



**INFLUENCE OF PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL PRACTICES ON EMPLOYEE RETENTION IN THE HEALTH SECTOR IN  
THE COUNTY GOVERNMENT OF KAKAMEGA**

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**ABSTRACT**

*This study sought to establish the influence of performance appraisal practices on employee retention in the health sector in the County Government of Kakamega with a view of proposing a mechanism to manage employee retention. The study was anchored on Equity Theory. The study employed a descriptive survey design. The target population was 1,153 health workers in Kakamega County drawn from 11 health facilities and a sample size of 297 respondents was used. The Data was collected by the questionnaires which was the main instrument to collect primary data. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive inferential statistics (correlations and regression analyses). Performance appraisal practices and employee retention results revealed a positive and significant relationship in the health sector in the County Government of Kakamega. It was concluded that performance appraisal practices accounted for 36.9 percent of employee retention in the health sector in the County Government of Kakamega. The study recommended that organizations should effectively implement performance appraisal practices in various departments. The study findings may help to streamline the retention of staff in the health sector in Kakamega County by providing strategies of employee retention. The study provided a basis for future scholars, researchers and other stakeholders to use the results as a reference while also enabling researchers to carry out more investigation on other strategies that would increase employee retention. The County health sector HRM department would also gain from the findings of the study which would further enhance their skills in handling challenges of employee retention and understand factors which may have led to lack of employee retention.*

**Key Words:** *Performance appraisal, Employee Retention, County Government of Kakamega*

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## INTRODUCTION

Performance appraisal has been described as “the process of identifying, observing, measuring, and developing employee performance in organization” (Schraeder, 2012). When employees are managed with progressive performance appraisal they become more committed to their organization and at least in part, this commitment leads them to exhibit proper role behaviour and thus lower workers’ compensation costs, higher quality and higher productivity, (Schuller, 2012). In his study, (Erdogan, 2012) found out that performance appraisal as a drive for employees’ engagement, results into higher and faster revenue growth which is achieved through satisfied employees displaying positive behavior towards customers which usually brings higher profits. Organizations with engaged employees have more satisfied customers because employees are also

improving other factors, such as customer satisfaction, responsiveness, product quality, innovation, (Erdogan, 2012).

Since 1998, United Kingdom and United States of America have significantly relied on African countries like Kenya, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Ghana, Zambia and Nigeria among others for the much needed qualified nurses as found out by Nyagudi and Juma (2018) (see Table 1). Forty three percent of nurses registering in the UK in 2003, were foreign trained, compared to ten percent a decade earlier (Buchan, 2004). This has worsened the already pathetic national and district health systems, making it extremely hard for countries in Africa to achieve the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on health care provision (UNDP, 2014; UN, 2000).

**Table 1: External Migrants between 2008 and 2010**

Country	Percentage External Migrants
Italy	0.2
Ghana	0.2
Uganda	1.0
South Africa	0.7
Dubai	0.5
Tanzania	0.7
Botswana	12.2
England	25.7
Ireland	1.0
New Zealand	1.5
Namibia	2.6
Canada	6.5
Australia	5.9
USA	41.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

*Annual Report of the Nursing Council of Kenya (2011),*

In this period, developed nations have become increasingly reliant on international expatriates to fill health workforce positions across the skill spectrum, from home health aides and assistants to nurses, physicians, and medical specialists, (Nyagudi & Juma 2018). Amid rising life expectancy and expanding

elderly populations, this reliance is expected to intensify in future decades and in several health occupations, (WHO, 2013). Migration, together with other factors in many countries such as insufficient health systems, low wages, and poor working conditions, are key factors determining low health

worker density in countries with the lowest health indicators, (Kinyili, 2015). WHO estimates that the basic health-care system of 57 countries is affected by shortage of human resources and about one third of these countries are the emerging market economies (Hoffman, 2013; ILO, 2010).

In his study Samuel (2009), established that it is not only the private sector, governments are also facing difficulty in retaining skilled employees. The governments have admitted that retaining key employees is the most difficult aspect in public sector as a result most of the time when these employees move, they migrate to competing organizations with the knowledge and trade secrets acquired from their former employers, thus, creating a critical situation in the organization (Kottolli, 2010).

