

WORKER AND JOB RELATED FACTORS AND JOB TURNOVER IN PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Employee retention in training institutions has become challenging due to a multiplicity of factors. Most studies have been concentrating on job related causes of labor turnover in government owned training institutions. This study investigated the effect of both job related factors and worker related factors. A sample of 395 employees in public universities was used and the study employed descriptive survey research design and questionnaires were used to collect data. Data was analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. The results indicated that career progression and the study established that the desire to grow individual careers did lead to workers leaving their jobs in private universities and the effect was significant (Coef= -0.583, P-value=0.002). The study also established that the effect of lack job security was significant (Coef= -0.998, P-value=0.003). The effect of both remuneration and work life balance was also significant (Coef= -0.401, P-value=0.001) and (Coef= -0.398, P-value=0.001) respectively. Worker related factors- age, gender and education had significance effect (Coef= -0.321, P-value=0.003), (Coef= -0.386, P-value=0.001) and (Coef= -0.477, P-value=0.003) respectively. In order to reduce the rate of job turn-over, this study recommends that management of private universities should put in place good work policies touching on career progression, life balancing measures and remuneration. Details in this policy should also guarantee some job security to their workers. The findings are important to the planners in universities in Kenya, if they were ready to have satisfied workers who can remain there for long durations thus ensuring continuity of the institutions.

Keywords: Career progression, Work-life balance, Job security, Remuneration

1. INTRODUCTION

Human resource departments in many organizations in the world are faced with the daunting task of not only identifying, recruiting, but are also bestowed with the more challenging task of ensuring that employee retention is achieved. However, it is human resource departments in

academic institutions world over that face the biggest challenge (Hugo, 2005). The situation is more critical in Africa's institutions of higher learning as they are constantly faced with the biggest challenge of retaining their employees due to a multiplicity of factors (Bushe, 2012). For example, in one of the local polytechnics in Ghana, staff had left the institution to join newly established universities in the country (Tamale Polytechnic, 2011). In just three years (2008-2011) forty three (43) staff members had left the polytechnic to join other better paying jobs in upcoming universities (Tamale Polytechnic, 2011). In a study in South Africa by Wyngaard and Kapp (2004) on the impact of institutions mergers, it was reported that a major negative effect of the mergers was labour turn-over among TVET institutions. The key reason by many former employees of these institutions being the fear of been victimized by new management (Wyngaard and Kapp 2004). According to Getahun, (2005) labour turnover in 10 agricultural training and vocational colleges in Ethiopia is reported to be at 82%. Main causes of this high rate include; job security, poor pay and intimidation by seniors (Getahun, 2005).

The privatization of Universities and liberation of the Kenya economy in the 1990s changed the competitive environment in which the service industries operated. This contributed to the universities repositioning themselves for the challenge and development of both strategic and performance objectives. This has been made even more difficult by lack of qualified employees and turnover in search of better opportunities in public universities and in other private sector jobs. While Nkatha (2017) analyzed the causes of labor movement from TVET institutions of higher learning to the upcoming universities, currently those employed in the private universities are learning to join public universities. It is known why workers makes this move, and the purpose of this paper is to analyse the factors influencing the movement of labour from private universities to public universities.

The main objective is to investigate the Influence of Job related factors on labour Turnover in private univesities

Specific objectives

1. To examine the effect of remuneration on labor turn over in public universities
2. To determine the influence of career progression on labor turnover in private universities
3. To establish the influence of job security on labor turnover in private universities
4. To examine the influence of remuneration on labor turn over in private universities
5. To explore the influence of working conditions on Labor turnover in in private universities

The study will be of great importance to the management of private universities by providing them with information which they will use in order to put come up with measures to curtail the loss of critical manpower either to competitors or to other institutions.

The study will also be important to the Ministry of Education since it will use the information when accrediting universities in order to ensure that staff needs are taken care of.

Theory of factors influencing job turnover will have been tested, and researchers will also make use of the findings of this study in identifying gaps for further research.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical literature

This study was grounded on various theories:

Adam's Equity Theory

This theory was developed by Adams John Stacey, and it contended that staff are prone to resigning from their work places if they are not able to maintain equity between the inputs that they bring to a job and the outcomes that they receive from it against the perceived inputs and outcomes of others. In light with this theory, the researcher observed that turnover happens in private universities, the employees may interpret a situation to be unfair treatment (Champoux, 2011). According to Mhere, (2010) staff may therefore quit their jobs if they feel their inputs which may include; skill, effort, hard work, adaptability and tolerance are not equal to the outputs they receive such as; their pay and fringe benefits, competent supervision and friendly co-workers.

