

## FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE RETENTION OF RURAL HEALTH WORKERS IN SIAYA COUNTY, KENYA

Florence Muindi<sup>1</sup> Caroline Awour Odandi<sup>2</sup>

**ABSTRACT** *In order to survive, organizations need a pool of excellent, talented and productive human capital to work in organizations. Retaining good employees has become the chief concerns of nearly every organization. The objective of the study was to investigate the factors that influence retention of rural health workers in hospitals in Kenya. The study used descriptive research design. The population comprised of all the medical staff working in hospitals in Siaya County. The study used stratified sampling to ensure all segment of population were represented. The study used primary data that was collected through self-administered questionnaires. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. The study found out that training and development, and career development opportunities are adequate and positively influence retention in the hospitals. Training and development was being used by the hospitals to retain its health workers through proper orientation, releasing employees to attend training and monitoring training and development plans for all employees. Career development in the hospitals gives the health workers opportunities grow in their careers and achieve career goals. Compensation does not help in retention of health workers as they were not adequately compensated. This de-motivates the health workers as the rewards offered to employees were not commensurate with market offers in larger towns and therefore they are constantly looking for a new job that will remunerate them according to their work. The management style adopted by the hospital leadership did not encourage retention of staff. This is especially in terms of fairness, appreciation because of lack involvement in decision making. The rural environment does not help in retention either. The nature of work has little room for flexibility in scheduling and that the workload is high due to low staffing levels. The findings imply that Governments should enhance the compensation of rural health workers if they want to retain them. Hospitals need also to reduce workload of health workers which was seen to be high and does not commensurate with reward. Additionally, the hospitals should invest in training the health facilities managers on leadership and management to enhance retention of staff.*

**Key words:** Employee retention, factors influencing retention, Health workers, siaya County

---

<sup>1</sup> Lecturer, Department of Business Administration, School of Business- University of Nairobi, Kenya  
[florence.muindi@uonbi.ac.ke](mailto:florence.muindi@uonbi.ac.ke)

<sup>2</sup> MBA student, Department of Business Administration, School of Business- University of Nairobi

## INTRODUCTION

Every organization is competing to survive in this ever increasingly challenging and volatile work environment. In order to survive, organizations need a pool of excellent, talented and productive human capital to work in organizations (Sass et al., 2011). Due to this, organizations need to provide their employees with suitable benefits work environment to motivate them to remain in the organizations. With that, the employees themselves will be highly motivated in their jobs and this will lead to high performance and retention. Indirectly, this will help the organizations in competing and surviving in a challenging market environment. Recruitment and development of employees is a large burden for companies in most industries. Due to this, there is a clear organizational imperative to attract and retain talented workers since employees constitute an important resource, especially for knowledge intensive organizations (Pandit, 2007). Hiring and retaining good employees have become the chief concerns of nearly every company in every industry. Organizations that understand what their employees want and need in the workplace and make strategic decisions to proactively fulfill those needs will become the dominant players in the irrespective markets (Robbins et al., 2009).

In today's highly competitive labor market, there is extensive evidence that organizations regardless of size, technological advances, market focus, are facing retention challenges. Torrington et al (2005) point out that throughout employees working life, they increase their levels of knowledge, experience and skills, performance. Thus, organizations need to identify individual employee's abilities; talents and education to enable them administer the relevant motivating factors and growth leading to increased rate of employee retention which is more beneficial to the organization. Gering and Conner (2002) state that retaining good workers is critical to any organization and therefore organizations train, offer competitive compensation plans and increase benefits to secure their employees' loyalty. Despite these efforts, many organizations

experience a shortage of employees and high turnover rates. Thus in this era of employee shortages and increased service delivery demands, it is important to explore factors which contribute to the retention of employees who contribute a wealth of knowledge and experience to their organizations.

Locke and Latham (2004) in goal setting theory posit that to ensure the employee retention rate is high, employee satisfaction and motivation at workplace is paramount. The hierarchy of needs outlined in Maslow's (1948) theory can also be practiced in most of the organizations with an aim of ensuring high rate of employee retention. In his ladder of human needs – basic needs security, social, self-esteem, and self-actualization. Self-actualization relates to the current challenges and opportunities of employers and organizations. Its purpose is to provide true meaning of human capital development within the organizations as well as real life situation. Maslow (1948), was able to view these issues for over 50 years; the fact that employees have their basic human needs, they also have a right to strive for self actualization just as the corporate directors and business owners to ensure their retention in any organization. For organizations to acquire a high rate of employee retention, then they should understand, encourage and enable their human capital with personal growth to ensure they acquire self actualization.

Retaining talented productive rural health employees and eliminating poor performing employees is essential to the long run success of health care. The loss of talented employees may be very detrimental to the Health Facilities future success. It becomes imperative for Health Facilities to put in place strategies to retain their workforce for performance. Retaining employees is a dilemma that the rural health institutions are facing; hence identifying the root cause of employee turnover is a good approach. In order to retain top employees, leaders, administrators and human resource departments ought to spend large amounts of time, effort and money and put in

place human resource strategies that will ensure that there is minimal employee turnover.

