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TELECOMMUNICATION COMPANIES IN KENYA; A CASE OF SAFARICOM PUBLIC LIMITED COMPANY**

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ABSTRACT

The main objective of this study was to investigate the influence of competency management on Employee Retention in the Mobile Telecommunication companies in Kenya; a case of Safaricom Public Limited Company. A descriptive research design was used. The target population comprised 4192 employees in the Safaricom Mobile telecommunication company in Kenya from which a sample of 351 respondents was drawn from three strata; top management, supervisory, and general staff. Sampling was carried out by stratified and simple random techniques. Data was collected by use of a questionnaire whose items were adapted from the relevant previous studies. Percentages were used to initially analyse the data. Inferential statistics were obtained by carrying out correlations analysis; bivariate, and multiple linear regression analyses, to test for the degree of association (correlations) between pair of variables in relation to the influence of competency management on employee retention. The results revealed that there is a positive and significant relationship between competency management and Employee Retention in Mobile Telecommunication companies in Kenya. It was clear therefore that, competency management should always be considered as a key component and outcome of strategic human resource management for enhanced employee retention and performance. Organizations should consider competency management as core HR practices if they were to retain their employees. The study recommended a longitudinal research for an in-depth examination of the Talent Management Practices and employee retention.

Key Words: Competency Management, Gap Analysis, Performance Assessment, Competency Analysis

INTRODUCTION

In the modern day competition, talent has become a precious resource, sought and fought over by competitors in a global ‘war for talent’ (Cheese, Thomas & Craig, 2008). For most organizations, filling key positions is a very important means of developing and ensuring sustainability of the competitive edge (Thunissen, Bosselie & Fruytier, 2013). Retention of talented employees is the priority of many organizations and it is the key differentiator of human capital management in many organizations (Mohammed, 2015).

Organizations have increasingly recruited talent away from their competitors, creating retention tension (Capelli, 2015). The demand for competent employees is high especially for key decision-making workforce; therefore organizations are exposed to a continuous competitive fight for the best and talented employees (Kibui, 2015). Studies have shown that employees who are satisfied as a result of proper career management practices always tend to be committed to an organization hence stay for longer (Cooper-Hakim & Viswesvaran, 2005), and employees who are satisfied and committed are more likely to stay with the organization (Ngirande & Muzana, 2014).

Talent management practices consist of a wide range of activities which different organizations adopt such as compensation management, talent attraction, talent development, talent retention, performance management, competency management, skill development, training and development, learning and development, leadership development, succession planning, career management, workforce planning and many others (Bersin & Deloitte, 2010; Armstrong, 2010). These are methods employed by organizations to assist in the retention of their employees (Human Capital Institute, 2008). The practices adopted generally differ from industry to industry in many cases and certain practices are more suitable for certain industries over others (Ochieng, 2016).

The overall attitude toward TM practices differs from country to country, while findings on TM in

emerging-market firms show that at different levels TM challenges in all of these countries are to a larger extent influenced by the country’s cultural, its organizational, institutional, industrial, and other individual factors (Cooke *et al.*, 2010). Moreover, effective implementation of TM practices in organizations has a number of country-level consequences that can be measured by different economic development or competitiveness indicators (Morley *et al.*, 2015)

Statement of the Problem

Currently, organizations are facing the challenge of retaining their skilled talent (Schuler, 2011; Scullion, 2010; Tarique & Schuler, 2010). According to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (2012), at least 20 per cent of employees leave their organisation, this severe drain of talents from organizations has not spared mobile telecommunication sector. The high rate of employee turnover in these organizations can be attributed to the fact that many managers have dismissed talent management as a non-issue and have not put in place strategies to retain talent in their organization (Rono & Kiptum, 2017). Usually, the lack of staff retention in these organizations has had adverse effects on service delivery (Ng’ethe, Iravo & Namusonge, 2012). According to the Annual Report, Safaricom has experienced a staff turnover of approximately 6.0 per cent (Safaricom Annual Report, 2016), 20 percent Airtel (Nding’ori, 2015; Odembo, 2013) and 35 percent in Telkom Kenya (Muteti, 2013). Several studies have been done on talent management (Ochieng, 2016; Ndung’u & Omondi, 2015; Silvia, 2014; Omondi, 2013; Wambui, 2012), many of whom have studied about how talent management affects competitive advantage (Hejase *et al.*, 2016; Chepkwony, 2012) however, there is limited research that has been done on how talent management influence employee retention in the mobile telecommunication industry in Kenya. Nonetheless, despite a significant growth in talent management literature, most studies were carried out in other sectors such as banks (Karuri, 2015;

