

Moderating Role Of Employees' Attitude On Effects Of Human Resource Management Practices On Employees' Commitment In Public Health Sector In Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Over the years, there has been public complains concerning poor service provision at public hospitals in Kenya. This has been partly blamed on the lack of enough workers and working equipment and other resources. However, there is evidence from the existing literature that people working in those institutions could be the problem, the reason why patients prefer private hospitals and clinics. Given this phenomenon, there is need for researchers to investigate what has contributed to poor commitment to work by employees in public health sector in Kenya. This study therefore seeks to fill the existing knowledge gap by investigating effects of human resource management practices and mediating role of attitude on employee commitment to duty in the public health sector in Kenya. Specifically, the study focused on the following human resource management practices: recruitment and selection practices, training and development practices, employee compensation practices; and the moderating effect of employees' attitude on the relationship between fore mentioned human resource management practices and employee commitment in the public health sector in Kenya. Knowledge generated will help the government to formulate and undertake more efficient human resource management strategies. The study adopted descriptive, survey research and co-relational designs, and target population was 849 employees in public hospitals in Kirinyaga County from which a sample of 271 respondents was drawn. Data was collected using interview method and analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics was used to describe the characteristics of the respondents. Inferential statistics involved use of regression analysis to determine the relationship between independent variable and the dependent variable. Selection and recruitment of employee significantly influenced employee commitment in public health sector in Kenya. Moreover, training and development significantly affected employee commitment in public health sector in Kenya. Employee compensation has a positive and significant influence on employee commitment. Further, it was established that employee attitude had a significant moderating role on the effect of human resources management on employee commitment. The study recommends a clear criterion that is elaborate to be used in selecting candidates, and after hiring, health organizations are supposed to avail training programs based on the needs and abilities of employees. Health sector employees are supposed to be trained to be whole rounded individuals who can deal with challenges easily. It is also important that health organizations strengthen the compensation schemes for their employees in order to motivate employee. The study further recommends counseling of health employees that undergo difficulties while undertaking their duties.

Key Words: Recruitment and selection, Training and Development, Commitment, Compensation Attitude

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I. Background of the Study

Human resource are considered to be one of the most valuable resources in today's companies. It's becoming increasingly vital to manage people since other drivers of competitive success are becoming less potent. Human resource Management must be seen from a new perspective, which considers the fact that the basis for competitive advantage has shifted to new ventures such employee commitment for sustainability. Organizations human resources are more critical to its long-term viability than its product and process technologies, protected markets and economies of scale (Pfeffer, 2017). A key goal Human Resource (HR) Department is charged with responsibility of finding and retaining motivated, committed and highly competent employees that an organization needs (Adeniji, Salau, Awe & Oludayo, 2018). In Health sector, several policy documents articulate human resource issues. Two of these are: Kenya Health Policy (KHP) 2012-2030 and the Kenya Health Sector Strategic Plan (KHSSP) July 2012-June 2017. This is a testimony that health sector workforce in Kenya is identified as one of the key assets which the Kenya government invests in and strive to maintain. Under health workforce policy direction, Kenya Government intends to provide for the adequate and equitable distribution of human resources. This will be achieved through several strategies; one of them being an enhancement of the management of the

health workforce by setting up or strengthening mechanisms for the attraction, retention and motivation of the workforce. Despite launching of such strategies, there has been issues of health workers commitment to duty. This heightened the need of this study, which focuses on public health employee commitment.

Statement of the Problem

Employees in organizations are considered by organizations as significant assets necessary for accomplishment of the objectives of the organization (Michael, 2017). The competitiveness of an organization especially in the present-day competitive business environment will be anchored on the quality of employees they employ and how well they retain them in their organizations (Mwenda, 2020). The problem of high rate of attrition has seen most organizations lose their best employees to competition. The idea is to attract the right candidates into the organization, and then motivate them so that they remain committed to the organization (Michael, 2017).

There have been many cases of absenteeism, which is a signal of lack of commitment by employees in the public health sector in Kenya, which is an indication that employees are dissatisfied with their workplace (Mwenda, 2020). Research shows that up to three quarters (75%) of doctors and nurses leave the government employment three years after joining the public health sector to join either the private health sector or travel abroad to seek a better employment (Mwenda, 2012). Most healthcare outlets loose staff to other hospitals and institutions in the country and abroad because they don't offer them competitive terms of employment and an attractive working environment. Employees join organizations and opt out too soon to look for better employers (Michael, 2017). In Kirinyaga county, 25% of employees opt out either to other local hospitals or travel abroad. This trend is dangerous, and it shows those workers are not committed to the hospitals they are working for before they opt out. They just buying time waiting for opportunities to open up elsewhere (Mwenda, 2020).