The health care sector in the country is faced by several challenges that include lack of medicine, inadequate staff and few health care facilities. In Kenya, the devolution of healthcare to the counties has compounded the problems facing the sector and this has resulted in dissatisfaction of staff in those areas. The devolved system has given the responsibility of health care management to the counties who are not experienced in health care. The county governments have also other competing priorities and may not give enough attention to health care staff. The compensation and overall management of health care staff is now in the hands of the county government unlike few years back when this was a responsibility of national government. Siaya County with a population of over 850,000 has 2 County Hospitals, 3 Sub county hospitals, 83 Dispensaries, 26 Health Centers and 10 private or other facilities. Some of these facilities are manned by 1 or 2 health care workers who multi task to run the facilities. The staffing levels are far below the threshold of World Health Organisation guidelines of staffing ratios. The intent of this research therefore is to ascertain the factors that influence retention of health workers in rural health facilities.

Studies that have been undertaken on factors influencing employee retention includes, Omboi (2011) undertook a study on factors influencing agents' retention in insurance industry in Nairobi showed that use of commissions as a mode of remunerating agents and working conditions influence retention of agents negatively whereas training and development, social demographic, product knowledge and resourcing strategies were found to be key factors influencing retention of agents. Akala (2012) undertook a study on the factors influencing employee retention among the non-teaching staff at the University of Nairobi, Kenya. The findings were that employee retention was influenced by training and development,

performance appraisal, welfare benefits, disciplinary procedure and of potential for career growth. Employees perceive institutional support for staff training and development and use of performance appraisal practices as a major contributor to employee retention. Bawazir (2013) undertook a study on the perceived effect of retention strategies on employees' performance at Imperial Bank Limited, Kenya. The findings of the study were that training and development, communication, compensation, good working environment and career advancements strategies rated were the strategies pursued by the bank in order to influence the performance of employees.

Thiriku (2013) researched on the perceived factors affecting employee retention in Safaricom Limited and found out that performance management practices were not transparent and unfair and contributed to retention. Career growth within Safaricom Limited was slow leads to lower rate of employee retention. Working conditions, compensation assisted in employee retention. On the basis of the above studies, there has been no study that has endeavored to investigate the factors that influence retention of rural health workers and this research will seek to fill this gap.

## **THEORETICAL FOUNDATION**

This researched is informed by motivation theories. These include Maslow's Hierarchy of needs, Herzberg Motivation – Hygiene and Stacy Adams Equity theory. One of the most influential theories of human motivation is Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of human needs. The hierarchy of human needs postulates that employees are motivated by five levels of needs: physiological, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualization. This ranking is guided by four major assumptions. According to Maslow (1943), the lowest level needs are physiological needs such as food, shelter, clothing, and relief from pain. These are followed by safety needs, that is, the feeling of security. Once these two levels are satisfied, people pursue and look for love, friendship, and affection to satisfy social needs.

Esteem needs then set in: people seek status, self-respect, recognition for accomplishments and a feeling of self-confidence and prestige. Finally, self-actualization needs relate to desire to develop one's full potential. To achieve this, people seek growth, achievement, and advancement. When employees are able to perform a certain task and they have the required skills, the managers should then motivate them to ensure that the performance keeps on improving from one level to another (Price, 2007). The management should therefore consider employee's views and opinions important for the for employee retention. Managers and organizations can use the theory of Maslow's hierarchy of needs as a framework to develop benefit packages that are meaningful to and resonate with their employees, thus increasing motivation, productivity and overall organizations revenues (Sandri and Bowen, 2011). A motivated workforce will be inspired to be more creative, productive and loyal hence increased employee performance. Employees in general are goal seeking and look for challenges and expect positive re-enforcement at all times. The Health workforce is no exception.

Hertzberg (1968) believes that every worker has two sets of needs (motivational and hygiene needs). He contends that employees in this respect will stay in their work place so long as their needs are satisfied and they are motivated. Failure to meet their needs would automatically call for departure hence employee turnover. People are satisfied at their work by factors related to content of that work. Those factors are called intrinsic motivators and contain achievement, recognition, interesting work, responsibility, advancement and growth. Factors that make people unhappy with their work are called dissatisfies or hygiene factors. Herzberg found the following dissatisfies: company policy, supervision, working conditions, interpersonal relationships, salary, status, security. What makes them different from motivators is the fact that they are not related to the content of the work but to the context of the job (Armstrong, 2007). Mitchell *et al.*, (2001) in job embeddedness theory noted that employees remain in the organization as long as the

inducements to stay there match or exceed their expectations. Job embeddedness influences employee's decision to whether remain in the company or leave. By being embedded in a job, the individual will be less likely to leave the organization thus having a positive impact on their performance. Organizations should ensure that their employees are job embedded as this will keep the individual from leaving the company hence resulting to employee retention. Human resource practitioners should try and ensure that employees are embedded to their jobs through the three dimensions of job embeddedness; links, fit and sacrifice.

Equity theory deals with the aspects of organizational justice, whether the individuals feel that they are treated fairly at work or not. The felt equity or inequity will impact their decisions about their level of effort and whether to leave or stay (Adams and Freedman 1976). Ramlall (2004) posits that an individual on employee – employer relationship evaluates not only the benefits and rewards he or she receives and whether the input given to the organization is in balance with the output but also the relevance of inputs given and outputs received by other employees inside or outside the employing organization. Individual inputs can be education, effort, experience, and competence in comparison to outputs such as salary, recognition and salary increases. If an individual notices an imbalance on the input - outcome ratio according to his or her own experiences and in comparison to the others, tension is accumulated. Adams and Freedman (1976) noted that individuals who feel under rewarded will have stronger, negative feelings than the ones who are over rewarded. If inequity is met in the employee-employer relationship, individuals are likely to change their inputs to correspond the outcomes i.e. lower the work effort to equal the outcomes, change the referent to which they are comparing the felt inequity or distort perceptions of self or others.

