



HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES INFLUENCING STAFF RETENTION IN NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN KENYA: A CASE STUDY OF KENYA RED CROSS SOCIETY EASTERN AND CENTRAL KENYA REGIONS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to assess the human resource factors influencing staff retention in Kenya Red Cross society. The aim was to assess how the human resource factors that affect employee retention in the organization long-term, particularly how employee training, motivation influenced employee long term engagement with the organization and to come up with recommendations on what more can be done to further enhance their positive influence on long-term employee engagement with the organization. Descriptive research design was used with a total population of 45 employees in Eastern and Central regions of Kenya. A census was done instead of taking a sample to enhance accuracy. The response rate was at 88.9%. Quantitative approach was used to collect and analyse data from the questionnaires' closed ended questions on a Likert scale to generate frequency distribution tables, data entry sums and averages. Qualitative technique was used to analyze open ended questions on the questionnaire and provide more-in-depth details. Data collected was analysed using SPSS statistical software, version 22. The study established that Human Resource management factors do indeed influence employee retention in an organization and their need to feel adequate to perform their jobs, sufficiently compensated for their performance and the need to see a potential for career and personal growth while working for the organization. The study found that there is a relationship between the independent and dependent variables and also that perception about one independent variable has an influence on perceptions about the other independent variable. Also, the organization had not fully and satisfactorily implemented their strategies in a manner that would encourage employees to want to stay in the organization long term, at least not to the desired level that would be of maximum benefit to the organization. It is recommended that the organization still needs to put more effort in its employee retention strategies to realize full benefits from long term retention of skilled employees.

Key Words: *Human Resource Management Practices, Staff Retention*

INTRODUCTION

According to Kibui, Gachunga & Namusonge (2014), retaining talented employees has become one of the major priorities of organizations and the key differentiator for human capital management. Global dynamic trends and competitive markets are making it increasingly difficult to recruit and retain talented employees and there is the constant risk of losing them to competitors. According to Armstrong (2014) talent management is hinged on the belief that those organizations with the best workforce are the winners in their industries. Talent management is therefore considered a tool to strengthen organizational capability (Kibui *et al*, 2014). Talent management refers to the 'systematic attraction, retention and deployment of individuals' who are valuable to an organization with regard to current critical roles or for future endeavours (CIPD, 2013; Kibui *et al*, 2014).

Mendez & Stander (2011) emphasizes the importance of employee retention in organizational success. Employee turnover is detrimental to a company's productivity due to the costliness of transitioning attraction of new employees, loss of production, reduced performance levels, overtime due to staff shortage and low employee morale (Lyria, Namusonge & Karanja 2014, cited in Echols, 2007). Hughes & Rog (2008, cited in Poorhpsseinzadeh & Subramaniam, 2012), found that a number of organizations globally have adopted talent retention strategies whose make up had both similarities and differences. Examples include Brazil, France and Netherlands who employ stimulation while Japanese employers intimidate employees to yield 'trust and respect'. Italian organizations conduct effective performance assessments whereas South Korea bases employee retention on performance targets, while Canada pegs employee retention on satisfaction and motivation.

Mensah (2014) defines employee retention as the efforts by which employers attempt to hold on to their employees by creating an environment which keeps and engages employees for a longer time.

Human capital is the most valuable resource to an organization therefore employee retention is of high importance, as argued by Ng'ethe, Iravo & Namusonge, (2012), who propose that employee retention is determined by leadership, distributive justice, work environment, salary, training and development, recognition, autonomy and promotional opportunities. "Employee retention is one of the challenges facing many organizations both public and private, occasioned by globalization that has intensified competition and increased mobility of highly skilled employees" (Ng'ethe *et al*, 2012). Lyria, Namusonge & Karanja, (2014) share a similar view stating that mentioning company flexible working hours, satisfied and motivated employees, competitive compensation, attractive non-monetary rewards as some of the measures that have been used to gauge organizations' employee retention capacity alongside other determinants such as existence of good company image, recruitment policy of the company and the style of the leadership." Employee retention being the crowning factor in talent management aims at retaining employees in the organization for long periods of time (Lyria *et al*, 2014).

Statement of the problem

Employee retention is a key factor in an organizations' success (Lyria, Namusonge & Karanja (2014). It is "one of the challenges facing many organizations both public and private occasioned by globalization that has intensified competition and increased mobility of highly skilled employees" (Ng'ethe, Iravo & Namusonge, 2012). Global dynamic trends and competitive markets are making it increasingly difficult to recruit and retain talented employees and there is the constant risk of losing them to competitors (Kibui, Gachunga & Namusonge, 2014). The implication of globalization is that organizations are competing for the same pool of talents in the 'global labour market for talents' leading to standardization of talent recruitment, development and management. This means that organizations need to "adapt global best practices of talent management and at the same time adapt the local requirements and local labour

market, Lyria *et al*, (2014). While a majority of managers consider retention of their best employees to be an important part of their long term business strategy, many organisations do not have a framework in place to effectively retain their employees, Mensah (2014, as cited in McKeown, 2010). This study therefore seeks to determine the human resource factors that influence employees' long term commitment to the organization. According to Ng'ethe *et al*, (2012), these factors are leadership, distributive justice, salary, work environment, promotional opportunities, training and development autonomy and recognition. This study will look at these factors in three categories that could be developed as possible strategies for organizations in employee retention. Firstly, staff training which ensures employees skills are sufficient for the job at hand and that the job is matched with the right type of skill and not just the level of skill. Secondly, employee motivation which encompasses all the organization aspects that may cause an employee to under-perform or surpass goals such as reward and performance recognition alongside leadership and performance management styles, career growth opportunities and the work environment.