Ndung'u & Omondi, 2015; Kibui, Gachunga & Namusonge, 2014; Silvia, 2013), commercial state corporations (Mwajuma, 2015; Njeri, 2014; Kagwiria, 2013; Wambui, 2012), training institutions (Katitia, 2014), in supply chain (Ochieng, 2016) and healthcare industry (Mukweyi, 2016; Karem, Kachori, Josee & Okibo, 2014). Therefore, there were significant gaps between competency management and employee retention scholarship in mobile telecommunication industry in Kenya, which this study sought to address.

Study objective

The objective of this study was to investigate the influence of competency management on Employee Retention in the Mobile Telecommunication Companies in Kenya; a case of Safaricom Plc.

Research Hypotheses

- H_{01} Competency Management has no significant influence on employee retention in Mobile Telecommunication Companies; a case of Safaricom PLC.

LITERATURE REVIEW

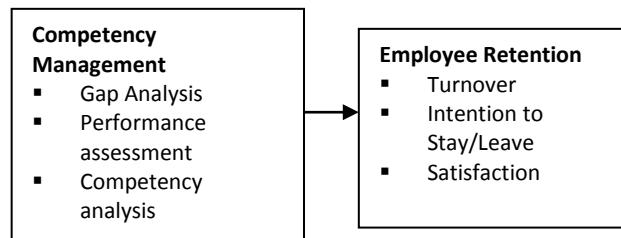
Theoretical Review

Human Capital Theory

This theory assists in the evaluation of the influence people have on a business entity and the value addition on the shares by providing a measuring yardstick upon which future employees, business plans and procedures are structured to improve on the effectiveness of Talent Management (Ochieng, 2016). The added value that people can contribute to an organization is emphasized by human capital theory (Armstrong, 2012). It considers people as assets and emphasizes that the investment by organizations in its personnel generates profitable returns. The theory therefore reinforces the beliefs of human resource management and human capital management. The Human capital theory is closely associated with the resource-oriented perception of the organization, as referred to by Barney (1991). According to this view, the sustained competitive advantage is achieved when the company has the

human resources that cannot be imitated or substituted by its rivals in the market. The competitive advantage a company needs to survive is obtained by using methods different from those used by its competition; therefore, each company will try to find (consciously or not) rare resources that are impossible to imitate, copy or replaced (Buta, 2015). According to the Human Capital theory the stock of knowledge and all that implies the knowledge becomes the ultimate resource for companies, i.e. the resource that ensures / maintains competitive advantage; so human resources in organizations as equivalent to human capital, become in time an important vector in carrying the knowledge that is inimitable (Manolescu, 2003).

Conceptual Framework



Independent Variable

Figure 1: Conceptual framework

Source: Author (2018)

Review of Variables

Competency Management

Competency management, the lynch pin to talent management, helps organizations identify and define the current and anticipated knowledge, skills and/or behaviours required for optimum success (Aberdeen Group, 2007). Competency management; an integrated set of HR activities aimed at maximizing the development and the use of employee competencies to increase individual effectiveness, and eventually, to increase organizational effectiveness (Van Beirendonck, 1998).

Competency management is about assisting organizations understand the competency profile of each of their employee, each team and the organization. It starts with defining employees'

competencies, roles, capturing their assessment and analysing the results. These results are then used in the development and deployment of people based on their core competencies (Andrew, 2011). Competency management is significant to talent management as it places competencies at the core of TM. This is a complete contrast to traditional job analysis; competency management ties the derivation of job specifications to the strategy of the organization (Sita & Pinapati, 2013).

The definition of competencies in a structured and consistent manner helps to bind and consolidate the organization's TM processes; they act as a common denominator (Riitva & Viitala, 2007). Even though competencies were designed with emphasis on training and development, organizations must start using them in virtually all HR areas of functionality. This is because competencies can provide the linkage for developing a truly integrated human resource system (Andrew, 2011). Thus, by using the same competencies throughout the organization a specific language is created based, on which the organization's strategy can be translated into human resource practices. Competency management if successfully implemented and well embedded can bring about many advantages for the organization (Becker & Huselid, 1999).