### **EMPLOYEE RETENTION**

Employee retention refers to policies and practices organizations use to prevent valuable employees

from leaving their jobs (Glen, 2006). Chaminade (2007) on the other hand defines retention as a voluntary move by an organization to create an environment which engages employees for long term. However, retention of high performing employees has become more challenging for managers as this category of employees frequently move from one job to another as they are being attracted by more than one organization at a time. Chew (2004) concurs that employees in an organization are said to have high job retention when all or most of the established posts are filled, they have low or no intentions to leave, have had a consistency in job status, have had a career development or when employees do keep their job for a considerable long period of time. It is thus essential to create a variety of options and alternatives for a total employee retention programme to address areas that matter to the employees as well as focusing on certain others that may be ignored, unconsidered or underutilized. Nowadays, institutions often find that they spend considerable time; effort and money to train an employee only to have them develop into a valuable commodity and leave the institution for greener pastures. In order to create a successful institution, employers should consider as many options as possible when it comes to retaining employees, while at the same time securing their trust and loyalty so they have less of a desire to leave in the future (Derose *et al.*, 2009).

Employees who work together for a long time will enjoy a healthy working atmosphere, good relations with managers, effective succession planning and deeply embedded organizational knowledge and learning. Failing to retain key employee's especially new graduates is costly for any business. It is important that the organization hires the right employee and strives to safeguard them to avoid losing them. It's the duty of organizations to focus on reducing employee turnover with an aim of decreasing recruitment cost, training costs, accidents of new employee are often higher, wastage is often higher with new employees, avoiding time wastage as a resource, and loss of talent and organizational knowledge.

Retention of employees is critical to preserving skills of such employees. By so doing, a business can avoid losing customers so that they maintain high quality products that are marked by high sales. Employees who work together for a long time will enjoy a healthy working atmosphere, good relations with managers, effective succession planning and deeply embedded organizational knowledge and learning. Failing to retain key employee's especially new graduates is costly for any business. Mendez and Stander (2011) further emphasizes that a company needs to invest in employee retention in order to be successful. Competition and the lack of availability of highly talented skilled employees make finding and retaining talented employees a major priority for organizations. Flegley (2006) posit that in cultivating a high-performance workforce, both assessment of employees to ensure the best match to the job and the company and assimilating them to ensure successful integration into the workplace, the culture of the organization and specific roles and responsibilities are equally important.

Schuler and Jackson (2006) state that recruiting people to meet the organization's human resource needs is only half the battle in the war for talent, rather the other half is keeping these people. Organizations that keep their employee turnover rates lower gain an advantage against their competitors by reducing overall labour costs and improving productivity. Retention of key employees is important in that it fosters client's satisfaction, increases revenue, promotes working relationships, improves employee-manager relationships and enables valuable succession planning. In such a system, Institutional knowledge and learning is successfully preserved and advanced. Failing to retain key employees' especially new graduates is costly for any business.

### **Factors Influencing Employee Retention**

To retain talented employees, employers must seek strategies aimed at reducing both involuntary

and voluntary separations. Involuntary separations result from poor performance or from unreliability due to work-family conflicts or other personal issues (Flegley, 2006). Companies need to understand what keeps their employees loyal and happy to be working with them over the years without falling to the temptation of switching to the competitor's payroll. Earle (2003) carried out a study on using the work environment to retain top talents and concluded that the many organizations do not have plans to retain their employees and that retention strategies are not properly embedded in the business process. Companies ought to determine the effectiveness of work environment, the job design, recognition and compensation in employee retention.

Increasingly, organizations recognize that an important element in HR management practices is the need to successfully motivate and retain high talent employees who are capable of surviving organizational restructuring, downsizing, consolidation, reorganizing and re-engineering initiatives. Gowry (2011) in a paper on matching individual career plans and organizational career management concluded that the performance appraisal process, training and development, financial and health benefits strongly influenced retention while selection and recruitment was the least significant factor influencing retention. A study by Coff and Laverty (2007) the loss of talented employees may be very detrimental to the company's future success. Outstanding employees may leave the organization because they become dissatisfied, underpaid or unmotivated. Trying to retain such employees may present other challenges such as demand higher wages, non compliance with organizational practices and not interact well with other co-workers and managers.

Employee retention is very important for the functioning and competitiveness of an organisation. Hill and Jones (2001) noted that employees today are different. As soon as they feel dissatisfied with the current employer or the job, they switch over to look for another job. It is the responsibility of employers to retain their best

employees. A good employer should know how to attract and retain its employees.

Investment on employee Training and career development is considered important factor in employee retention. Organization has the incentive to make investment in form of training and development only on those workers, from whom organization expect to return and give output on its investment. Beardwell and Claydon (2007) mentioned that all employees want to be valuable and remain competitive in the labor market at all times. This can only be achieved through employee training and development. Employees will always want to develop career-enhancing skills, which will always lead to employee motivation and retention. There is no doubt that a well trained and developed staff will be a valuable asset and therefore increasing the chances of efficiency in discharging his or her duties. Training and development are activities that are used to maintain and promote the competencies and talents of employees in relation to the developments inside and outside the organization.