Objectives of study

The general objective was to assess the human resource management practices influencing employee retention by studying the indicators of employee long run commitment to an organization. The specific objectives were to examine how staff training practice and employee motivation practice affected employee retention in the organization.

Research Questions

- 1) How did staff training practice affect employee retention?
- 2) In what way did employee motivation practice impact on employees' commitment to an organization?

Scope of study

The research targeted the non-governmental not-for-profit sector, specifically Kenya Red Cross Society staff. This included management and subordinate employees in both project and administrative positions. The coverage area was Eastern and Central regions, as covering all the eight regions and the head office was not feasible due to geographical vastness and large population size. A staff population of forty five employees enabled the use of census as a data collection method as the population size was manageable. The regions also had employees who were not KRCS hires but rather local office hires such as groundkeepers and office assistants. These local office hires were not included in the main study population but were utilized in the pilot testing to determine reliability and validity of the questionnaires. The study will therefore only focus on direct KRCS hires. The study aimed at identifying how employee staff training and motivation impact on employee retention within KRCS and the implications that retention or turnover has had on the organization. It also looked to identify further possible action points that the organization might be able to use to enhance talent retention.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Herzberg Two Factor Theory

This theory was proposed by Fredrick Herzberg in 1959. Herzberg, in a bid to understand employee satisfaction and the effect of incentives offered by employers, set out to determine the impact of attitude on motivation by asking people what aspects of their jobs made them feel good or bad and their responses, which were very different from each other depending on whether they felt good or bad about their jobs, formed the basis of the theory (Dartey-Baah & Amoako, 2011). The theory states that job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are affected by two different sets of factors (Stello, 2011). These factors are hygiene factors and motivator factors.

Hygiene factors are the maintenance factors that are not directly related to the job, but conditions surrounding the job (Dartey-Baah & Amoako, 2011).

Hygiene factors are important for motivation to take place and their absence, or poor sustenance of them, leads to dissatisfaction (Lyria *et al*, 2014). Their presence removes dissatisfaction from the job but they do not necessarily bring about job satisfaction but maintain the employee in the job (Kibui *et al*, 2014). They include company policy and leadership relationship with co-workers, salary, job security work conditions, personal life and status (Dartey-Baah & Amoako, 2011).

The motivator factors on the other hand, are the factors that motivate employees to perform (Lyria *et al*, 2014). They are also referred to as satisfiers. They pertain to the job content and while they do not prove to be highly dissatisfying, when present they build strong levels of motivation and yield good performance (Dartey-Baah & Amoako, 2011). They include recognition, sense of achievement, promotion opportunities and responsibility Lyria *et al*, (2014, as cited in Nzuve 2009).

2.2.2 Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs Theory

This theory was proposed by Abraham Maslow in 1943. This theory proposes that human beings are motivated by a hierarchy of needs organized according to pre-potency i.e. from the most urgent or basic need to the less basic ones which he outlined in the order of physiological needs, safety, love, self-esteem and self-actualization (Wininger & Norman, 2010).

The physiological needs include food, clothing, shelter and sex, while the safety refers to the need for protection. Love alludes to the need for social acceptance and development of associations with people. Self-esteem is all about prestige while self-actualization about realizing one’s full potential to be all they can be. (Worlu & Chidozie, 2012). Maslow posited that we must satisfy each need in turn, starting with the first, which deals with the most obvious needs for survival itself before the next higher level needs would motivate employees Bernard (2010).

Only when the lower order needs of physical and emotional well-being are satisfied are we concerned

with the higher order needs of influence, self-actualisation or realisation and personal development. Conversely, if the things that satisfy our lower order needs are eliminated, we are no longer concerned about the maintenance of our higher order needs (Bernard 2010). Wininger & Norman (2010), in their analysis of literature on this theory by Maslow and various other authors established that Maslow in his development of the theory established that movement along the hierarchy from one need level to a higher need was possible as long as a majority of the needs in the lower level had been satisfied. As physiological needs are adequately or partially fulfilled man develops safety needs and so on (Worlu and Chidozie, 2012). Wininger & Norman (2010) also argue that Maslow’s theory as he later established with further developments to the theory, does not proclaim complete rigidity in the order of needs, but rather it depends on external circumstances and individual differences, and also that behaviour is often multi-motivated simultaneously by more than one need.