A number of studies have been carried out on human resource management practices and employee commitment. A study by Nawab (2011) on the influence of human resource management practices on commitment to public health organizations revealed that there was a positive considerable correlation between human resource practices and employee's commitment to an organization. A study conducted by Maina et al (2018) on total human resource management practices and employee commitment in the telecommunication industry revealed that there was correlation between HRM and employee commitment. Milgo, Namusonge and Kanal (2014) did a study on reward and compensation as a determinant of commitment of an employee. The study was based on KTDA factories in Kenya.

In the recent past, it is evident that narrowing down of studies has not been carried out extensively to focus human resource practices and employee commitment in the public health sector in Kenya. Previous studies focus majored on other key areas and industries, rather than establishing whether human resource management practices strategies affected employee commitment in the public health sector in Kenya. There is also high level of absenteeism in public health facilities in Kenya, which is as high as 25% daily, an indication of lack of commitment to duty Milgo, Namusonge and Kanal (2014). This lack of commitment of public health employees in Kenya needs to be investigated, whereby human resources management factors influencing it are investigated and this was the focus of this study.

Objective of the Study

The objective of this study to determine the effects of HRM practices on the employee's commitment, and the mediating role of attitude on the relationship between HR practices and employee commitment in the public health sector in Kenya. Specifically, this study seek to:

- i) Determine the effect of recruitment and selection HRM practices on employee commitment in the public health sector in Kenya.
- ii) Examine the effect of training and development HRM practices on employee commitment in the public health sector in Kenya.
- iii) Determine the effect of employee compensation HRM practices on employee commitment in the public health sector in Kenya
- iv) Establish the moderating effect of employee's attitude on the relationship between human resource management practices (recruitment and selection, training and development, and employee compensation) and employee commitment in the public health sector in Kenya.

II. Theoretical and Empirical Review of the Study

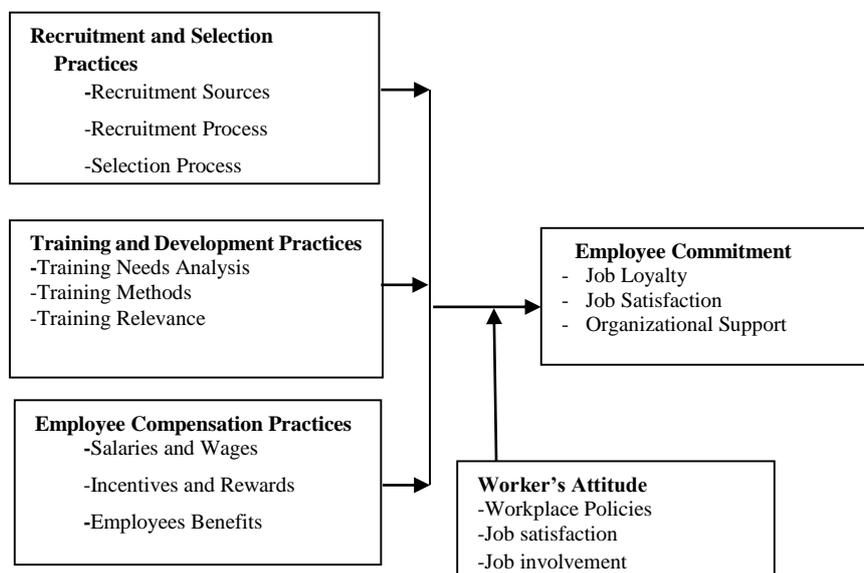
One of the theories relevant to this study is **Human Capital Theory**, which states that there are differences between ways of working of individuals with different levels of education and training reflects differences in the returns necessary to cover the costs of acquiring those skills (Smith, 1776). Chultz (1961) recognized the human capital as one of the important factors of national economic growth in the modern economy (Dae-bong, 2009). Economist Elliot (1991) developed the theory of human capital. After the manifestation of that concept as a theory, SThe theory argues that a person's formal education determines his or her earning power. Human capital theory holds that it is the key competences, skills, knowledge and abilities of the workforce that contributes to organizations competitive advantage. It focuses attention on resourcing, human resource development, and reward strategies and practices, which are key variables in this study.

