Total reward includes all types of rewards-indirect as well as direct, and intrinsic as well as extrinsic (Manus & Graham, 2006; Armstrong, 2008). Armstrong and Brown (2009) in their model adapted from work by Towers Perrin reward consultancy identified four categories of rewards each of which has equal potential significance as a

source of reward from the employee perspective. Reward categories include; individual pay such as base pay, contingent pay, bonuses, incentives, shares and profit sharing often referred to as compensation. Transactional rewards include pensions, holidays, healthcare, other perks and flexibility. Relational rewards include career development while communal rewards comprise leadership, organizational values, voice, and recognition, and achievement among others, (Torrington, Hall, Taylor and Atkinson, 2011).

Both monetary and non-monetary rewards and incentives can enhance employees' motivation and attachment to the organization (Bergiel, Nguyen, Clenney & Taylor 2009; Dockel 2003). Mello (2009) concurs when he asserts that compensation, a key strategic area for organizations impacts an employer's ability to attract applicants, retain employees, and ensure optimal levels of performance from the employees in meeting the organizations strategic objectives. Attractive remuneration packages are one of the very important factors of retention because it fulfills the financial and material desires (Shoab et al, 2009). Tetley (2006) concurs with this when he states that dissatisfaction with salaries is one of the key factors undermining the commitment of employees to their institutions and careers, and consequently their decision to stay or intent to leave.

Nawab & Bhatti (2011), also emphasize that compensation plays a significant role in attracting and retaining good employees especially those exceptional or unique skill. Research findings have proved that there is a significant and positive relationship between compensation and job commitment. Accordingly, research has it that the higher the compensation, the greater the losses employees would feel if they left the employment relationship (Holtom & O'Neill. 2004; Bergiel et al., 2009). From the company's point of view, some researchers argue that competitive compensation package is the only strong

commitment feature while it also builds strong commitment on the workers side.

Gupta (2008) posits that one of the objectives of paying at competitive levels is to increase employees loyalty and enable the organization to retain it personnel by minimizing the incidences of quitting. Mello (2009) asserts that in designing a reward or compensation strategy or system, an organization needs to be concerned with the perceived equity or fairness of the system for the employees. The design of an equitable compensation system should incorporate internal, external as well as individual equity. Internal equity involves the perceived fairness of pay differentials among different jobs within an organization while external equity of pay involves employee's perception of the fairness of their compensation relative to those outside the organization. Additionally, individual equity considers employees perception of pay differential among individuals who hold identical jobs in the same organization (Byars & Rue, 2008; Mello, 2009; Armstrong, 2009 & Sababu, 2010).

An organization can also adopt individual performance pay, contribution related pay, competency-based pay strategy, skill based pay, service based pay, market based pay system, allowances, bonuses, incentives, commissions among others(Armstrong, 2009; Byars & Rue, 2008; Kimberly, 2006; Jarboe,2004; Schwanhausser, 2004;sababu, 2010;Mello, 2009)

Employee Commitment

Commitment represents the strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in, an organization. It refers to attachment and loyalty. It's the individual's psychological attachment to the organization. Commitment represents something beyond mere passive loyalty to an organization but involves an active relationship with the organization, such that individuals are willing to give something of them in order to contribute to the organization's well-being. It can be characterized by at least three

factors namely; strong belief in, and acceptance of, the organization's goals and values; a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization; and a strong desire to maintain membership in the organization (Armstrong, 2012).

Commitment is a bond between an employee and the organization. The commitment attitude is determined by a number of personal and organizational variables although non-organizational factors, such as the availability of alternatives after making the initial choice to join an organization, will also affect subsequent commitment (Luthans, 2007). In the words of Vance, (2006), commitment is a sort of strong magnetic force which binds employees with their willingness to remain attached to its organization. As Boxall and Macky (2009), put it: commitment is a state of being in which an individual becomes bound by his (sic) actions to beliefs that sustain his activities and his own involvement.