Conceptual Framework

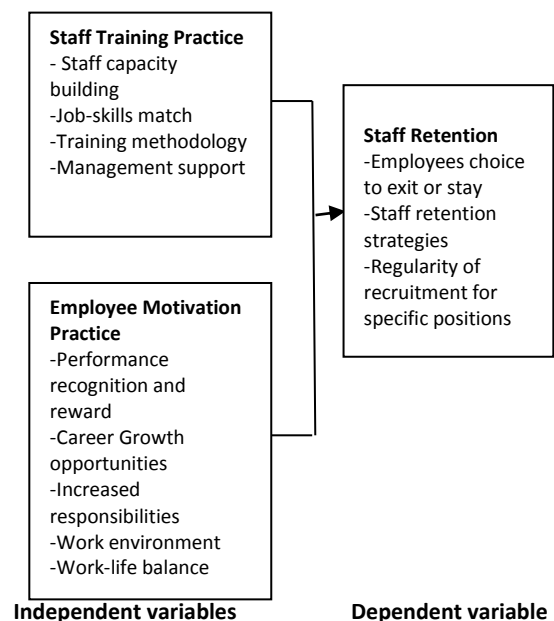


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Staff Training Practice

Training refers to the process of changing in thought, behaviour, and action as a result of changes in knowledge, skills and competences Bernard (2012). Training and development widens one's compatibility with opportunities for advancement contingent upon one's ability to competently tackle new levels of responsibility and challenges, hence it is an investment in human capital whether initiated by the individual or the organisation (Bernard 2012). Training provides employees with specific skills or helps to correct deficiencies in their performances, while development is an effort to provide employees with abilities the organization will need in the future, Ngethe *et al* (2012, as cited in Chew, 2004). Training is necessary to keep up with rapidly changing technology which quickly renders skills obsolete Bitner and Zeithaml (2010).

The purpose of training in the work context is to develop the abilities of the individual and to satisfy the current and future manpower needs of the organization (Ng'ethe *et al*, 2012). In the view of Dessler (2008) and Saks & Haccoun (2007) training is the arming of employees with the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities required to perform their jobs and thereby enhance performance and is short-term, while development is the long term imparting of skills knowledge and abilities for career development and greater responsibility (Ayodo, Namusonge, Ayodo & Maluti, 2014). This line of thought however, has some opposing views suggesting that training can describe learning that takes a long time to complete and development can be a quick and powerful experience (Ayodo *et al*, (2014 as cited in Joy-Mathews *et al*, 2007), who further state that training may not always translate into higher performance due to other challenging factors that could influence the behaviour of employees such as inability to transfer learned skills to the job, hostile environment or poor attitude of the job holder towards the new techniques or working formula.

While extensive training opportunities are a priority facility that dynamic organizations are using to

attract and retain employees, it is apparent that those institutions with little regard for training their staff will be adversely placed in attracting and retaining their manpower, Ayodo *et al*, (2014, as cited in Saks & Haccoun, 2007). Training is crucial for updating skills of staff on new trends and needs for skills generated by changes in technology and development, and is a way of showing employees that they are valuable to the organization. (Bernard 2012). Training and development opportunities are among the most important reasons why employees remain in organizations especially the youthful ones (Ng'ethe *et al*, 2012).

Training must be a systematic process, hinged on effectively administered performance appraisals, identification of training needs, and establishment of a competence framework that addresses organisational goals (Bernard 2012). (Kaufman & Guerra-Lopez, 2013) define a needs assessment as a process that identifies gaps between current and desired results and places those in priority order on the basis of the costs to bridge the gap as compared to the costs to ignore the gap. These gaps are referred to as needs, which if chosen for resolutions can also be viewed as problems that need to be solved (Kaufman & Guerra-Lopez, 2013).

The mistake that most organizations make globally in deciding on how to improve their effectiveness and efficiency, is that they tend to start development without a proper review to ensure that their objectives, including visions and missions are still appropriate and have enough specificity so that people can appropriately plan to meet them. They also fail to provide rigorous and clear criteria for management, development, evaluation, and continual improvement (Kaufman & Guerra-Lopez, 2013). This common practice makes it harder for organizations to come-up with a performance improvement plan with the data on what their targets are and what their gaps are to inform the strategies they will employ to move them from where they are to where they need to be (Kaufman & Guerra-Lopez, 2013). This can be remedied by a proper needs analysis which is applicable to many procedural components affecting organization

operations and performance including training and development. Without efforts towards training and development intellectual capital can stagnate making the organization uncompetitive and irrelevant (Ng'ethe *et al*, 2012).

Employee Motivation Practice

Motivation is what causes people to do what they do (Bernard, 2012). It is the reason for the behaviour or actions of people in response to a stimulating factor. It is the force that energizes and gives direction to behaviour (Hlaethoa, 2010). According to Ng'ethe *et al*, (2012), the factors that influence employee retention are leadership, distributive justice, salary, work environment, promotional opportunities, training and development autonomy and recognition. Therefore based on Bernard (2012) description of motivation, these factors are motivators of retention in that, depending on how they are handled or how they manifest in the organization, they will either cause employees to stay or leave the organization.