It is in this regard that the researcher analyzed the human resource management practices influencing employee retention at the County Government of Kakamega. This would allow future researches to determine the importance of focusing on certain areas where very limited documentation has been done. The research presented baseline information for the healthcare sector in the County Government of Kakamega to illustrate the influence of human resource management practices on employee retention.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Kakamega County health sector over the last few years has been bedevilled with continuous staff challenges ranging from staff unrest, due to this high turnover, the few remaining staff are demotivated and as a result, poor service delivery. The marked degree of both internal and external migration has intensively affected service delivery and it's attributed to various factors, with the key being remuneration and career prospects (KIPPRA, 2013; WHO, 2013). It was been established that medical doctors, clinical officers, enrolled nurses and laboratory technologists exit the service due to

unfavourable working conditions resulting to uneven work distribution among the remaining medics (NCK, 2011). There were many health professionals in the key cadre leaving public service in the recent past (Health Sector HR Strategy, 2014-2018).

World Health Organization identified Kenya as having a critical shortage of healthcare workforce (WHO, 2013), set at minimum threshold of 23 midwives, nurses and doctors, per population of 10000 as a necessity for delivery of maternal health and vital child services. Kenya loses an average 20 medical doctors each month through either emigration or brain waste (Mullei *et al.*, 2010). Brain drain rate of doctors at present stands at 51percent and nurses at 8percent with main destination being the UK.

A number of studies have been carried investigating the influence of performance appraisal on employee retention in different organizations. However, a few studies have focused in the health sector, specifically in counties, In a study done by (Gachunga, 2010) undertook a research on influence of human resources management practices on retention of core employees in the media sector in Kenya, a case of Standard Group Ltd. The study showed that Standard Group values leadership qualities that are aligned with the retention strategies and recruitment process. In her study (Wangui, 2009) looked at employee retention in local Kenyan banks with a focus on Equity bank. Her study established that Equity Bank uses both financial and non-financial incentives to encourage its employees to stay. Romano *et al.*, (2014) undertook a study on Effects of Employee Engagement on Employee Retention in Micro-Finance Institutions. The results indicated a declining trend of employee engagement that perhaps explains the current increasing rates of staff turnover. Although the medical officers earn the highest salary, this remains very low compared with international salaries, showing the poor competitiveness of Kenya on the international health labour market (WHO, 2013). Therefore, there were

significant gaps between performance appraisal and employee retention scholarship in the health sector in Kenya, which the current study sought to address.

### Research Objectives

The objective of this study was to establish the influence of performance appraisal practices on employee retention in the health sector in the County Government of Kakamega.

### Research Hypotheses

H<sub>0</sub>1: There is no significant influence of performance appraisal practices and employee retention in the health sector in the County Government of Kakamega.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

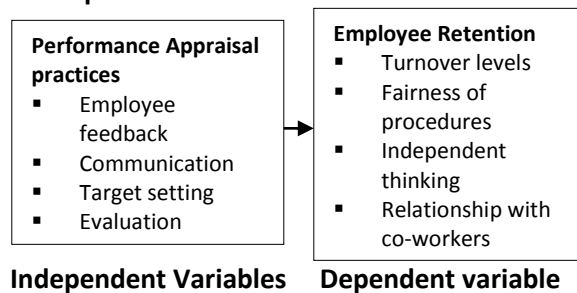
### Theoretical Review

#### Equity Theory

Adams (1963) Equity theory, recognizes that individuals are concerned not only with the absolute amount of rewards they receive for their efforts, but also with the relationship of this amount to what others receive (Mumbua, 2017). Based on one's input, such as effort, experience, education, and competence, one can compare outcomes such as salary levels, increments, recognition and other factors. When people perceive an imbalance in their reward ratio relative to their colleagues, tension is created (Nazir *et al.*, 2013). This tension provides the basis for motivation, as people strive for what they perceive as equity and fairness. First, the theory holds that people develop beliefs about what constitutes a fair and equitable return for their contributions to their jobs. Second, the theory assumes that people tend to compare what they perceive to be the exchange they have with their employers. This concept of equity is most often interpreted in work organizations as a positive association between an employee's effort or performance on the job and the reward or treatment she or he receives, (Adzei & Atinga, 2012).

This theory was applicable to the study since the theory holds that people develop beliefs about what constitutes a fair and equitable return for their contributions to their jobs. Second, the theory assumes that people tend to compare what they perceive to be the exchange they have with their employers (Nazir *et al.*, 2013). If ratios are equal, a state of equity is said to exist; they feel their situation is fair and that justice prevails and hence employees will be satisfied to continue working with their current employer. Inequity exists if the ratio is unequal and employees tend to view themselves as under rewarded and will therefore attempt to correct the inequity through exiting the organization to look for better prospects, (Bidisha, 2013).