Gomez *et al.*, (2005) posits that training provides specialized technique and skills to employee and also helps to rectify deficiencies in employee performance, while development provide the skills and abilities to employee which will need the organization in future. Development of skill consists of improving interpersonal communication, technological knowledge, problem solving and basic literacy. It can be expected that Hospital investments in both technical and non technical training will have positive impact on the extent to which the hospital actually succeeds in developing the skills/knowledge of its employees. Hospitals with superior training programs may also experience lower staff turnover than facilities that neglect staff development. In Health Facilities with good technical and non-technical training programs, employees are likely to realize that their market value develops more favorably than in other Institutions. Therefore, it is in their own interest to remain longer in the organization. Improving the

competence of the workforce is one way that career development can create a competitive advantage. Training and development opportunities can be perceived as a means by which employers address employees' needs.

Compensation systems that organizations offer to the employees play a key role in increasing employee retention; performance and productivity. Hence, most of the organizations are very much concerned about establishing and maintaining the optimal compensation systems. According to expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964), when pay is tied to some measure of individual or group performance, employees are more likely to work harder to increase the individual's, the group's or the organization's performance and an increase in performance in any of these areas will lead to an overall improvement in the organization's performance. Based on expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964), it can be expected that, if the organization provides rewards desired by the employee in question, this employee is more likely to perform in a way that will bring him/her the reward. Garibaldi (2006) opines that choosing inappropriate compensation mechanism is probably the core problem of human resource managers, and represents the heart of personnel economics. Further he stated that compensation packages must be consistent with profit maximization on the part of firms, but they should also provide workers with the incentives to do as well as possible.

Greller (2006) states that employees remain in an organisation because of work, reward, the organization status and co-workers. Rewards are substantially related to turnover as employees who are satisfied with organizational rewards will believe losing such a competitive reward to be costly and would not find such compensation elsewhere, and therefore they choose to stay. Rewards effectively form a calculative and psychological attachment with an organization. Rhoades et al., (2001) argue that organizational rewards reflect appreciation and recognition of individual performance. As pay increases with tenure, skills and work experience, so does

satisfaction with rewards and willingness of both parties to invest time and effort in the continuation of the employment relationship.

Growth and development are the integral part of every individual's career. 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 and Gold, 2003). Career development is vital for both the employees and employers. Career development is mutual beneficial process because it gives imperative outcomes to employer and employees. To gain and maintain competitive advantage, organizations required talented and productive employees and these employees need career development to enhance and cultivate their competencies. Price (2007) indicates career development programs are important in ensuring continuous updating and upgrading of employees knowledge, skills, attitudes and competence. It ensures that employees are well developed before they move up the next higher ladder in the hierarchy. Investing in the development of the careers of employees is central in the maintenance and development of skills, knowledge and abilities of both individual employees and the organization as a whole.

Career development aims at making employees utilize their potential, face expanded challenges, and have greater responsibilities and increased autonomy. The availability of career development opportunities illustrates the willingness and effort of the organization to cherish employees. Generally, organizations that provide relevant quantity and quality development schemes are signaling to employees their likeliness to develop a cadre of skillful employees to grow together with the business. Huselid (1995) suggested that progressive human resource practices that embrace career growth related practices could improve knowledge, skills and the abilities of an organization's current and potential employees, and enhance the retention of quality employees. Organizations are able to improve their employees' retention rate by adopting job

enrichment programs and enhancing their advancement opportunities. Besides promotion opportunities, the evaluation criteria used in the promotion and reward system also had significant effects on employees' turnover intentions (Quarles, 2004). Ineffective performance appraisal and planning systems contributed to employees' perceptions of unfairness and they were more likely to consider leaving the organization.

Career development is about the development of employees that is beneficial for both the individual and the organization. Effective career development programs enhance individual work performance by continuously learning and adapting, while the organization offers favorable developmental relationships with their employees. It is a complex process that shapes the career of any given individuals over their lifespan. Lips-Wiersma and Hall (2007) suggested career development as the outcome of interaction between individual career planning and institutional career management processes. By offering career development opportunities, employers help employees to develop their own personal competitive advantage and ensure their long-term employability. Many employees seek out employers who provide training and development activities that facilitate career advancement. When they receive such opportunities, employees are likely to commit to the organization.

The leadership and management style may affect employee retention. The relationship between supervisor and worker play pivotal role in employees' turnover intention. Leaders are the human face of the Institution. Greenhaus (2004) suggested that employees' views regarding organization are strongly concerned to their relationship with supervisor. If supervisor support, open communication and have good relationship with employees, the employee's turnover intentions are likely less and more engaged with organization. Leaders interact as a bond to perform application between expectations and stated goals. By harmonizing the rivaling demands supervisor support and manage the

inside and outside work environment. If the relationship among workers and supervisors are strong the workers may not seek to any other new employment opportunity. Managers can help promote an organization and make it attractive to employees, or they can be the cause of high turnover. Once the employees are on board, the manager plays a key role in determining whether good employees stay with the organization or leave for something better (Schuler and Jackson, 2006).