Commitment is a psychological state that binds the individual to the organization. A committed employee is one who will remain with the organization. Without commitment, the implementation of new ideas and initiatives will be compromised (John, Meyer and Elyse, 2010). According to Boxall and Macky (2009), this binding force can be experienced in different ways and can be accompanied by different mindsets including: an affective attachment and involvement with the target, a felt obligation to the target, and an awareness of the costs associated with discontinuing involvement with the target. Scott (2007) posits that committed employees remain with the organization for longer periods of time than those who are less committed.

Jaw & Liu (2009) argue that commitment is not only a human relation concept but involves generating human energy and activating the human mind. Madigan, Norton and Testa (2009) posit that committed employees would work

diligently, conscientiously, provide value, promote the organization's services or products and seek continuous improvement. Commitment increases the employee's performance and reduces turnover. In organizations, committed employees have been found to be willing to build and maintain long-lasting relationships with their employer.

Mullins (2009) view this concept of employee commitment, as encapsulating in that it involves giving all of one-self while at work by portraying work behaviours such as using time constructively, attending to work detail, putting that extra effort, accepting change, cooperation with others, self-development, respecting trust, pride in abilities, seeking improvements and giving loyal support.

Newstrom and Davies (2008) on the other hand define employee commitment as the degree to which an employee identifies with the organization and wants to continue actively participating in it. Metaphorically, Newstrom and Davies (2008) compare commitment with a strong magnetic force attracting one metallic object to another. It often reflects the employees' belief in the mission and goals of the firm, willingness to expend effort in their accomplishment, and intentions to continue working there. In a nut shell, it is worth noting that employee commitment is very important to organizations because high levels of commitment lead to several favourable organizational outcomes.

Empirical Review

Training Practices

Studies have revealed that training is a key retention factor as well as a critical factor for personal and professional development for employees at any age. Employees who value knowledge and skills for their career growth may be more willing to work for an employer who constantly equips them with new knowledge through training. Gaining innovative skills and

getting benefit of many diverse systems of learning beneficial to employees and organizations is what studies demonstrated as 'Development' (McDonald & Hite, 2008) According to O'Connor *et al* (2008),

In recent researches, it is argued that employees have a less propensity to leave only if they feel that they are learning and developing. Social support and access to training can also play a significant role into the level of commitment that is established. Organizations that is able to create an environment where training is supported and valued by employees will be able to achieve greater commitment outcomes (Bartlett, 2011). Guest (2007) report empirical data showing that lack of training and promotional opportunities are the most frequently cited reasons for high-performers to leave the company.

Upon hire, training is typically one of the first HR practices that organizations offer to their new employees. It plays an integral role in the socialization process for many employees. Employees enter the employment relationship with many expectations and desires. When these expectations and desires are fulfilled, then the employee is able to better identify with the company. The result is an employee that becomes more committed. If a training program fails to meet these expectations, then there is usually a negative attitude change. These unmet expectations can lead to a decrease in commitment and a greater likelihood of turnover (Tannenbaum, Mathieu, Salas, & Cannon-Bowers, 2008). In contrast, when employee expectations and desires are achieved through training the worker is able to feel a greater connection.

A study on employee mobility by Green, Felsted, Mayhew and Pack (2008) found that commitment objectives such as training decreased the probability of employees being "more likely to search" from 19 to 10 percent, and increased being in the "less likely to search" category from 15 to 26 percent. Patrick Owens (2006) had a similar finding in his study of training and

organizational outcomes. Owens' study was able to find a correlation between commitment and turnover. The study found that employees that had a higher level of commitment also had a higher level of "turnover cognitions". A higher score in "turnover cognitions" indicated that the employee had a more favorable attitude and was less likely to consider turnover.