### Conceptual Framework



**Independent Variables**      **Dependent variable**

**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**

**Source: Author (2019)**

### Review of Variables

#### Performance Appraisal Practices and Employee Retention

In his study Brown *et al* (2010) conducted a study about the effects of performance appraisal on employee retention a comparison of Finnish and Vietnamese enterprises. The purpose of this study was to identify the features of a performance appraisal system and explore how each feature affects the employees' loyalty. The study applied qualitative method, data was collected through 15 semi-structured interviews (7 cases were conducted in Finland and 8 cases were interviewed in Vietnam). Participants chosen for the research were professional employees working in Vietnamese or Finnish original enterprises (Koshy, 2014). The study

found four features of a performance appraisal system, which goals were setting, supervisor – subordinate relationship, rewards linked with performance result and fairness issue argued based on literature review.

In a study conducted by Gulzar, Advani, and Jalees (2017) on impact of performance appraisal on employee retention, in banking sector of Pakistan. The study found that banking industry despite being one of the most flourishing industries in the world is considered to have high turnover rate. Thus, the aim of this study was to measure the effects of performance appraisal, career development, job satisfaction and reward system empowerment with feedback on employee retention. A valid sample size of the study was 316 with a response rate of 98percent. The data was collected from 39 leading branches of a private bank operational in different cities. After carrying out preliminary analysis including reliability, validity and normality the overall model was tested through multiple regression analysis. The outcome of the study after conducting comprehensive research, was found that the performance appraisal, career development, job and reward system all have positive impact on employee's retention if practiced regularly and adequately. The findings of this study were seen consistent to earlier conducted studies, (Gulzar *et al.*, 2017)

### **Employee Retention**

The study by Cheron (2017) on effects of human resource practices on employee retention in the real estate firms in Nairobi County was carried out in 5 out of 80 real estate firms in Nairobi. A sample size of 270 respondents from various real estate organizations was selected. The study used structured questionnaires to collect primary data. Both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were used to analyze the data. Descriptive statistics such as means, standard deviation, percentages and frequencies were used to analyse the data. Regression analysis was conducted to test the effect

of HRM practices on employee retention. The findings of this study revealed that HRM practices such as compensation, training and development, performance management, supervisor support and work environment are vital to employee and indeed have significant influence on employee retention in real estate firms. The study results found that to an extent working environment affect employee retention at any level of management from top to lower management. An open comfortable, safe work environment and structure facilitates teamwork where employees are friendly. The study results did indicate a strongly positive relationship between HRM practices and employee retention.

Employee retention has become a daunting and highly challenging task for managers and human resource practitioners (Chiboiwa, Samuel, & Chipunza, 2010). It is challenging because employees have their own objectives and diverse needs to achieve which sometimes might be at variance with that of organisation. Such objectives and needs have to be accommodated for employees to continue in the organisation wholeheartedly and most often, through rewards, (Chiboiwa *et al.*, 2010).

### **Empirical Review**

In their study (Brown *et al.*, 2010) conducted a study about the effects of performance appraisal on employee retention a comparison of Finnish and Vietnamese enterprises. The study found four features of a performance appraisal system, which were goals setting, supervisor subordinate relationship, rewards linked with performance result and fairness issue argued based on literature review. The study by Cheron (2017), on effects of human resource practices on employee retention in the real estate firms in Nairobi County, revealed that HRM practices such as compensation, training and development, performance management, supervisor support and work environment are vital to employee and indeed have significant influence on employee retention in real estate firms. The study results found

that to an extent working environment affect employee retention at any level of management from top to lower management. An open comfortable, safe work environment and structure facilitates teamwork where employees are friendly. The study results did indicate a strongly positive relationship between HRM practices and employee retention.

## METHODOLOGY

The study employed descriptive survey design. The design would enable the researcher systematically to

collect data, present; analyse it before making conclusion and recommendation. The target population consisted of the following staff as illustrated in Table 2. Kakamega County Referral hospital did not have sufficient population to determine the influence of HRM practice and retention. This study adopted the level four hospitals in the County Government of Kakamega so as to arrive at the representative sample size and have a sufficient population to facilitate valid results.

**Table 2: Target Population**

S/No.	List of Level 4 Hospitals	Number of Staff
1	County Referral Hospitals	588
2	Butere Sub-county Hospital	105
3	Malava Sub-county Hospital	103
4	Lumakanda Sub-county Hospital	78
5	Matungu Sub-county Hospital	76
6	Likuyani Sub-county Hospital	59
7	Navakholo Sub-county Hospital	38
8	Iguhu Sub-county Hospital	39
9	Matunda Sub-county Hospital	28
10	Shibwe Sub-county Hospital	23
11	Mautuma Sub-county Hospital	16
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1,153</b>

*Source: Human Resource Department, Health Sector Monthly Staff Returns, Kakamega County (September 2018)*

The study gathered primary information by use of questionnaires which consisted of two parts and six sections. Section I had the demographic information of respondents such age, gender, education level and length of service. On the other hand, Section II

captured information on human resource practices and employee retention. In this study, structured questionnaires were adopted to gather views from the respondents. The questionnaires were self-administered to the respondents by the Researcher.