Vroom's Expectancy Theory

This theory also contended that staff in Government Technical Institutions are prone to look for alternative jobs when they perceive the amount of work they do and the commitment they grant to their jobs is not equal to their expected returns (Dessler,2012). As a preventive measure to high turnover rates among staff, the theory points out that the institutions' management should ensure that their employees always expect future pay raises and potential job promotions (Bellamy, *et al.*, 2003).

Herzberg Two Factor Theory

The researcher employs this theory to show the relationship between staff turnover and factors in the institutions that can either cause job satisfaction or dissatisfaction. The theory points out that staff in institutions have two sets of needs which can either be met by motivational or hygiene factors though these relationships may not necessary be linear (Bratton, 2012). Institutions should put in place measures that ensure that staff is always expectant of extrinsic motivators such as; job security, salary, and fringe benefits, interpersonal relations and working conditions. When absent these motivators lead to job dissatisfaction a situation that can result to staff looking for

alternative jobs where they perceive extrinsic motivators will be present (DeCenzo and Robbins, 2010).

Management by Objectives Theory

This theory was developed by Drucker (1954) to highlight the need to include junior employees in organizational planning. Zahraee, (2003) observed that objective management involved the inclusion of employees as a motivation strategy in the implementation process of organizational goals and objectives. Rather than dictating instructions, and goals from above, managers following an MBO philosophy included employees in strategic decision-making whenever possible, especially in decisions that directly affect employees' daily routines. Failing to put this approach into action can cause you to lose some of your brightest and most self-motivated employees (Zahraee 2003).

Maslow Hierarchy of needs Theory

This theory was developed to explain the varying needs of employees. In order to ensure retention, employers must recognize the varying needs of their employees (McNamara, 2005). According to Champoux (2011) these needs are classified under; physiological needs, safety needs, love, affection and belonging and progressing up to needs for self esteem and self actualization. Failing to meet employee's needs at any level in the hierarchy can create a lack of fulfillment in employees' professional lives, causing them to eventually try to fulfill these needs on their own, possibly by finding a new employer who provides better opportunities

Empirical literature

Career Progression and Labour Turnover in Government Training Institutions

Staff turnover in Government training institutions in the U.S observed that the main cause of intention to leave was related to the desire to either grow individual careers and or change careers Ruhland (2001). This is supported by Long and Swartzel, (2007) who in a separate study reported that high labor turnover among staff in a government technical agricultural extension institution resulted from the desire by workers to grow their careers. A similar situation is reported in Mexico. For instance, Peterson, *et al.*, (2003) in their study observed that staff in Government owned Technical Training Institutions resign from their jobs due to their desire to grow their careers. Most join private universities where opportunities for career growth are available and restricted (Peterson *et al.*, 2003). Tompkins and Beech (2002) reported a different situation in Canada where they found low rates of intention to leave work by staff in Government Technical Training Institutions resulting from the desire to grow individual careers. The existence of a clearly understood benefits plan reduced the labor turnover rates of staff in Government Technical Training Institutions in Canada (Tompkins and Beech, 2002). These

findings were however disputed by Doern (2010) who reported high rates of labor turnover among staff in Government owned Technical Training Institutions resulting from the desire to grow their individual careers. So far no study that has investigated the staff turn over from private universities.

2.2 Job Security and Labour Turnover in Training Institutions

Guest (2004) posits that job security is a major job related factor that contributes to the intention to leave employment among most training institutions staff. Intentions to leave among technical staff are in most cases as a result of certain unfair organizational practices such as; incompetent supervision, unfair promotions, increased responsibility that does not relate to remuneration and unfavorable work conditions (Byrne, 2005). Kalleberg and Mastekaasa (2001) contend that labor turnover in training institutions in Norway is low compared to other European countries like U.K because of minimal corruption which ensures that promotions are done on merit. This is also the case in Netherlands where labor turnover rates among technical staff is low because of fair promotion procedures and existing remuneration structures (Hagedoorn, 2003).