Generally, competencies link the larger organizational matters with a range of talent management applications (CHCI, 2012). Right from hiring and selection, organizations have a free hand in the use of behavioural-event interview techniques, scoring checklists in the identification of talented individuals who possess the right competencies that are essential for success in the organization. In general, organizations dedicate a greater amount of effort in the identification of talent which is scarce and in areas that are considered difficult in development which are considered for immediate success (Schoonover, 2011; Washington State HR, 2012). Through such effort in hiring, organizations have to safeguard on the issue of retention.

By the incorporation of competencies in to the learning, development and the career planning process of the organization, competencies become not only essential but useful in a number of ways. Over time, the competency-based curriculum design has become an all-time practise for many organizations. Additionally, a number of organizations have continually used career planning practice across bands or roles (Wuim-Pam, 2014). In the recent past, competencies have been utilized to develop a variety of initiatives ranging from multisource feedback and assessment to coaching tools and complete and comprehensive learning frameworks. It is notable that, it is through the performance management process that organizations can succinctly communicate the behaviors important to the overall individual success. They can also help individuals see how well they demonstrate the competencies and develop plans for individual improvement and eventual retention of this talent in the organization (Wuim-Pam, 2014)

Organizations implement competency management in order to; drive and instil a performance culture, make more precise, target-based and effective hiring decisions and to integrate talent management initiatives around a "common language" (Schweyer, 2012). Competencies serve as the common language to align disparate talent processes and are at the very core of any talent management strategy. Competency management enables organizations to identify the critical skills, behaviors, and knowledge required to attract the right talent, manage talent, and develop talent to ensure a sustainable organization (CHCI, 2012). It is from this that an organization's competency management can be defined as that activity that aims to safeguard and strengthen an organization's operating capability and competitiveness by means of its knowledge base. Through competence management an organization is able to nurture and develop its core competencies on all levels, right from the general staff through the management in all the critical areas of operation. This demands for proper direction, clear definition, accurate

evaluation, careful planning and development (Schweyer, 2012).

The use of competencies in talent management appears to be growing. For example, Mercer HR Consulting 2004-2005 U.S. Compensation Planning Survey reported that just 36 percent of companies used a competency-based performance management system at that time, while 16 percent were considering it. A study by Arthur Andersen in 2001 found out that 48 percent of participating organizations used competency-based performance management systems. While it is impossible to make direct comparisons between the studies, it is fair to say that competency management has gone mainstream and is now a widely accepted best practice in talent management. Nonetheless, the use of competencies in organizations is, for the most part, in its infancy and very much a work in progress (Arthur Andersen, 2001).

To ascertain retention it is necessary that, job-competency profiles, also referred to as job-competency models, are created by the identification of the competencies necessary for someone to be successful in a role and the specification of the degree of proficiency essential for each one. The competencies settled on however, depends on a number of critical factors, but is often based on the competencies that a high performer is already demonstrating in the role assigned (Lexonis, 2012).

In a survey conducted by the Corporate Executive Board (CEB) (2014), a majority 85 per cent of Fortune 500 organizations studied tend to feel that they have a shortage of global leaders and talent supply. Therefore, to gain the all-important and critical advantage in the globalized marketplace, it is becoming essential for organizations to come up strongly and develop their strategic competency models that are tailored to meet their strategic business objectives. In addition to the development of employees in specific sectoral subjects, the most successful individual contributors and leaders are “T-shaped thinkers” – those that have a deep functional subject matter expertise in addition to a

broad cross-functional knowledge base in the organization (CEB, 2014).

The development of a robust set of competencies organizationally and at the job level normally establishes a framework that supports the growth of organizations globally and across the critical dimensions of the talent wheel that include but are not limited to: recruitment and selection, onboarding, job profiles, learning and development, training, performance management, career development, and succession planning (IHRDC, 2014).

The establishment of the core competencies at the organizational level assists employees to understand how the organization views talent and also promotes behaviors that are a reflection of the organization's vision and values (Andrew, 2011). The development of a competency framework is important as it also provides for a more consistent set of behaviors and language that can be used across talent management in the organization. Finally, competencies facilitate talent management strategy discussions in the organization and can therefore be leveraged into any organization's talent management initiatives (IHRDC, 2014).

Employee Retention

Employee retention issues are emerging as the most critical workforce management challenges of the immediate future (Rono & Kiptum, 2017). Once an organization has captured skilled employees, the return on investment requires the closing of the back door to prevent them from walking out (Kubaison, Mukangu & Rutiria, 2015). Most employees are likely to remain with the organization if; they believe that the organization shows more interest in and concern for them, know what is expected of them, are given a role that fits their capabilities, and receive meaningful and regular positive feedback and recognition (Samuel & Chipunza, 2013).