A K Paul in 2004 also made a research on the influence of HRM practices on employee commitment among software professionals in India which revealed that HRM practices such as career development and comprehensive training show a significant positive relationship with employee commitment. A study by Barrett and O'Connell (2011) clearly portrayed the idea of reciprocity in their empirical research of organizations in Ireland. The study indicated that the greater the sense of debt incurred with the training program, the more of a return on the investment that organizations will secure from the employee.

A study of several British companies found that when training sought to enhance and develop a "culture of identification" between the organization and the employee, the intention to search for another job decreased substantially (Green *et al.*, 2008). A study of companies in Japan also reveals the same sentiments. Internal on-the job training in Japan has a "commitment maximizing" logic as it promotes a greater level of socialization. This company specific socialization encourages employees to identify solely with the organization. The internal training is said to increase identification and boost attachment. The result is an employee that is more committed to the organization (Lincoln & Kalleberg, 2006).

Studies carried out by Kenyan scholars also posit the same results as those done internationally. Ondimu (2013) for instance undertook a study on the managers' perception of the influence of employee career development programs on employee commitment at OXFAM international

and found out that Oxfam International in Kenya does have and actually implements career development initiatives aimed at building the careers of its employees and that employees are committed to Oxfam and are willing to work and stay with Oxfam as an employer.

Kowido (2013) undertook a study on cross-sectional survey on perceived factors contributing to employee commitment in small medium furniture companies along Mombasa road, Nairobi County. The findings of the study were that training and development, promotion factors, working conditions, employee benefits and job security contribute to employee commitment. Organizations that is able to create an environment where training is supported and valued by employees will be able to achieve greater commitment outcomes (Bartlett, 2011). The above studies allude and provide affirmation that training is positively related to commitment and that it entails a greater general component than many believe.

Reward Management Practices

Frye (2004) examined the relationship between equity based compensation and firm performance and found positive relationship between the two. He argued that for the human capital intensive firms compensation plays a crucial role in attracting and retaining highly skilled employees". Ihsan and Naeem (2009) in a study on the relationship between commitment and payment of fringe benefits indicated that Pharmaceutical sales force rated pay and fringe benefits as the most important retention factor. In addition, it indicated that pay and fringe benefits is highly valued by the sales force of all demographic backgrounds. The possible explanation could be that pay and fringe benefits enable salespersons to fulfill their physiological as well as esteem needs.

A study by Kimunge, 2014 on the effects of total rewards on employee retention on Vision 2030 Secretariat found out that most employees still

prefer financial compensation to non-financial and that organizations need to put in place pay periodic increases. A study by Horwitz *et al* (2008) found out that compensation is still the most popular retention strategy reported by HR managers of Knowledge firms. A study by Ramlall on what would make an employee stay or leave the organization revealed that employees that were offered competitive salaries with attractive benefits stayed in employment. 59% of the employees stated that they would leave if they were not compensated at or above the market rates for their jobs.

A study by Levenson (2010) on the role of compensation in driving retention of Price Waterhouse Coopers (PWC) employees revealed that pay satisfaction was a key driver of retention and commitment as was perceived by equity of pay. This study acknowledged that employees intention to stay with the firm was pegged on pay and on how quickly they anticipated their compensation would grow. A survey by PWC (2014) identified that companies are offering high pay as a key retention/commitment strategy.

All these studies allude and underpin the importance of compensation as a factor that determines whether employees will continue working for an organization or not.

Commitment

Over the last ten years, the study of commitment has advanced in many different directions. A variety of disciplines have adopted the topic as a theme in their research and these have offered fresh and significant insights (Brown, McHardy, McNabb & Taylor, 2011). These recent advances include new approaches to the conceptualization of employee commitment.

Some researchers are of the opinion that the impact of the changing world of work is perhaps most evident in changes in the psychological contract between employees and employers. Employees are expected to give more in terms of time, effort, skills, and flexibility, whereas they receive less in terms of career opportunities,

lifetime employment, and job security (Aube, 2007).