Heathfield (2008) postulates that employees leave managers and supervisors more often than they leave organizations or jobs. In other words, the most common cause of employee turnover is the lack of a positive relationship between the employee and the manager or supervisor. He further argues that it is not enough that management is liked by the employees. Starting with clear expectations of the employee, management has a critical role to play in retention. Anything that management does to make the employee feel unvalued will contribute to turnover. The employee's relationship with the supervisor has the greatest impact on whether to stay or go, because a supervisor has control over the core elements that create job satisfaction such as compensation, opportunity, recognition and environment. It is therefore important to hold management accountable for retaining a thriving workforce. This means that not only do organizations need a performance management system that recognizes and rewards management for meeting objectives that reduce employee turnover; managers need to understand what steps they can take to meet their responsibility in employee retention.

Work environment is considered one of the most important factors in employee's retention. According to Hytter (2008), work environment is generally discussed as industrial perspective; focus on aspect such as noise, toxic substances exposure and heavy lifts. However work environment characteristics in services sector are different from production sector, because services sector and involves more interaction with



customers. The interaction between employees and customers moves from physical to psychological dimension. Psychological work environment consists of work load, decision, support, stressors, latitude and decision. It is of much importance to know and recognize the emerging needs of employees and providing good work environment in order to keep the employees committed with organization.

Ramlall (2003) posit that people strive to work and to stay in those organizations that provides good and positive work environment, where employees feel that they are valued and making difference. Organizations should focus on managing the work environment to make better use of the available human assets. People want to work for an organization which appreciates work performance, has opportunities to grow, a friendly and cooperative environment and a feeling that the organization is second home to the employee (Ontario, 2004). Three types of environment that an employee needs in an organization are learning, supportive and positive work environment (Freyermuth, 2007). Learning environment includes continuous learning and improvement of the individual, certifications and provision for higher studies. For supportive environment an organization can provide support in the form of work-life balance. Work life balance includes flexible hours, telecommuting, dependent care, alternate work schedules, vacations and wellness. However, work environment includes efficient managers, supportive co-workers, challenging work, involvement in decision making, clarity of work and responsibilities, and recognition. The absence of such environment pushes employees to look for new opportunities. The environment should be such that employees feel connected to the organization in every respect.

## **METHODOLOGY**

A descriptive research design was used in this study. The design was chosen since it was more precise and accurate as it involves description of

events in a carefully planned way (Babbie, 2010). The study was used to identify the factors influencing employee retention of rural health workers in hospitals in the County. The design was deemed appropriate because the main interest was to explore the relationship between the variables and it also provided quantitative data from cross section of the chosen population. The population of the study consisted of all the Technical staff working in the hospitals in Siaya County, Kenya.. According to the Ministry of Health (2014) there are 12 Hospitals in the County with technical staff comprising of Doctors (12) Nurses (45), and Clinical officers (25), Pharmacists (36), Lab Technicians (31) and Nurse Aids (29).

Respondents were selected randomly based on their category. This approach was appropriate since it ensured a representative sample. In order to find the best possible sample, stratified sampling was the best method to use as it provided reach and in-depth information. The sample size was appropriate for the study as it ensured that all the categories in the hospitals were represented thus reducing sampling bias and achieving a high level of representation.

The study used primary data which was collected through the questionnaires. Kothari (2004) terms the questionnaire as the most appropriate instrument due to its ability to collect a large amount of information in a reasonably quick span of time and in an economical manner; it also guarantees confidentiality of the source of information through anonymity while ensuring standardization. The questionnaire was structured to have both open-ended and closed-ended questions. This limits responses in some cases and in others to provide the respondents with freedom to provide information in their own words. Filter questions was also asked to probe for more information. The questionnaire also had the Likert scale type of questions which was aimed at weighing factors according to their importance on influence on employee retention.

The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics (measures of central tendency and measures of variations). Once the data was collected, the questionnaires were edited for accuracy, consistency and completeness. However, before final analysis was performed, data was cleaned to eliminate discrepancies and thereafter, classified on the basis of similarity and then tabulated. The responses were then coded into numerical form to facilitate statistical analysis.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Influence of Training and development on retention**

The findings indicate that the respondents agreed to a great extent that employees are properly oriented and trained upon being employed in the hospitals (mean = 4.1884); employees receive adequate training and information to do their job well (mean = 3.9721); employees are regularly released from work to attend training and even sponsor them where possible (mean = 3.8861) and that training and development plans are developed and monitored for all employees (mean = 3.6867). From the results, it can be concluded that training and development was being used by the hospitals to retain its health workers by orienting and training them when they are employed, releasing employees to attend training and monitoring training and development plans for all employees. The Ministry of Health offers various opportunities for refresher trainings for its staff across the Board.

### **Influence of Compensation on Retention**

The respondents were requested to indicate the influence of compensation on health workers retention. Compensation systems that organizations offer to the employees play a key role in increasing employee motivation, performance and productivity and thus the need to understand its influence on health workers. The results show moderate relationship between pay equity assists in employee retention (mean = 2.6744). However results also show that health workers are not compensated for outstanding

performance or unique skills (mean = 2.319); health workers were not good benefits package (mean = 2.3064); and rewards offered to health workers does not commensurate their work (mean 2.2953); compensation does not caters for health workers needs (mean = 2.2581) and that rewards offered to employees are not comparable with what the market offers (mean = 2.1558). In conclusion, the results indicate that compensation does not help retention of health workers as they were not compensated well, offered good benefits package, commensurate according to their work, compensation caters for health workers needs and that rewards offered to employees were commensurate with market offers.