The second theory on which the study was based on is **Resource Based View (RBV)** was articulated by Wernerfelt (1984). According to this theory, a wider range of resources in a firm including its human resources produces its unique character and creates a competitive edge. Organization's resources can be classified into two: tangible and intangible. Tangible resources include financial, technological, physical and human resources, while intangible resources include brand-name, reputation and know-how resources. According to Barney (2000), resources lead to the sustainable competitive edge when they are accessible, rare, imitable and non-substitutable. The resource-based view theory suggests that the firm can secure a sustained competitive advantage through facilitating the development of competencies that are firm specific, produce complex social relationship; are embedded in a firm's history and culture, and generate tacit organizational knowledge (Odhong et al., 2013). Human Resources include aspects such as training, experience, judgments, intelligence, relationships and insights of individual managers and workers in an organization. This theory is relevant in this current study as it recognizes human capital as the most valuable, non-substitutable and imperfectly imitable resource that a firm can successfully utilize to achieve organizational productivity and competitiveness, hence making the theory very relevant in the study. It explains more the human resource planning practices and the recruitment and selection practices as they both emphasize that investment in people adds to their value to the firm.

The third theory relevant to this study is the Social Exchange Theory, which was developed by Sociologist George Homans who defined social exchange as the exchange of activity, tangible or intangible, and more or less rewarding or costly, between at least two persons. This involves relationship that brings about obligations to give back. It is a social exchange where employers bestow benefits to employees that creates a feeling of mutual obligations between the employer and employee. It is rewarding kind actions and punishing unkind actions. It is cognizant that people evaluate the kind actions by consequences and the underlying intentions (Ritzer, 2014). In relation to human resource strategies strategies and employee commitment, the social exchange theory views employment relationship as consisting of social or economic exchanges (Aryee, Budhwar & Chen, 2002). Economic exchange relationships involve the exchange of economic benefits in return for employees' efforts and are often dependent on formal contracts which are legally enforceable.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework explores the relationship between the variables in the study and consists of independent variables and dependent variable. It explains how the independent variable interacts with the dependent variable.



Empirical Review

Various studies have been done on each category of variables, for instance, training and development, for instance, Egessa, (2015), indicated that training and development impacts positively on the employee commitment. Johnstone, and Wilkinson, (2013) suggest that training and development also serves as a social function which allows workers to form bonds and friendships and distract them from their normal work environment. For the organization, training and development of employees is vital for both the operations and advancement of the institution while from the employees stand point, training undertakings are important for knowledge and skill development as well as the advancement of their career (Nkosi, 2015). Bulut and Culha (2010) explained that as employees develop a feeling that training would be beneficial, they tend to incline towards achieving their set goals so as to get another opportunity to be trained by the company which also sustains their stay in the firm longer. The employees believe that at the end of a training program, they are likely to be better than they were before the program. Okumu, et al., (2018) observed that skill acquisition in the modern market is key in helping organizations position themselves as competitive in the global market, increase development as well as performance. According to Dhar (2015), learning opportunities to employees encourage them to be more committed than when given financial incentives, job satisfaction, or even monetary compensation. According to Okumu, et al., (2018) good training programs entice employees into believing that the organization has their interest at heart. They feel like insiders hence a significant degree of commitment. Therefore, if organizations needed their employees to be committed, all they have to do is increase the accessibility of training programs (Okumu, et al., 2018).

According to Peretomode and Peretomode (2001), the efficiency and effectiveness of any workplace whether private or public largely depends on the calibre of the workforce. Recruitment and selection are essential tools in assisting the human resource managers and the entire company to hire the right people and retain them (O'Brien, 2012). When assessing the ethical considerations in Human Resource Management in Kenya. Githui (2011) observed that most organizations in Kenya are currently facing conspicuous challenges of attracting and retaining qualified personnel. Internal promotion may offer routes to accommodate emergent skill or knowledge gaps while reinforcing between the employer and valued employee (Farnham, 2015). The recruitment process represents the opening exchanges in the development of the relationship between employee and employer (Surbhi, 2015). As with all strategic decisions, the particular priorities and objectives which dominate any recruitment strategy are a matter of choice rather than predetermination, but the starting point is knowing what is required for the recruitment process (Farnham, 2015, (Breugh, 2008). Recruiters constrain themselves to think about the numbers and the quality of applicants they receive or the number of the acceptances-proximal outcome of the recruitment process (Higgins & Judge, 2004). While these criteria are important, they are restrictive. If there is no clear view of what is required, it is difficult to develop a sound strategy to achieve the undefined goals (Rynes & Cable, 2003). Organizations talent management, recruitment and retention policy can significantly reduce attrition rates (O'Brien, 2012). It is crucial and challenging to retain talented employees under high unemployment levels. It is essential to retain them because of high training and recruitment costs so organize rounds to retain employees (North, 2011).