A study by Stovel and Bontis (2002) on employee retention has shown that employees, on average switch employers every six years. This situation demands that management should identify the reason(s) for this frequent change of employment by employees. Once this reason(s) has been identified, management can then devise retention strategies that will help in keeping essential employees for a rather longer tenure. Maya (2008) studied the factors influencing organization commitment among permanent and temporary employees in organizations. Her study measured the impact of these factors among permanent and temporary employees in five organizations belonging to the manufacturing industry in Palakkad. During this study the researcher was able to find that the level of determinants was varying among the permanent and temporary employees.

A study by Obwayo (2008) on the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment in commercial banks in Nairobi found out that there was a positive correlation between employers' obligation and job satisfaction and a negative correlation between psychological contract and organization commitment. The violation of the psychological contract between an employee and an organization is likely to produce burnout, because it erodes the notion of reciprocity, which is crucial in maintaining well-being and commitment (Conway, Edel, Kathy & Monks, 2010).

Njiru (2008) conducted a study on the challenges facing state corporations in the headquarters and in the field. The study gave a pointer to employee commitment and retention policies at these firms. Organizations that invest in committed employees are unlikely to lose them to competitors. Committed employees strive to achieve organizational ideals in circumstances that are sometimes extremely extra-ordinary. This may

involve personal sacrifice among other factors. Since these attributes are both necessary and desirable, then firms will want to retain employees of this nature.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study used descriptive research design. The population of this study comprised employees from eight (8) public hospitals in Nairobi County namely; Kenyatta national hospital, Mbagathi hospital, Nairobi hospice, Armed forces memorial hospital, National spinal injury hospital, Mathari mental hospital, Mama Lucy Kibaki hospital and Pumwani maternity hospital. The study limited itself to the doctors, clinical officers, nurses and other technical staff such as pharmacists, laboratory technicians and radiologists who are directly concerned with provision of health care. The study used stratified random sampling procedure to select a sample that represents the entire population. The researcher then employed stratified random sampling method, a probability design to select respondents. The method involves dividing the population into homogenous sub groups (strata) and then taking a simple random sample in each sub-group (Kombo, 2006). There were different categories of staff in the healthcare facilities hence the choice of the method. For this study, the strata were for doctors, dentists, clinical officers, nurses, pharmacists, radiographers, physiotherapists, and orthopedics and laboratory technicians. The study adopted the lottery method, a simple random sampling technique to choose subjects from the strata of doctors, clinical officers, nurses and lab technologists and purposive sampling for the rest of the strata. The study determined the data collection approach largely by identifying the type of information needed (Cooper & Schindler, 2006). The questionnaires were self-administered and distributed to the respondents and reasonable time given before they could be collected. The completed questionnaires were sorted and cleaned of errors. The study also

undertook desk review of existing information about the study area to gather secondary data. Other secondary data concerning variables under study was collected through a study of reports, records, documents and documentary evidence from various departments in the hospitals.

A pilot study was undertaken on 14 respondents to test the reliability and validity of the questionnaire. Reliability of the questionnaires was assessed through use of Cronbach's Alpha. The research adopted Content Validity Index which refers to the extent to which a measuring instrument provides adequate coverage of the topic under study.

The study used the SPSS program version 22 to analyze the quantitative data collected. This program was appropriate for social sciences for it enables the researcher to recode variables, to deal with missing values, to sample, to weight and select cases and to compute new variables and effect permanent or temporary transformations.

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study targeted a sample size of 100 respondents from which 62 filled in and returned questionnaires were received making a response rate of 62%.