### **Influence of career Development Opportunities on retention**

The respondents were requested to indicate the influence of career development opportunities on health workers retention. 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. From the findings, the respondents were in agreement to a great extent that the health workers were given opportunities to learn new things so as to build their career goals (mean = 4.0558); career development exist in the hospitals (mean = 3.8302); managers assist in employee career development (mean = 3.7516) and that career development gives imperative outcomes to employer and employees (mean = 3.6837). The results implies that career development to the health workers influenced their retention as career development exist in the Hospitals and this gives the health workers opportunities to learn new things so as to build their career goals and at the same time the workers managers assist in career development which gives imperative outcomes to employer and employees.

### **Influence of Management Style on retention**

Leaders are the human face of the firm and therefore the style of the leadership have great effect on the performance of employees. The study therefore sought to establish the influence of

management style on health workers retention. The results indicate the distribution of responses on the influence of management style on retention of health workers in the hospitals. The results indicate that the respondents were moderate on managers ensuring that their actions were not only fair but also perceived as fair by the employees in order to retain them (mean = 2.7442) and that health workers hard work was appreciated which encourages them to stay longer (mean = 2.6572). The respondents disagreed that supervisors go out of their way to make employees' work- life easier (mean = 2.3744); employees' ideas are very frequently used constructively, motivating them to serve longer (mean = 2.2816) and that employees are allowed to take part in decisions that influence their jobs, increasing job satisfaction (mean = 2.2468). From the analysis, it can be concluded that supervisors go out of their way to make employees' work- life easier, employees' ideas were used only to an extent constructively in order to motivate them and the same applies to taking part in decisions that influence their jobs. The managers ensured that their actions were not only fair but also perceived as fair by the employees and that health workers hard work was appreciated.

#### **Influence of Work Environment on retention**

The respondents were requested to indicate the influence of work environment on health workers retention. The work environment gives employees a sense of being valued which makes them to strive to work and stay in the organizations. The results indicate the distribution of responses on the influence of work environment on health workers retention. The results indicate that the respondents were in agreement to a moderate extent management making possible effort to create collaborative work environment (mean = 3.0698) and that the management cared about the health and safety of employees (mean = 2.8605). The respondents on the other hand disagreed that there is flexibility in scheduling in the Hospital (mean = 2.3209) and that manageable workload is given to all employees (mean = 1.9651). The results implies that the management makes effort to create collaborative environment by caring

about the health and safety of health workers however there is unrealistic flexibility in scheduling and that the workload was not manageable as the staffing numbers are low.

In summary the findings indicate that training and development was being used by the hospitals in order to manage the health workers.. Although the training and development opportunities enabled the health workers to improve their skills and abilities thus enabling the rural hospitals serve the locals, the health workers were not compensated well and offered good benefits package that commensurate with their work. This de-motivates the health workers as the rewards offered to employees were not commensurate with market offers in larger towns and therefore they are constantly looking for a new job that will remunerate them according to their work.

Development of employees in an organization provides opportunities to employees to widen their knowledge and abilities for more efficient teamwork and achieve individual development. The study established that career development opportunities enabled the health workers to learn new things so as to build their career goals. This enabled the employees to be committed to their work as the training enabled them to handle difficult situations which they could not do initially. The managers were found also to have assisted the health workers in career development and this gives imperative outcomes to employer and employees and this enabled the health workers to feel appreciated by the management.

The leadership style being exhibited towards the health workers play a pivotal role in their turnover retention. The study established that the supervisors do not go out of their way to make employees' work- life easier; employees' ideas were not used constructively in order to motivate them. Employee involvement in decision making gives them a sense of being appreciated and valued in the organization, the study however established that the health workers were rarely allowed to take part in decisions that influence their jobs and this demoralizes them as they view

the management as being insensitive to their ideas. The work environment gives employees a sense of being valued which makes them to strive to work and stay in the organizations. The study found out that the management makes effort to create collaborative environment by caring about the health and safety of health workers however there is no flexibility in scheduling and that the workload was not manageable.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study established that training and development was being used by the hospitals to retain its health workers by orienting and training them when they are employed, releasing employees to attend training and monitoring training and development plans for all employees. This results are consistent with Gomez et al, (2005) findings that training provides specialized technique and skills to employee and also helps to rectify deficiencies in employee performance, while development provide the skills and abilities to employee which will need the organization in future. Mondy and Noe (2005) argue that training and development is the formal activities designed by an organization to help its employees acquire the necessary skills and knowledge to perform current or future jobs. Training and development activities like job training, coaching, mentoring and counseling are important activities for employees to get valuable support, knowledge, skills and abilities and has an effect on retention.

. Compensation systems that organizations offer to the employees play a key role in increasing employee motivation, performance and productivity. In the rural hospitals however, the health workers were not compensated well, offered good benefits package, commensurate according to their work. . This has a negative effect on retention as Greller (2006) states that employees remain in an organisation because of work, reward, the organization status or co-workers Rewards are substantially related to turnover as employees who are satisfied with organizational rewards will believe losing such a competitive reward to be costly and would not find such compensation elsewhere, and therefore

they choose to stay. Development opportunities enable the employees to increase their knowledge which result in increased output. The study established that career development exist in the hospitals and this gives the health workers opportunities to learn new things so as to build their career goals and at the same time the managers assist in career development which gives imperative outcomes to employer and employees. The results are in tandem with Price (2007) findings that career development programs are important in ensuring continuous updating and upgrading of employees knowledge, skills, attitudes and competence. Investing in the development of the careers of employees is central in the maintenance and development of skills, knowledge and abilities of both individual employees and the organization as a whole.