Fair job promotion procedures and well laid out remuneration strategies are among factors that have a positive effect on the labor turnover rates in Belgium's TVET sector (Anseel and Lievens 2007). However, an aging workforce is the greatest contributor to labor turnover in European countries (Anseel and Lievens 2007). This is echoed by Egger and Sengenberger (2003) who contend that the aging workforce in Denmark presents not only job opportunities but also job security for foreign migrating technical staff. According to Harris et al., (2006) a different situation is experienced in Australia where technical staff in private Technical Training Institutions feel more job secure than those in Government Technical Training Institutions. In Germany, some employees of Government Technical Training Institutions reported job insecurity as their greatest reason for their decision to leave (Staufenbiel and König 2010).

In a study in Pakistan Kaur, (2010) reports that as a result of corruption, nepotism and political interference most employees in Technical Training Institutions in the district of Punjab are not job secure and even though most exhibited an intention to leave, most had to stay because they had no alternative because of lack of better job opportunities that would be more secure. Promotions are bribed and clan influenced leaving those that are not influential hopeless (Kaur, 2010). Unlike Pakistan, Zain (2008) observes that in Malaysia due to low levels of corruption staff rarely resign from their jobs due to issues relating to job security but they are prone to leave due to more attractive salaries in neighboring Singapore and issues relating to work-life balance. Bu et al., (2011) report that job insecurity among young employees in Technical Training Institutions in China, is a major cause of high rates of labor turnover. Kaur and Mohindru (2013) reported a similar situation in Bangladesh where young employees in Technical Training

Institutions, exhibited feelings of jobs insecurity emanating from high rates of corruption and nepotism that result to unfair promotions.

Job security is a major contributor to labor turnover among technical staff in Africa (Grollmann, 2009). This is attributed to unfair promotions and recruitments that are not merit-based in these government funded institutions For instance in Nigeria, Akpan, et al., (2007) observed that as a result of corruption and ethnicity, issues of unfair promotions, close supervision by incompetent authority and poor work conditions lead to high numbers of job resignations among technical staff. This is because these staff interpret these as intentions to frustrate them from their competitors

Mhere (2010) observes that issues of corruption and ethnicity as factors that adversely affect job promotion decisions in government institutions in Zimbabwe, leading to the migration of technical staff that feel unfairly treated to countries such as South Africa, Namibia and Botswana. Samuel and Chipunza (2009) South Africa experiences one of the highest turnover rates of technical staff in Africa resulting from issues relating to job security.

2.3 Remuneration and Labour Turnover in Training Institutions

Ingersoll and Smith, (2003) observes that low salaries are a major factor resulting to high turnover rates among novice staff in technical community institutions in the USA. New staff are always on the move from their jobs in technical community institutions due to attractive salaries in private universities (Dee, 2004). This is supported in a separate study which reports that challenges associated with poor pay are linked to the increasing staff turnover in most technical community institutions in the USA (Dove, 2004). This is in contrast to Malaysia where turnover rates are low in relation to staff salaries (Morris et al., 2004). However, turnover rates in Malaysia are higher than those of Singapore with staff salaries in Singapore being higher than those of European countries such as the U.K (Maxwell and Murphy 2003). Staff salaries in Singapore are higher compared to most developed countries, a situation that discourages job change on basis of pay (Seng, 2008).

A study in Zimbabwe by Mhere (2010) established that underfunding by the government contributes to high numbers of resignations among Training Institutions staff. As a result, majority of technical staff migrate to neighboring Namibia and Botswana to look for greener pastures (Mhere, 2010).

2.4 Work life balance and Labour Turnover Training Institutions

Berg, *et al.*, (2003) observe that it is important that human resource managers develop programs within their organizations that facilitate the creation of a balance between paid work and the daily needs of life; family time, community activities, voluntary work, personal development and

leisure and recreation. Houston, *et al.*, (2006) contend that in the U.S many technical staff exhibit intention to leave their places of work due to work overload resulting from lack of clarity about roles which leads to role ambiguity. According to Tytherleigh, *et al.*, (2005) the situation is worse in The U.K which experiences the highest rates of technical staff turnover among these countries. Technical staff in the U.K is the most overworked; a situation that has resulted to high turnover rates in government owned technical institutions (Kinman and Jonnes, 2008). In the Netherlands, technical staff turnover is reported to be highest among female staff more than male (van Emmerik, 2002).

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A sample of 395 respondents was used, and the research was descriptive survey in research design. The data was collected using questionnaires administered to thirty five HR departments in private universities. This design involved description of events in a conscientiously as outlined by (Babbie, 2002). To portray the characteristics of the sample fully, age, gender and level of education of the sample was included. Regression analysis was used to show the effect of both worker and job-related factors on the job turn-over in private universities.