According to Purce (2014), a pay system is also required to retain the most valuable employees by distributing the rewards in such a way that these employees are left with a feeling of satisfaction. An effective performance-based pay system should sustain high levels of performance from the organization's human resources, leading to employee satisfaction and commitment. Thus, performance-based pay systems can help to reduce wage disparities for diverse employees, since there is a direct relationship between pay and employee commitment (Elgana & Imran, 2013). According to Gary & Alan (2017), one of the key elements in employee attitude is job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is where employees enjoy their work, feel confident in their abilities to succeed in the tasks assigned, and appreciate the role they are assigned. It helps the employee to have a positive attitude in the workplace. The effect of job satisfaction on employees' performance can be analyzed in regard to: satisfaction and productivity, where research has indicated a positive relationship between employees' job satisfaction and productivity; satisfaction and absenteeism, where researchers have found a negative relationship and job satisfaction; and finally, satisfaction and turnover, where a negative relation between the two has been detected (Gary & Alan, 2017),

III. Research Methodology

The study adopted exploratory research design in order to clearly state the problem and identify the gaps. Survey research used when collecting data regarding public employees opinions while descriptive and correlational designs were applicable when analyzing the data, and target population was 849 employees in public hospitals in Kirinyaga County from which a sample of 271 respondents was drawn. Data was collected using interview method and analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics was used to describe the characteristics of the respondents. Inferential statistics involved use of regression analysis to determine the relationship between independent variable and the dependent variable.

IV. Results

Moderation Effect of Employee Attitude on human resources practices and employee commitment

Model Summary						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
1	.473 ^a	.223	.212	.72991		
2	.785 ^b	.616	.608	.51448		
<i>a. Predictors: (Constant), Employee Compensation, Training and Development, Recruitment and selection</i>						
<i>b. Predictors: (Constant), Employee Compensation, Training and Development, Recruitment, Workers attitude</i>						
ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	24.259	3	8.086	14.304	.000 ^b
	Residual	111.373	197	.565		
	Total	135.632	200			
2	Regression	82.170	4	20.543	75.313	.000 ^c
	Residual	53.462	196	.273		
	Total	135.632	200			
<i>a. Dependent Variable: employee commitment</i>						
<i>b. Predictors: (Constant), Employee Compensation, Training and Development, Recruitment</i>						
<i>c. Predictors: (Constant), Employee Compensation, Training and Development, Recruitment and Selection, Workers attitude</i>						
Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error			
1	(Constant)	-.804	.790		-1.017	.310
	Recruitment and Selection	.284	.111	.170	2.552	.011
	Training and Development	.405	.119	.223	3.390	.001
	Employee Compensation	.421	.120	.236	3.513	.001
2	(Constant)	-1.776	.553		-3.214	.002
	Recruitment and Selection	.179	.077	.108	2.316	.022
	Training and Development	.053	.086	.029	.617	.038
	Employee Compensation	.199	.085	.111	2.350	.020
	Workers attitude	.936	.064	.706	14.571	.000
<i>a. Dependent Variable: employee commitment</i>						

From the results, it is observed that selection and recruitment of employee significantly influences employee commitment in public health sector in Kenya. Moreover, training and development significantly affected employee commitment in public health sector in Kenya. Employee compensation has a positive and significant influence on employee commitment. Further, it was established that employee attitude had a significant moderating role on the effect of human resources management on employee commitment. Adjusted R squared after moderation by employee attitude was 0.608 which was higher than the non-moderated effect which had its adjusted R square being 0.212.

V. Conclusions and Recommendations

The researcher concluded that training and development, employee compensation and recruitment and selection significantly influenced employee commitment in public health sector in Kenya. Further, it was concluded that employee attitude moderates the relationship between human resources management practices and employee commitment in public health sector in Kenya. It is therefore recommended that the three HRM practices are emphasized in organizations in order to improve employees' commitment, while employees' attitude should be monitored. To improve on the latter, counselling would go a long way in making employees attitude more favorable so that benefits of the other HRM practices used by the public health organizations would be realized.

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