The relationship between supervisor and worker play pivotal role in employees' turnover intention. Heathfield (2008) postulates that employees leave managers and supervisors more often than they leave organizations or jobs. Starting with clear expectations of the employee, management has a critical role to play in retention. Anything that management does to make the employee feel unvalued will contribute to turnover. This study found that the supervisors do not go out of their way to make employees' work- life easier, employees' ideas were not used constructively in order to motivate them and that employees were not allowed to take part in decisions that influence their jobs. The working environment influences the perception of employees towards the work they are doing as they feel they are valued. The study established that the management makes effort to create collaborative environment by caring about the health and safety of health workers however there is no flexibility in scheduling and that the workload was not manageable. Ontario (2004) established that people want to work for an organization which appreciates work performance, has opportunities to grow, a friendly and cooperative environment and a feeling that the organization is second home to the employee.

## CONCLUSION

Health Workforce is considered as an important resource for the realization of any hospital's objectives and every effort should therefore be made to train and retain them at the same time. As an important resource, employees at all levels look for better pay, working conditions, training, performance management, employee relations and career prospects and this can help in stemming exit of staff. There is no need to emphasize that it is the people, people and people that make an organization achieve its objectives. The human resources for health in a facility, when looked after and provided with, will certainly pay back in terms of better results, better performance and enhanced productivity. The management should strive to make coherent human resource policies that fit closely with overall health institution strategy.

Kenya's developmental challenges demand that public healthcare system should stand up as one leading place to prepare the nation for the expected leap forward. But the evidence seems to suggest that the hospitals remain ill prepared. This is partly due to the low morale of the health workers, which in turn has increased the rate of labour turnover from the system. It is fair to say that health workers put in their best when the work environment is conducive; when there are good welfare packages like good houses, good management style, training and development opportunities, good human resource policy, career advancement and other relevant fringe benefits.

The findings of the study supported motivational and hygiene needs theory as it highlights that employees stay in their work place as long as their needs are satisfied and motivated and therefore by understanding the factors that influence retention of employees, the central Government and the County government was able to come up with measures that motivated the health workers in order to retain them. Employees are satisfied at their work by factors related to content of that work. Without having adequate human resource, the rural hospitals were unable to achieve established goals; hence managing human

resource was the key role of success of the health institutions.

The findings of the study was of importance to the health non-governmental organizations for they were able to know the factors that contribute to rural health care staff turnover and thus addresses the factors so that they can attract qualified workers who were able to work in the institutions. The study established that compensation contributes to turnover of rural health workers and it is recommended that the government should revise the remunerations of the rural health workers in the public sector. This will go a long way in motivating the workers to continue working longer and effectively for the improved health care system. To improve on the core competencies emanating from both public/private sector human resources, the public/private sectors need to institute performance management system and train key staff on administration of the system, review the job descriptions, personnel policies and reward system. All such steps are aimed at motivating the staff to get the best out of them in order to achieve the health facilities' objectives and stop the high level of exit from the Hospitals.

## IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The findings imply that rural health workers in Kenya have adequate training opportunities and career development opportunities. However there is still room for health sector to improve on these. The findings also showed that compensation of staff is low and work load is high. This implies that Governments should enhance the compensation of rural health workers if they want to retain them. Hospitals need also to reduce workload of health workers which was seen to be high and does not commensurate with reward. This is supported by equity theory. Additionally, the hospitals should invest in training the health facilities managers on leadership and management to enhance retention of staff.