4. RESULTS

Descriptive statistics

Majority of the respondents, 39.9% held bachelor's degrees, 26% of the respondents held college diploma certificates, 18.7% held trade certificates whereas 15.4% the respondents held post graduate degree certificates.

The study established that most of the respondents as shown by 40.3% were aged between 30 to 39 years, 30.6% of the respondents were aged between 40 to 49 years, 16.2% of the respondents were aged above 50 years whereas 12.9% of the respondents were aged between 20 to 29 years. This implies that well distributed in terms of their age. Majority of the respondents as shown by 43.8% were females whereas 56.2% of the respondents were males.

The study also established that majority of the respondents as shown by 46.8% had served in the organization for a period of 10 to 19 years, 24.6% of the respondents had served in the organization for a more than 20 years, 19.7% of the respondents had served in the organization for a period of 5 to 9 years while 8.9% of the respondents indicated to have served in the organization for a period not exceeding 5 years. This implied that majority of the respondents had served for a considerable period of time which implied that they were in a position to give credible information relating to this study.

Regression analysis Results

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | .719 ^a | .720 | .763 | .31190 |

Coefficients

| Model | Unstandardized | | Standardized | t | Sig. |
|--------------------|----------------|------------|--------------|-------|------|
| | Coefficients | | Coefficients | | |
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| 1 (Constant) | 1.443 | 1.133 | | 1.274 | .001 |
| Career progression | -.583 | .108 | .203 | 4.574 | .002 |
| Age | -.321 | .069 | .237 | 4.040 | .003 |
| Gender (male) | -.386 | .105 | .216 | 3.876 | .001 |
| Education | .477 | .123 | .253 | 3.455 | .000 |
| Job security | -.998 | .067 | .227 | 4.840 | .003 |
| Remuneration | .401 | .115 | .219 | 3.476 | .001 |
| Work life balance | -.398 | .113 | .251 | 3.327 | .00 |

From the above regression equation it was revealed that presence of career progression policy would lead to a decrease in employee turnover rate in private universities by a factor of (-0.581), which supports findings by Nkatha et al (2017). presence of job security strategies would lead to a decrease in employee turnover rate by factors of (- 0.998) presence of employee remuneration policy would lead to decrease an in employee turnover rate in by a factor of (-0.401) and vice versa and finally a good work life balance policy would lead to a decrease ease in employee turnover rate in by a factor of (-0.398) and vice versa. If education level is increased by one year, the rate of job turnover falls by (0.321) and rate of job turnover falls by (.386) if the worker is male. The results further indicated that older workers are not likely to live their job and all the variables were significant as their significant value was less than (p<0.05).

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

The research revealed that career development/progression policy had a positive effect on the employee loyalty, therefore the study concludes that career progression helped to reduce labor

turnover rate in private universities. The study noted that job security was a major job related factor that contributed to the intention to leave employment in private universities. Presence of a good remuneration had a positive and significance effect on the turnover, and that one of the most common reasons given by employees leaving their current employment was the availability of higher paying jobs elsewhere. Thus, the study concluded that better remuneration could help to curb labor turnover rate in private institutions in Kenya. Old workers and those who have attained higher levels of education are not likely to leave private universities. This signifies that may be they are well paid and this makes them satisfied with the institutions unlike the young workers with low levels of education.

5.2 Recommendations

In order to encourage employee retention, the management of private universities should come up with good remuneration policies. This should include not only base and variable pay scales, but long-term incentive compensation. The management of private universities should take seriously staff development programmes to facilitate the training of their young employs in order to enhance retention rates. However, labour is a mobile factor of production, implying that they will always move due to so many other factors, and training may be costly to the organizations. Since turnover for skilled and knowledgeable employees particularly those that cannot be replaced for years is capable of damaging credibility of the organization and in the mean time lead to decline in the productivity and job performance of the organization, hence, managers should make a maximum effort in the handling of employee and motivate dissatisfied employees. It is the duty of managers of private universities to identify the dissatisfied employees in order to address their issues before they leave their jobs. The higher the participation of employee in the decision making process, the faster its implementation and hence employee satisfaction. Hence managers should encourage employees to participate the decision making process of the organization core programs.

5.3 Recommendation for Further Research

Since the factors included in the model used in this study accounted for about 72% of the factors influencing job turn over in private universities, the study recommends that other variables accounting for about 28% on employee turnover in private universities be investigated

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