Based on the numerous motivation theories, there are several factors that motivate employees to high or poor performance. SCT proposes motivation to be due to self-efficacy and self-regulation (Greene 2012). Herzberg's two factor theory on the other hand proposes that motivation is due to hygiene factors which are external to the job but are pre-conditions that affect the possibility of the job to be done, and motivator factors that relate to the job itself and lead to high performance or outcomes (Kibui *et al*, 2014).

The hygiene factors include company policy and leadership relationship with co-workers, salary, job security work conditions, personal life and status (Dartey-Baah & Amoako, 2011). The motivator factors also referred to as satisfiers. They pertain to the job content and while they do not prove to be highly dissatisfying, when present they build strong levels of motivation and yield good performance (Dartey-Baah & Amoako, 2011). They include recognition, sense of achievement, promotion opportunities and responsibility Lyria *et al*, (2014, as cited in Nzuve 2009). Maslow's hierarchy of needs

theory proposes that human beings are motivated by a hierarchy of needs organized according to prepotency i.e. from the most urgent or basic need to the less basic ones which he outlined in the order of physiological needs, safety, love, self-esteem and self-actualization (Wining & Norman, 2010). The physiological needs include food, clothing, shelter and sex, while the safety refers to the need for protection. Love alludes to the need for social acceptance and development of associations with people. Self-esteem is all about prestige while self-actualization about realizing one's full potential to be all they can be (Worlu & Chidozie, 2012).

There are also other theories of motivation not discussed in this study that address motivators and how they affect employee retention. There is Victor Vroom's Expectancy Theory, proposed in 1964 that is based on the idea that people believe there are relationships between the effort they put forth at work, the performance they achieve from that effort, and the rewards they receive from their effort and performance. In other words, people will be motivated if they believe that strong effort will lead to good performance and good performance will lead to desired rewards Lunenberg (2011). There is also John Stacey Adams' Equity theory proposed in 1963 which suggested that individuals seek a fair balance between what they put into a job and what they get out of it (Bernard, 2012). The Equity theory is concerned with the perceptions people have about how they are treated as compared with others (Ng'ethe *et al*, 2012). "Employees seek to maintain equity between the input they bring into a job (education, time, experience, commitment and effort) and the outcome they receive from it (promotion, recognition and increased pay) against the perceived inputs and outcomes of other employees" (Ng'ethe *et al*, 2012). There is also the goal setting theory developed by Edwin Locke and Gary Latham which suggests that when individuals are given the autonomy to set their own targets, they are more persistent and eager to meet and even exceed their goals, a recipe for good performance (Bernard, 2012).

The motivation theories above have similar determinants of motivations but with different approaches to handling or applying them which determines the results they yield. The Herzberg theory, for example, can be used to come up with a formula for combining hygiene factors and motivator factors which could yield an array of results (Dartey-Baah & Amoako, 2011). Anything from a combination of high hygiene and low motivator factors resulting in employees having few complaints but are not highly motivated, in which case the job is perceived as a pay check. You could also have a combination of low hygiene and high motivators resulting in employees who are motivated but have a lot of complaints, a case where the job is exciting and challenging but salaries and work conditions are not. There could also be a combination of low hygiene and low motivators resulting demotivated employees with lots of complaints (Dartey-Baah & Amoako, 2011).

Staff Retention

The rate of employee turnover affects the performance of an organization and therefore employee retention is considered of utmost importance globally, Ayodo *et al*, (2014). Low turnover ensures that organization is retaining their competent employees by providing them superior environment, which increases the performance of individual employee Ayodo *et al*, (2014, as cited in Waleed Hassan *et.al* 2013). In the face of restructuring, organizations in a bid to remain in business and still be effective in their ventures managers need to maximize on their strategic resources by carefully isolating for retention the best-trained, experienced, disciplined, productive and effective employees to sustain a competitive advantage and differentiate themselves from their competitors Ayodo *et al*, 2014).

The arguments for staff retention are reduced acquisition costs, minimization of training and induction costs relating to new employees, idle resources due to shortage of staff to put them to use is avoided, customer dissatisfaction due to poor services relating to staff shortage or absence of

skilled service delivery is also kept at bay (Ayodo *et al*, 2014). Staff retention is also important as employee exit represents the lost organization resources due to training of staff that eventually leave the organization to apply those skills elsewhere. "Training is considered a form of human capital investment whether that investment is made by the individual or by the firm" (Ng'ethe *et al*, 2012).

Empirical Review

Several studies on the determinants of employee retention have been carried out globally, referring to the factors as human resource practices that enhance employee retention. This implies that there needs to be active or intentional participation by the organization to create an environment that positively influences employees to stay with the organization, Li-Qun (2013). Abduljlil, Yazam and Ahmid (2011) conducted a study to investigate the role of employee retention in organizational performance and derived from the outcomes of the study that the employee retention has a mediating role in the linking of between HRM practices and organizational performance.