## REFERENCES

- Adams, J. S., & Freedman, S, 1976. Equity theory revisited: Comments and an annotated bibliography. In L. Berkowitz & E. Walster (Eds.), *Equity theory: Toward a general theory of social interaction: 43-90*, New York: Academic Press.
- Akala G.(2012) *Factors influencing employee retention among the non-teaching staff at the University of Nairobi, Kenya*. Unpublished MBA thesis, University of Nairobi
- Armstrong, M. (2009), *A Handbook of Human Resource Management Practice* (11 Ed.) Cambridge, UK: Kogan Page Limited.
- Bawazir (2013) *Perceived effect of retention strategies on employees' performance at Imperial Bank Limited, Kenya*. Unpublished MBA project, University of Nairobi
- Beardwell J. & Claydon T. (2007), *Human Resource Management, A contemporary Approach* 5th edition, Prentice-Hall.
- Bratton, J., & Gold, J. (2003), *Human Resource Management, Theory and Practice*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Chaminade, B. (2007), Retention management of critical (core) employees: Challenging issue confronting organizations in the 21st Century. *International Business and Economic Research Journal*, 46-50.
- Coff, R.W. and Laverly, K.J. (2007). Real options meet organizational theory: coping with path dependencies, agency costs, and organizational form. *Advances in Strategic Management*, **24**, pp. 333–361.
- Chew, J.C.L. (2004), *The influence of Human Resource Management Practices on the Retention of Core employees of Australian Organizations: An empirical study*. Unpublished Masters Thesis, Murdoch University.
- Deros, B. M., Rahman, M. N., & Said, A. H, (2009), A survey of Benchmarking Understanding and Knowledge among Malaysian Automotive Components Manufacturing SMEs. *European Journal of Scientific Research*, (33)3, 385-397.
- Earle, H.A. (2003), Building a workplace of choice: using the work environment to attract and retain top talent. *Journal of Facilities Management*, 2(3), 244-257.
- Flegley, S. (2006), “Talent Management Survey Report”, SHRM Research, Alexandria, VA
- Garibaldi P. (2006), *Personnel Economics in Imperfect Labour markets*, Oxford University press, Oxford.
- Gering, J. and J. Conner, A strategic approach to employee retention. *Healthcare Financial Management*, 2002. 56(11): p. 40-4.
- Glen, C. (2006), Key skills retention and motivation: The war for talent still rages and retention is the high ground, *Industrial and Commercial Training*, 38, 37-45.
- Gomez-Meija, L.R., Balkin, D.B. & Cardy, R.L. (2005), *Managing Human Resources*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Gowry, R. (2011), Matching individual career plans and organizational career management. *Academy of Management Journal*, 30(4), 699-720.
- Greenhaus, J. H. (2004), Breaking all the rules for recruitment and retention. *Journal of career planning and employment*. 61(3), 6-8.
- Greller, R.M. (2006), Antecedents and Outcomes of Organizational Commitment, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 22(1), pp.46-56.
- Heathfield, S.M. 2008. Training and Development for Employee Motivation and Retention. [Online]. Available: <http://www.about.co>. [15 October 2010].
- Hill, C. and Jones, G., (2001), *Strategic Management Theory*, Boston, MA: Houghton-Mifflin.
- Huselid, M. A. (1995), The Impact of Human Resource Practices on Turnover, Productivity and Corporate Financial Performance, *Academy of Management Journal*, 38, 635 – 72.
- Hytter, A. (2008), “Retention strategies in France and Sweden”, *The Irish Journal of Management*, 28(1), 59-79.
- Lip-Wiersma M and Hall D. ( 2007) Organizational career development is *not* dead: A case study on managing the new career during organizational change. *Journal of Organizational Behaviour volume 28 Issue 6 pages 771` - 792*

- Locke E.A & Latham G.P, (2004), *A theory of goal Setting*. Prentice Hall cliffs.
- Maslow, H (1948), A Theory Of Human Motivation, *Psychological Review*, 50, 370-396.
- Maslow, A. H. (1943), A theory of Human Motivation. In V.H. Vroom, &E.L. Deci (Eds), *Management and Motivation*.MD: Penguin Books Ltd.
- Mendez, T. M., & Stander, K. (2011), Positive Organization. The role of leader Behaviour in work engagement and Retention. *South African Journal of Industrial Psychology*, (37)1.
- Mitchell, T.R., Holton, B.C., Lee, T.W., Sablinski, C.J., &Erez, M. (2001), Why people stay: using job embeddedness to predict voluntary turnover. *Academy of management Journal*, 44, 1102-1121.
- Mondy, R.W. & Noe, R.M. 2005. Human Resource Management Ninth Edition: International Edition. New Jersey : Pearson Prentice Hall.
- Ontario, R.N. (2004), Human resource management and firm performance. *Journal of Management*.21(71), 1-738.
- Pandit, Y. V. L. (2007), Talent Retention Strategies in a Competitive Environment, *NHRD Journal, Hyderabad*, 27-29.
- Price, A (2007), *Human Resource Management*, In a business context, 3rd edition, south western, centage learning.
- Quarles, R. (1994), An examination of promotion opportunities and evaluation criteria as mechanisms for affecting internal auditor, *Journal of Managerial Issues*, 6(2), 176- 194.
- Ramlall, S. (2003),Organizational Application Managing Employee Retention as a strategy for Increasing Organizational Competitiveness. *Applied H.R.M.*, 8(2), 63-72.
- Rhoades, L., Eisenberger, R., &Armeli, S. (2001), Affective commitment to the organization: The contribution of perceived organizational support. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 86, 825–836.
- Robbins, S.P., Judge, T.A., Odendaal, A., &Roodt G. (2009), *Organisational Behaviour: Global and South African Perceptions*. 2nd edition. South Africa: Pearson Education.
- Sandri, G. & Bowen, R. C. (2011) Meeting Employee Requirements Newsletter: Maslow’s Hierarchy of needs is still a reliable guide to motivating staff: *Industrial Engineer*.
- Sass, D. A., Seal, A. K., & Martin, N. K. (2011), Predicting teacher retention using stress and support variables”. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 49(2), 200-215.
- Schuler, S.R., Jackson, S.C. 2006.*Managing Human Resources*.Cengage Learning.
- Thiriku (2013) *Perceived factors affecting employee retention in Safaricom Limited. Unpublished MBA thesis*. University of Nairobi
- Torrington, D.S. Hall, L. & Taylor, S. (2005),*Human Resource Management: 6<sup>th</sup>edition*, Prentice Hall, Financial times. London, UK.
- Omboi (2011) *Factors influencing agents’ retention in insurance industry in Nairobi . Unpublished MBA thesis*. University of Nairobi
- Vroom, V. H. (1964),*Work and motivation*. New York: John Wiley.