The respondents were requested to indicate their gender in order to establish if there was gender balance in the positions indicated. The findings indicated that majority (60%) were female respondents while (40%) were male respondents. The study found out that most of the respondents (40%) were aged between 26 to 35 years, 25% of the respondents 36 to 45 years, 15% were aged over 51 years, 12% were aged 46 to 50 years while 8% of the respondents were aged 18 to 25 years. From the study findings majority (50%) indicated that they had diploma certificates, followed by those who indicated that they had university degree at (34%) with few (14%) indicating that they had master's degree and (2%)

doctorate qualification respectively. Majority of the respondents had worked at the institution for less than 5 years representing 32%, 24% of the respondents stated that they had worked for the organization between 6-10 years, 27% of the respondents stated that they had worked for the organizations between 11-15 years and 16% of the respondents stated that they had worked for the organizations for over 15 years. The study established 12% of the respondents were laboratory clinicians, 7% orthopedics, 11% physiotherapists, 3% radiographers, 11% pharmacist as, 28% nurses, 18% were clinical officers, 4% dentists and 6% were doctors.

Training Practices

The study sought to establish the extent to which respondents agreed with the statements on training and development in relation to employee commitment. A scale of 1-5 was used. The scores "strongly disagree" and "disagree" were represented by mean score, equivalent to 1 to 2.5 on the continuous Likert scale ($1 \leq \text{disagree} \leq 2.5$). The scores of 'neutral' were represented by a score equivalent to 2.6 to 3.5 on the Likert scale ($2.6 \leq \text{neutral} \leq 3.5$). The score of "agree" and "strongly agree" were represented by a mean score equivalent to 3.6 to 5.0 on the Likert Scale ($3.6 \leq \text{strongly agree} \leq 5.0$). The results were presented in mean and standard deviation. The mean was generated from SPSS version 22 and is as illustrated in Table 4.3.

The study findings indicated that majority (52%) of the respondents disagreed that the organization perpetuated a Training and Development philosophy (mean of 2.032); the organization has an operational policy on training and development (mean of 2.100); the employees got on and off the job training that was well planned and managed (mean of 2.506); that training a powerful retention strategy in the organization (mean of 2.167); the employees were encouraged to undertake training for self-

development (mean of 2.060). Majority (58%) of the respondents strongly disagreed that organization offered relevant training courses that help in developing both professional and personal career paths for employees (mean of 3.343) and that the organization availed opportunities for training and development (mean of 2.160).

The study findings were in agreement with literature review by Green, Felsted, Mayhew and Pack (2008) who found out that commitment objectives such as training decreased the probability of employees being “more likely to search” from 19 to 10 percent, and increased being in the “less likely to search” category from 15 to 26 percent. Patrick Owens (2006) had a similar finding in his study of training and organizational outcomes. Owens’ study was able to find a correlation between commitment and turnover. The study found that employees that had a higher level of commitment also had a higher level of “turnover cognitions”. A higher score in “turnover cognitions” indicated that the employee had a more favorable attitude and was less likely to consider turnover.

Paul (2004) also made a research on the influence of HRM practices on employee commitment among software professionals in India which revealed that HRM practices such as career development and comprehensive training show a significant positive relationship with employee commitment. A study by Barrett and O’Connell (2011) clearly portrayed the idea of reciprocity in their empirical research of organizations in Ireland. The study indicated that the greater the sense of debt incurred with the training program, the more of a return on the investment that organizations will secure from the employee. The relevancy of training also plays a role in establishing employee commitment. Employees entered into training programs with specific expectations and needs. The result of training programs that did not meet the expectations and needs of participants may bring about lower commitment, negative attitude change, and an increase in turnover. On the contrary, employees

who viewed training as the “most relevant” to their current jobs were able to attain more positive commitment outcomes and had less of intent to quit. In order to use training as a mechanism to build commitment, organizations needed to ensure that trainings were relevant, were communicated effectively, and were able to meet the expectations of the employees participating (Armstrong, 2012).

Reward Management Practices

The study sought to establish the extent to which respondents agreed with the statements relating to reward management practices and employee commitment in public hospitals. A scale of 1-5 was used. The scores “Very Small Extent” and “Small Extent” were represented by mean score, equivalent to 1 to 2.5 on the continuous Likert scale ($1 \leq \text{Small Extent} \leq 2.5$). The scores of ‘Moderate’ were represented by a score equivalent to 2.6 to 3.5 on the Likert scale ($2.6 \leq \text{Moderate} \leq 3.5$). The score of “Great Extent” and “Very Great Extent” were represented by a mean score equivalent to 3.6 to 5.0 on the Likert Scale ($3.6 \leq \text{Great Extent} \leq 5.0$). The results were presented in mean and standard deviation. The mean was generated from SPSS version 22.