Ng'ethe (2013) conducted a study on determinants of staff retention in institutions of higher learning in Kenya. The study conducted on 496 respondents revealed that 72.7% of the respondents were dissatisfied with their salary and 72.5% did not think that bonuses were fairly allocated and 74.6% did feel that they were remunerated at par with employees in other organization with similar qualifications. Bernard (2012) cites a study of retention in Australian Organizations by Chew (2004) which established that younger employees were mostly driven by training and development, career advancement, challenging work, growth opportunities and recognition. The older generation attached great importance to autonomy, opportunities to mentor and job challenge.

Critique of the study

Previous studies on employee retention have employed varied research designs. Chew (2004) in a study of employee retention in Australian organizations used qualitative and quantitative methods. Longitudinal design method, as was employed by Pienaar *et al* (2008) to study whether those with intent to leave followed through on their intent, is beneficial but quite lengthy which may not be practical for studies aimed at award of degree, Ng'ethe (2013). Udi (2010) conducted a study on employee retention in service organisations. The study employed quantitative methods and left out the qualitative aspects which would have been instrumental in understanding employee opinions and allowed for clarifications and suggestions. Ng'ethe (2013) observed that sampling methods that bring bias such as purposeful sampling as used by Kipkebut (2010) should be avoided. Ng'ethe *et al* (2012) recommend the use of a study incorporating both qualitative and quantitative methods to clearly bring out the factors that determine or influence staff retention.

Research Gaps

While a majority of managers consider retention of their best employees to be an important part of their long term business strategy, many organisations do not have a framework in place to effectively retain their employees, Mensah (2014, as cited in McKeown, 2010). Global dynamic trends and competitive markets are making it increasingly difficult to recruit and retain talented employees and there is the constant risk of losing them to competitors (Kibui *et al*, 2014). The implication of globalization is that organizations are competing for the same pool of talents in the 'global labour market for talents' leading to standardization of talent recruitment, development and management (Lyria *et al*, 2014). This means that organizations need to "adapt global best practices of talent management and at the same time adapt the local requirements and local labour market, Lyria *et al*, (2014, cited in Stahl *et al*., 2007). There is need for further studies to dig deeper for a clearer picture of the determinants of employee retention (Ng'ethe *et al*, 2012).

There is also need to conduct a research incorporating both qualitative and quantitative methods to clearly bring out the factors that determine or influence staff retention (Ng'ethe *et al*, 2012) and address the biases in previous studies resulting from choice of research design and sampling methods that will further demystify staff retention (Ng'ethe 2013).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research design

Descriptive research design was used in this study. According to the University of South California Libraries, descriptive research designs help provide answers to the questions of who, what, when, where, and how associated with a particular research problem. According to Shuttleworth (2008), descriptive design is useful for a social case study of an individual subject as it allows observation or study without affecting normal behaviour. It is also useful where it is not possible to test and measure the large number of samples needed for more quantitative types of experimentation.

Target Population

The study which was conducted in Kenya Red Cross Society in Eastern and Central Kenya which has a total population of only 45 employees therefore took the form of a census so the entire population in that region would be involved.

Census

Census is a data collection process that seeks to obtain information from every member of the population under study. While it is usually utilized to determine population demographics where the population size is unknown it has a higher level of accuracy and reliability in that it is not based on generalizations and captures everything including the exceptions in the population. It can be instrumental in identifying minority interests in a population and open up areas for further research. Due to the manageable population size under study

the researcher used the census for a more accurate and credible research.

Data Collection Methods

These are the tools that were used by the researcher to gather information from respondents. As the researcher used both primary and secondary data, the secondary data was obtained through document reviews while the primary data was gathered through questionnaires and observation. For this research, the instrument used was the questionnaire.

Data Collection Procedure

Literature review took place in the first one month after the approval of the proposal. This involved review of strategies that organizations use to foster staff retention which are training and development and motivation; their scope and the specific items it tackled to bring about desired change, expectations of all employees in order to allow them to shift from good to great. KRCS having begun a restructuring process in 2012, the literature review also looked at the documented outcomes and reports of the process in an effort to gauge whether they employed any of the previously used strategies by other organizations to manage training and development, motivation and whether staff retention was a part of their goals. It also entailed review of the articles on the organizations performance and activities to see the kind of response from the general public and gauge whether their efforts were impacting on performance.

When the literature review was done, questionnaires were developed based on the literature review in terms of information that needs to be corroborated, unclear or missing information. These questionnaires were administered via the internet through the organization email system. I the researcher being an employee of the organization in the region of study was able to access this email network with ease and could also reach the employees physically where the need arose.

Data Analysis and Presentation

Hussey and Hussey (1997) state that if one has collected mainly quantitative data, they need to conduct some form of statistical analysis. The researcher used both qualitative and quantitative techniques for data analysis. Descriptive statistics such as mean and percentages were used to present the responses obtained from the respondents. Quantitative approach was used to collect and analyse data from the questionnaires closed ended questions on a Likert scale and inventories from review of secondary data and generated frequency distribution tables, data entry sums and averages, while qualitative technique were used to analyze open ended questions on the questionnaire and provide more-in-depth details. Statistical Product and Service Solution (SPSS) (formerly known as Statistical Package for Social Sciences) software version 22 was used for statistical analysis.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Response Rate

The county and program management were issued with the management questionnaire while the rest were issued with the employee questionnaire and the response rate was Response was received from 40 out of the 45 targeted respondents. The overall response rate was therefore 88.9%, with 100% response from program managers and administrative staff while County managers, project officers and junior employees having response rates of 50%, 95.5% and 75% respectively.