## RESULTS

### Descriptive and Inferential Statistics of Performance Appraisal Practices and Employee Retention

**Table 3: Descriptive statistics of Performance Appraisal Practices**

	Descriptive Statistics				
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Employees are appraised at least once a year	280	1.00	5.00	3.7607	1.38472
Employees are provided feedback after performance appraisal	280	1.00	5.00	3.2500	1.62915
Heads of departments carry out performance appraisal of their staff	280	1.00	5.00	3.8286	1.31679
The performance appraisal carried out is fair	280	1.00	5.00	3.9286	1.13367

Performance appraisal has help to retain employees in the organization	280	1.00	5.00	3.9000	0.97862
Employee is informed of the performance appraisal outcome	279	1.00	5.00	4.2724	1.04795
I receive salary increment after performance appraisal.	279	1.00	5.00	3.5556	1.32068
Performance appraisal has helped employees set and achieve meaningful goals.	278	1.00	5.00	3.9640	1.08425
Performance appraisal gives constructive criticism in a friendly and positive manner.	278	1.00	5.00	4.1835	0.88641
Performance appraisal has improved motivation and job satisfaction of employees.	279	1.00	5.00	4.1577	1.00191
Valid N (list wise)	278				

Source: Field data, 2019

The study sought to establish the influence of performance appraisal practices on employee retention. The results were as shown in Table 3; the questions were scored on a five point Likert scale. The question on whether employee was informed of the performance appraisal outcome had a mean of 4.2724 and a standard deviation of 1.04795; the question on whether performance appraisal gave constructive criticism in a friendly and positive manner had a mean of 4.1835 with standard deviation of 0.88641; on whether performance appraisal had improved motivation and job satisfaction of employees had a mean of 4.1577 with standard deviation of 1.00191; performance appraisal had helped employees set and achieve meaningful goals had the mean of 3.9640 with standard deviation of 1.08425; the performance appraisal carried out was fair had the mean of 3.9286 with standard deviation

of 1.13367; performance appraisal had help to retain employees in the organization had a mean of 3.9000 with a standard deviation of 0.97862; heads of departments carried out performance appraisal of their staff had a mean of 3.8286 with standard deviation of 1.31679; employees were appraised at least once a year had a mean of 3.7607 with standard deviation of 1.38472 and I receive salary increment after performance appraisal had the mean of 3.5556 with standard deviation of 1.32068.

Out of the ten questions asked, only two variables had means of 4.0 and above while eight variables had means of below 4.0. This was an indication that performance appraisal practices were not seriously emphasized and practiced in the health sector in the County Government of Kakamega these may affected employees' retention in the health sector.

**Table 4: Regression Results of Performance Appraisal Practices and Employee Retention**

Model Summary								
R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	Change Statistics			Sig. F Change
					F Change	df1	df2	
0.607	0.369	0.345	0.84251	0.369	15.441	10	264	0.000
ANOVA								
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.		
Regression		109.603	10	10.960	15.441	0.000		
Residual		187.393	264	0.7710				



Total 296.996 274

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Retention  
 b. Predictors: (Constant): Performance Appraisal Practices

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error			
1	(Constant)	1.475	0.328	4.491	0.001
	Performance Appraisal Practices	0.450	0.090	5.010	0.000

c. Dependent Variable: Employee Retention  
 a. Independent Variable: Performance Appraisal Practices  
 b. Significance level <0.05

Source: Field data, 2019

The objective of the study was to establish the influence of performance appraisal practices on employee retention in the health sector in the County Government of Kakamega. The means of performance appraisal practices were regressed with the means of employee retention and the results are as shown in Table 4. In this regression analysis beta ( $\beta$ ), is equivalent to the Karl Pearson correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) (Sekaram, 2003) was used to measure the strength of the relationship.

Furthermore, regression analysis, correlation analysis, ANOVA and t-tests were used to test hypothesis tested at 0.05 percent significance level, with 95 percent confidence, which is acceptable in the social sciences. First the study set out the following null hypothesis:

$H_0$ : There is no significant influence of performance appraisal practices and employee retention in the health sector in the County Government of Kakamega.