From the research findings, majority of the employees indicated that the organization has an operational policy on rewards as shown by a mean of 3.990 and that they would you leave their jobs if they are offered a better pay for a similar job elsewhere as shown by a mean of 4.011. However, majority of the respondents indicated to a small extent that the organization did periodic salary reviews and that the salary and benefits policy was fairly and equitably administered by a mean of 2.765; were contented with their current salary in relation to the work that you do by mean of 1.987; Feel that the salary paid to them is adequate and competitive enough as compared to salaries paid by other organizations for similar jobs by a mean of 2.876.

Majority of the respondents were moderate that the organization offer both financial and non-financial rewards by a mean of 3.654. This implied that reward management practices played a significant role in influencing employee commitment in public hospitals of Nairobi County.

The study findings were in line with the findings of Byars & Rue, 2008; Torrington, Hall, Taylor and Atkinson, (2011) that employment relationships were centrally influenced and guided by remuneration and that how much one was paid in an employment relationship and in what form matters to a great extend. The findings also supported the literature that compensation may be used to achieve several purposes among them job satisfaction, recruit and retain qualified staff with exceptional or unique skill, increased and maintained the morale of staff, reward can encourage peak performance, achieve internal and external equity, reduce turnover and encourage company loyalty (Cole, 2008; Huselid, 2009; Nawab & Bhatti, 2011). Significantly, positive correlation has been reported between compensation practices and perceived employee commitment (Taseema & Soeters 2006). Monetary and non-monetary rewards and incentives can enhance employees' motivation and attachment to the organization (Bergiel, Nguyen, Clenney & Taylor 2009; Dockel 2003).

Employee Commitment in Public Hospitals

From the study findings illustrated, majority (55%) of the respondents indicated that in the year 2012 more than 15 employees left the organization. In 2013, majority (60%) of the respondents stated that more than 15 employees left the organization. For the year 2014 majority (65%) of the respondents indicated that more than 15 employees left the organization while in 2015 majority (68%) of the respondents indicated that more than 15 employees left the organization.

Generally the findings indicated increasing trends in employee turnover from 2012 to 2015. Employees turn over implied or showed lack of

their commitment as they looked for better jobs in different organization since they were not satisfied in their current jobs in the public health hospitals.

Employees' complains was yet another sub construct that sought to measure commitment of employees in public hospitals of Nairobi County. The study findings were that majority (45%) of the respondents in the year 2012 recorded more than 15 complaints. 56% of respondents stated that more than 15 complaints were recorded in the year 2013. more than 15 complaints were recorded by 58% of the respondents in 2014 while majority (60%) of the respondents in the year 2015 indicated that more than 15 complaints were recorded. Looking into employees' complaints trends from 2012 to 2015, the study established that persistent employees' complains simply showed lack of commitment in the public health hospitals.

From the study findings on trends of employee absenteeism, majority (55%) of the respondents indicated that in the year 2012 more than 15 absenteeism cases were recorded. In addition, majority of the respondents (56%) stated that more than 15 absenteeism cases were recorded in the year 2013. For the year 2014 majority 60%) of the respondents indicated that more than 15 absenteeism cases were recorded. Majority (70%) of the respondents in the year 2015 recorded more than 15 absenteeism cases as illustrated on Table 4.9 below;

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Findings

Training Practices

The study findings depict a positive relationship between training and commitment. From the descriptive statistics, the study established that majority of the respondents stated that the organization perpetuate a Training and Development philosophy, the organization had an

operational policy on training and development, the employee got on and off the job training for all staff was well planned and managed. Training a powerful retention strategy in the organization and organization offered relevant training courses that helped in developing both professional and personal career paths for employees. The employees were encouraged to undertake training for self-development, and the organization offered training scholarships to employees as a means of promoting Professional development. The findings were in support of Byars & Rue (2008); Torrington, Hall, Taylor and Atkinson (2011); Armstrong (2012) that employment relationships were centrally influenced and guided by remuneration and that how much one was paid in an employment relationship and in what form matters to a great extend.