Data analysis

The data was collected, edited, summarized and tabulated using descriptive and inferential statistics to produce aggregate facts representing the relativity of variables to each other.

Finding on Effect of Training on Staff Retention

Training is one of the independent variables considered to influence staff retention in an organization and in this study training was considered two fold; internal or on the job training

and external classroom training. The study sought to determine which forms of training was supported by the organization, the effect of this training and which was more desired by employees and reasons for this.

The study found that 71.43% of management agreed that the organization had a training policy in place, while 28.57% neither agreed nor disagreed implying lack of interest in training, or differing opinion on what should constitute a training policy. 71.43 % of the managers also agreed that the training policy was fairly implemented. Those who agreed that a training needs analysis was conducted before training were 14.29%. There was also a high level of agreement that jobs were well matched with the employee skill at 85.72% with 42.86% of managers agreeing that the skills levels of staff in their department was adequate. This implies the 57.14% of managers felt that their staff could use more training to better performance. 42.86% of managers also concurred that training in the organization is aimed at preparing employees for future promotions and responsibilities while 14.29 disagreed.

Management were generally satisfied with employee performance with 71.43% rating it as high or satisfactory. Among the reasons for improved performance, only improved systems can demonstrate employee skills adequacy due to the on-the-job training required to implement a new system of operation, therefore implying that employee performance does not adequately demonstrate a formidable training culture in the organization but rather pre-possessed skills by employees which were later better utilized with the motivation of increased pay. However, two of the managers were not sure of how to rate performance with one stating that they had low and high performers among the employees, and one stating that performance had not changed after the organization restructuring in 2013.

For the non-management employees 42.5% agree that there is a training policy in place but the majority of 48.5% neither agree nor disagree while 9% disagree that it exists. This suggests lack of

encouragement or focus on training in the organization. Considering that 71.43% of management agreed that there is a training policy, this disparity points to a disconnect either due to miscommunication from the top down or lack of a driving force to spearhead the organization training aspect, which is necessary for the organization to stay relevant in a competitive market or industry. 51.1% of non-management employees agreed that the organization supports staff training interests while 27.3 disagreed. They also expressed confidence in the job design with 84.9% agreeing that their skills matched their jobs and 90.9% agreeing that their skills levels were sufficient to do the job. This is an indication that the employees were getting to a stage where they will have learnt all they can for their currently held positions and achieved as much as they can at that level, and therefore were looking to progress to a higher or more challenging position career wise.

Findings on Impact of Motivation on Staff retention

The next independent variable in this study considered to influence staff retention was employee motivation which considered those factors that make employees want to perform and those that if absent would cause them not to perform their jobs to the required standards

The study found that 71.42% of management staff agreed that they were interested in the motivation of employees. A similar percentage also agreed that they involve the employees in departmental and regional decision making. However, only 42.86% agreed that performance recognition was a regular practice in the organization with 28.57% agreeing that exemplary performance by employees is rewarded, while 28.57% disagreed that there was performance recognition or rewarding of employee outstanding performance. The findings also revealed that management concurred that the organization involved employees in target setting with 85.71% in agreement with this.

The study revealed that the organization has a healthy work-life balance with 71.43% of managers in agreement and only 14.28% disagreeing. 71.43%

were also in agreement that the organization provided promotion opportunities to existing employees with 28.57% disagreeing.

Only 42.86% of managers agreed that the organization supported autonomy and minimal supervision of employees and only 14.28% agreed that there was equity or fairness in the treatment of employees. Finally, 71.43% of managers were in agreement that the organization offers both monetary and non-monetary incentives to motivate employees while 28.57% neither agreed nor disagreed.

Only 30.3% of the non-management staff agreed that management is interested in motivating them, with 45.5% agreeing that they were involved in decision making in their regions or departments and 51.5% agreeing that they were also involved in target setting. 48.5% of this group of respondents disagreed that they were involved in decision making with 6% undecided. Only 30.3% of this category of respondents agreed that the organization recognized good performance while 45.5% remaining neither agreeing or disagreeing. In addition, only 27.2% agreeing that good performance was rewarded while 42.5% disagreed.

The non-management staff also had 57.6% agreed that the work environment was favourable and 66.7% also agreed to a work schedule accommodative of personal time off, alluding to a good work-life balance. 60.5% of respondents disagreed that there are promotion opportunities for them in the organization while only 21.3% agreed to the existence of promotion opportunities, an indication that they may be preparing to leave the organization in search of growth opportunities. 51.5% of employees disagreed that all employees were treated fairly or equitably with 42.5% disagreeing that there was autonomy in the workplace.