The test criterion was set such the study rejects the null hypothesis  $H_0$  if  $\beta_4 \neq 0$ . The results were: regression coefficient ( $B=0.450$ ), correlation coefficient ( $\beta=0.382$ ), ANOVA ( $F=15.441$ ) while t-test value ( $t=5.010$ ). All these values were positive

and significant since p-value was less than 0.05. The results signpost of not a very strong relationship between performance appraisal practices and employee retention ( $B=0.450$  and  $\beta=0.382$ ).

In the test criterion, the null hypothesis was accepted when the p-value is more than 0.05, an indication that the relationship between the two variables is not significant. Results in this study illustrated that the relationship between performance appraisal practices and employee retention in the health sector in the County Government of Kakamega was positive and significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected on this ground. The study revealed that performance appraisal practices account for 36.9percent ( $r^2=0.369$ ) of employee retention in the health sector in the County Government of Kakamega and the rest is explained by other factors.

The results were represented in the model

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_4 X_4 + \epsilon$$

Where  $Y$ = Employee Retention,

$$\beta_0 = 1.475$$

$$\beta_4 = 0.450$$

$X_4$ = Performance Appraisal Practices

$$\epsilon = 0.090$$

Replacing in the equation above, gives the following model:

$Y = 1.475 + 0.450X_4 + 0.090$ . The results therefore clearly indicate that there exists a statistically significant positive relationship between performance appraisal practices and employee retention.

The study results were consistent with past studies. In his study, Brown *et al.* (2010) conducted a study about the effects of performance appraisal on employee retention a comparison of Finnish and Vietnamese enterprises. The study found four features of a performance appraisal system, which goals are setting, supervisor-subordinate relationship, rewards linked with performance result and fairness issue are argued based on literature review.

In a study conducted by Gulzar, Advani, and Jalees (2017) on impact of performance appraisal on employee retention, on banking sector of Pakistan. The study found that banking industry despite being one of the most flourishing industries in the world is considered to have high turnover rate. The outcome of the study after conducting comprehensive research, was found that the performance appraisal, career development, job and reward system all have positive impact on employee's retention if practiced regularly and adequately. The findings of this study were seen consistent to earlier conducted studies, (Gulzar *et al.*, 2017).

#### **Descriptive of Employee Retention**

This gave results for the dependent variable (employee retention). The results were as shown in Table 5:

**Table 5: Descriptive statistics of Employee Retention**

Questions	Descriptive Statistics				
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Workers participate in management activities	279	1.00	5.00	4.1792	1.06115
Employees are given a chance to have independent thinking and make workable decisions	279	1.00	5.00	4.3405	1.14843
I can see myself working here again and again	279	1.00	5.00	4.0179	1.22461
There is better co-ordination among co-workers	275	1.00	5.00	4.4436	0.81473
I feel like I am able to reach my full potential at the organization	276	1.00	5.00	4.2754	0.87609
I feel comfortable working with my teammates	276	1.00	5.00	4.2101	0.88587
I feel like I always get feedback.	276	1.00	5.00	4.2065	0.99312
I have a clear understanding about my career path and promotion plan.	276	1.00	5.00	4.2319	0.80715
I would apply for this job again in this organization.	276	1.00	5.00	4.2754	1.03936
I feel like my work is valued in this organization	276	1.00	5.00	4.4058	0.78752
Valid N (list wise)	275				

Source: Field data, 2019

The questions were scored on a five point Likert scale. It should be noted that all the variables had a mean scores of above 4.0. The variables with least varied views were: I have a clear understanding about my career path and promotion plan (mean =4.2319; standard deviation = 0.80715); there is better co-ordination among co-workers (mean =4.4436; standard deviation = 0.81473); I feel like I am able to reach my full potential at the organization (mean =4.2754; standard deviation = 0.87609); I feel comfortable working with my teammates (mean =4.2101; standard deviation = 0.88587) and I feel like I always get feedback(mean = 4.2065;standard deviation = 0.99312).

### CONCLUSIONS

Performance appraisal practices and employee retention results revealed a positive and significant between performance appraisal practices and employee retention in the health sector in the County Government of Kakamega. The study revealed that performance appraisal practices account for 36.9percent ( $r^2=0.369$ ) of employee retention in the

health sector in the County Government of Kakamega and the rest was explained by other factors.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Lastly, the County Government of Kakamega hospitals should effectively implement performance appraisal practices in various departments since these practices were found to have least influence on employee retention.

### Suggestions for Further Research

Similar research was encouraged to be conducted in the other counties in Kenya to ascertain if consistent results can be achieved. Further research on the influence of performance appraisal practices on employee retention can be done in other organizations other than the health sector to ascertain if consistent results could be achieved. Research was encouraged to establish the moderating influence of organizational factors on the relationship between performance appraisal practices and employee retention in the health sector in other counties in Kenya.

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