Reward Management Practices

The study findings did reveal that there was a very strong relationship between reward management and employee commitment in Public Hospitals of Nairobi County. Majority of the employees agreed that the organization had an operational policy on rewards, that periodic salary reviews and the salary and benefits policy was fairly and equitably administered. Majority of the respondents said they were to a very small extent contented with their current salary in relation to the work that you did, they felt that the salary paid to them was adequate and competitive enough as compared to salaries paid by other organizations, and that the organization offered both financial and non-financial rewards for similar jobs. Majority of the employees indicated moderately that they would leave their job if they were offered a better pay for a similar job elsewhere. This confirms just like in other studies by Byars & Rue (2008); Torrington, Hall, Taylor and Atkinson (2011); Nawab & Bhatti (2011) that reward management practices play a significant role on employee commitment in public hospitals of Nairobi County.

Commitment

The study findings indicated that there was a problem of commitment among employees of Public Hospitals of Nairobi County as postulated by an upward trend in the number of employees who left the organization from 2012 to 2015. There was also an increase in employees' complains and cases of absenteeism between 2012 and 2015.

Conclusions of the Study

The study established and confirmed that training practices and reward management indeed influenced employee commitment in public hospitals of Nairobi County. The study findings however reported that reward management practices had the most influence on commitment of employees of Public Hospitals of Nairobi County followed by work life balance practices, the training practices and job design practices in that order respectively.

The study also affirmed that poor employees' commitment in Public Hospitals of Nairobi County was as a result of not implementing the above practices well.

Recommendation of the Study

Training practices should be an integral part of the HRM if employee commitment was to be achieved in the health sector. Training prospects are one of the intrinsic motivators in the work place. Now that health care is a devolved function; the county government should establish a staff training and development kitty which should fairly be administered through granting of scholarships to its officers including the health care staff. Opportunities for continuous training including on/off the job training/ internal training should be provided and these together with practical assessment should be part of commitment strategies.

There is need for the organizations to offer competitive rewards in relation to the work done and to the rates in the market. Employees require

timely payment of salaries and remittance of any dues deducted to the relevant institutions to avoid penalties and enable staff get their benefits accordingly. The salaries and benefit should be increased and made competitive to minimize turnover to private sector. The government should also adopt performance related pay policy and competency based pay policy in order to motivate the hard working staff and also those who advance their qualification.

Recommendations for Further Studies

This study was done in public health care facilities in Nairobi County, Kenya over a period of two months (July 2015 and August, 2016). A longitudinal study should be carried out to monitor the relationship between demographic factors such as the age, marital status, family status, educational level and experience of employees and their commitment with the organization. Secondly the study only explored the influence of training practices and reward management practices on the employee commitment in public health hospitals of Nairobi County. For better insight into the role of these human resource management practices in the

health sector, similar studies should also be done in public health care institutions of other counties in order to generalize the findings to all public health care institutions in the Country.

Further research in this area should focus on the role of management styles, employee motivation, recruitment practices, employee participation and involvement, communication, work environment and performance management among others on retention of staff in public health care institutions in the County and in the country as a whole. The findings of the study were that most of the staff that left went to work for NGOs, private health care institutions and in other countries.

Similar studies should also be done in the private health care institutions, NGOs and in other countries to establish the retention strategies developed and adopted and how these strategies are embedded within the organizations' dynamic environment. The study looked at the role of human resource management practices on the commitment of staff in health care institutions, other studies should also be done to establish the relationship between retention and employee performance in organizations.

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