Findings on Staff Retention

The study found that 85.7% of management disagreed that employee turnover was high in their

departments. 71.43% of them however agreed that employee turnover did have an impact on organization performance. 42.86% of managers agreed that the organization does have a staff retention strategy or policy in place while 14.29% disagreed. From these figures it is observed that management recognize the importance of retaining staff in order for the organization to perform. They organization does not however have a solid staff retention strategy necessary to effectively retain staff.

Management rated forms of employee turnover as layoffs at 57.14%, resignations at 28.57%, and redundancy at 14.28%. That the rate of resignation, which is the form of exit deemed to be the employees choice, while not the highest form of exit, represents the significant extent to which other organization are more attractive than KRCS.

The findings on the length of service of non-management staff in the organization showed that the employees who can be qualified as long-serving i.e. served for more than 5 years, account for only 15.2% of the workforce in KRCS in Eastern and Central Kenya. Majority of the staff have only had a medium length stay in the organization. That there are no employees who are less than one year could be a pointer towards the shortage of donor funding, or a symbol of recruitment opportunities considering internally existing labour first. However given that the majority of staff fall under the 3-5years service length which is the average length of a donor funded project, and only 15.2% have been in the organization over 5 years representing the possible rate of absorption of employees in new projects after old ones winding up, it does not paint a positive picture for continuity of existing project staff.

The finding showed that the expected length of stay by current employees with only 9.1% seeing themselves there long term while 66.7% see themselves exiting the organization in the near future i.e. in three years or less. Among the non-management staff, 54.5% of them rate layoffs as the highest form of turnover, followed by resignations at 36.4% and redundancy at 9.1%.

Correlation

The findings of this study regarding training were consistent with the findings of Ng'ethe (2013) where employees were of the opinion that while their training skills were fairly adequate, the training policy was not fairly implemented. Training was still desired by all staff for career growth. This study revealed that with regard to staff training, employees had a greater interest in external classroom training than on the job or office workshop trainings due to the belief that it is more suited to promotions and career growth, which they desired. Management on the other hand mentioned organization specific trainings which are more likely to be on the job or office workshop trainings shaping employee skills to be specific to the organization and hence encourage employees to stay with them. Their conflict would therefore arise from the fact that employees did not view management's favoured form of training as leading to career growth hence lower employee satisfaction with regard to training. Bernard (2012) states that training and development widens employees' compatibility with opportunities for advancement based on ability to tackle new levels of responsibility and challenges. Management could therefore improve satisfaction with regard to staff training by offering more promotions to staff that have undergone specialized organization specific training, hence using it as tool to retain employees in the organization. (Ng'ethe *et al*, 2012) states that training and development are among the most important reasons why employees remain in an organization, especially the youthful ones.

The findings on motivation were that other than work-life balance which seemed to have high satisfaction levels at both management and non-management levels, the other motivations incentives needed action to bridge the gap between management and employee views. Effective motivation is a combination of hygiene factors such as salary, job security, leadership relationship with other workers, company policy, work conditions and personal life status, and motivator factors such as recognition and promotion opportunities (Dartey-Baah & Amoako, 2011). These factors are motivators

of retention which can either cause employees to leave or stay in with an organization, depending on how they are handled (Bernard, 2012). While motivation is significantly dependent on personality types and personal desires, there are certain aspects that cut across all personalities. For example the ratio between monetary and non-monetary incentives of a reward package remains the same in the view of each employee, with differences only arising from the reward preferences. Likewise autonomy is not easily misconstrued from one person to another.

The research findings indicated that the most common form of employee exit or turnover from the organization was layoffs which they explained was mainly due to conclusion or winding up of projects. Managers were also in agreement that staff turnover affects organization performance, echoing the sentiments of Ayodo *et al*, (2014). Employee retention has a mediating role in linking HRM practices and organization performance (Yazam & Ahmid, 2011). Employees further concurred that job insecurity was a major cause of concern for them and one of the main reasons why a large number of them were still searching for jobs and did not see themselves staying long in the organization

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Influence of staff training practice on employee retention

Training was considered as one of the variables influencing staff retention in this study. 71.5% of management agreed that the organization had a training policy. However, only 42.42% of the non-management staff agreed that the organization did have a training policy. This indicates the need for sensitization of employees on what the organization training policy is. The non-management employees however, generally agreed that trainings were done based on a training needs analysis hence were likely to impact positively on organization operations. Both management and non-management staff seemed to be in agreement that jobs and skills were well matched with agreement of 85.71% and 84.84%

respectively. Non-management employees also rated inadequate work resources and workload as bigger hindrances to their performances than their skills inadequacy. They however still had an interest in training with 60.6% preferring to be offered organizational support for external training to advance academic education for promotions and increased responsibilities, while the remaining 39.4% preferring on the job training by updating knowledge on new work models, statutes and regulation to perform their jobs better. This indicated that employees felt that on the job training was not an effective strategy for career advancement and this could perhaps explain why management's strategy to offer organization-specific training as a staff retention strategy was not bringing all employees on board.

With regard to training leading to promotions or additional responsibility only 30.3% of non-management staffs were in agreement while 42.85% of management were in agreement of the same. This therefore indicates that employees did not feel that the training policy was working to their advantage as well as it was for the organization's performance. This brings out the gap in the organization's training practices and points to an action point that can make the training policy all rounded to its beneficiaries. The organization could either offer promotions that could easily be linked by employees to on the job organization specific training, or facilitate classroom professional training and then offer employees promotions based on these academic advancements.

Effect of motivation practice on employee retention

Employee motivation was also considered as a key factor influencing employees' choice to stay with the organization or leave. The motivation spectrum involved parameters such as career growth opportunities, involvement and inclusion of employees in all matters affecting their work, recognition of performance and time to attend to personal life matters. 71.42% of management considered employee motivation a key interest in the management process but only 30.3% of

employees were in agreement that management had an interest in motivating them, with similar views on the recognition of employee good performance by management who rated their employee performance recognition at 42.85%. The low perception on management interest in motivating employees had a negative effect on employees' reception of management's efforts to motivate them.

They had the biggest disparities in opinion regarding employee autonomy, career growth opportunities, and employee equity/fairness and rewarding of good performance, where management rated the implementation or practice positively, while non-management rated them as being inadequately or negatively conducted. Both management and non-management, however, seemed to have similar positive opinions on work-life balance, an indication that there were efforts by management to motivate employees despite the ineffectiveness of some of the incentives.

Employee Retention

None of the management staff considered employee turnover as high but rather determined by availability of vacancies or jobs within the organization determined by donor funding of projects. They considered this as lay-off of employees not needed by the organization at the moment however skilled or resourceful they were, and not negative employee turnover. They however considered staff retention important with 57.14% agreeing that it was a priority despite their not being always in a position to curb it. 71.42% of them agreed that it has an impact on organization performance. 57.14% of management considered layoffs as the most prevalent form of employee turnover ahead of resignations at 28.6% and redundancy at 14.28%.

Conclusions

While Kenya Red Cross has made tangible effort in its organization restructuring efforts in the last three years in the key HR practices fostering staff retention, they still have gaps they need to address in order to successively package itself as an ideal

organization for employees to work in. It is however important to recognize that the nature of the purpose of existence for the organization dictate that implementation and achievement of these HR practices can only be compared to organizations of a similar nature. The organization efforts are therefore significant but not as effective as is required in comparison to the global field in which the organization exists and therefore has to compete effectively for labour in the global market. This study has established the different folds in which staff training, motivation influence staff retention in the organization. Training provides skills for proper job implementation and paves the way for promotions and additional responsibilities leading to career growth. This study showed that while employee skills were satisfactory at KRCS in East and Central Kenya and not a major performance impediment, there was desire among employees to keep learning and improving and they mainly desired it more for career growth purposes as opposed to a key to bettering the performance of their currently held jobs. Among the motivation incentives studied in this research, the organization seemed to be achieving work life balances sufficiently but there was an implied need for improvement in the other incentives of employee involvement by supervisors in decision making, autonomy, career growth opportunities and, performance reward and recognition.

In gauging staff retention, majority of staff rated performance as satisfactory and few rated it as high and yet majority of them also rated their work environment as good and their skills as sufficient suggesting that motivation to perform is not at its best and commitment to build a future within the organization wanting. The low rate of long serving employees and employees who see themselves sticking around long term is also not desirable. Perhaps the biggest and most obvious expression of absence of long term commitment is the mention of lack of job security within the organization, implying they will be moving on in the near future.

Recommendations

The organization is aware of the broader HR practices that enhance employee retention. However it needs to consider the parameters involved in proper implementation of these practices and identify those that they are not factoring or need to improve on and act accordingly. The organization also needs to look into what causes the varying opinions on their HR practices that cause some employees to recognize their existence and gauge them as being positively manifested while others disagree. The organization therefore needs to determine whether the differences are as a result of miscommunication, inequity, or misconception, and address the differences.

Employees need to see the positive impact of their continuous training not just to the organization but to themselves. Their high skill improves organization output but does not lead to career enhancement for them and this makes them seek other employment opportunities. The organization therefore needs to chart career paths for their job descriptions and draw out the stages of growth along each career path indicating the qualifiers for growth from one stage to the next.

There is need for more stable employment to provide job security and the organization needs to source for more funding opportunities and develop all round employees with job descriptions that also have some tasks that are long enduring even in the absence of a donor funded project to provide continuity for highly qualified staff. It is costly for the organization to have to recruit highly skilled labour afresh every time they receive funding only to lose them to competitors after equipping them with skills through further training, and experience.

Areas for Further Research

This research studied the HR practices influencing employee retention at KRCS in Eastern and Central Kenya but the same has not been done for the other regions in Kenya where the organization operates to determine the organizational outlook. It is difficult to effect organization-wide policy modifications based on one region in isolation therefore further research for the remaining regions should be conducted to come up with policies that encompass

the needs of all regions. There are also factors such as job insecurity in the humanitarian sector which is a problem affecting all industry players and there is need for further research to determine how it can be curbed. It is also necessary to determine how

organizations can develop a total reward system that can yield an acceptable level of satisfaction, though not full satisfaction, among an organization's employees across the board.

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