Employee retention and talent management practices of successful organizations are fundamental elements to the maintenance of their leadership and development in the marketplace

(Kurbetta & Mehta, 2014). It is important therefore that, an organization's talent management strategy contributes more to; employee engagement practices, effective recruitment and retention program for employees. This in essence fosters a positive employer brand and most employees will consider staying in the organization longer, which minimizes turnover and turnover intention (Julia, Hughes & Rog, 2008).

Retention of an organization's talent; that employee who is a strong performer, has high potential or is in critical jobs is quite important during economic recoveries when organizations are competing aggressively for market share and talent (Kigo, 2016). This key talent immensely contributes to the organization performance and to future performance because they often become leaders. Their loss on the other hand costs considerably more since their impact and overall contribution to the organization is far greater than that of typically average employees (McMullen & Mark, 2012).

Retention of talent in organisations is critical in the preservation of skills and knowledge in an organization (Chikumbi, 2011). By so doing, an organization can avoid losing customers so that they maintain high quality products that are marked by high sales. Research indicates that employees who work together for a long time enjoy an open and healthy working environment, good rapport with supervisors, effective succession planning and organisational knowledge and learning (Mendez & Stander, 2011). For instance, a good compensation package is important in retaining employees, offering an attractive, competitive benefits package with components such as life insurance, disability insurance and flexi-time tends to motivates employees to commit themselves to an organization for longer (Ahmed, 2016).

It is important at the same time difficult to retain talented employees under soaring unemployment levels. It is critical to retain them because of high training and recruitment costs therefore organizations use rewards to retain employees (Simon North, 2011). Furthermore, Ratna and Chawla (2012) argued that retention is more

important than hiring, even though hiring knowledgeable people is essential for an employer. Ratna and Chawla (2012) state that "The process of employee retention will benefit an organization as the cost of employee turnover adds hundreds of thousands of money to a company's expense." It also means that if a company has a higher employee retention rate, it will motivate potential employees to join the company.

McNally (2011) found some ways of retaining valued employees, such as designing a compensation programme to reward valued employees, career opportunity, development and growth paths they need to develop, encouraging work-life balance and good communication. McNally stated that "Give your most valued employees the best opportunities, coaching and rewards, knowing that the key to your company's success is their retention."

To guarantee retention, employees in an organization must be able to see a clearly defined career path in their areas of operation, it is only then that they can stay longer (Bagga, 2013). Provision of great career development opportunities makes the employees to stay in the in addition, creating a positive social work environment and adding content to the jobs and tasks to be done by the employees enhances employee satisfaction and commitment, these all guarantee stay (Meganck, 2007).

In a study to identify ways of retaining talented employees in professional organizations Govaerts *et. al.*, (2010) sampled and studied 972 employees and concluded that, to retain employees it is important to pay attention to learning of employees. Learning and development of employees plays a key role in talent management strategy. Organizations should freely allow employees to learn more and do more in what they are good at in their areas of specialization. This kind of autonomy leads to satisfied employees, hence retention. The study identified a strong and positive relationship in intention to stay with the company and age of the employees. Using different talent management practices, the company is able to

retain employee for a longer period, the less will be the intention of employee to leave job (Mehta, 2014).

In order to increase retention, managers must consider training of employees to attain the necessary KSA to perform better as critical, this is to ensure that younger employees are almost at par with regard to skill acquisition with older counterparts in the organization (Taplin, Winston & Winterton, 2007). Proper-trained are always loyal to the organization (Leidner, 2013). Well-crafted employee training program that considers the interests of older employees is important for better older employee retention (Marjorie, Stassen & Templer, 2004). Finally, it is critical to retain talented employees otherwise it leads to greater wastage of resources in training costs by organizations. With this in mind an effective employee retention program should be adopted by organizations to maintain an effective workforce as well as meet operational requirements (Kurbetta & Mehta, 2014).

Empirical Review

A study by Oladapo (2014) on Impact of Talent Management on Retention in Strayer University. The study sought to unravel the challenges and successes of talent management programs and the reasons why some organizations choose not to have a program. Findings of the study revealed that for the organizations sampled with a talent management programs (69 per cent of those studied), respondents agreed strongly that an effective and strategic talent management program was an important aspect despite the fact that the organization faced challenges in the implementation. They reveal that, opportunity for job advancement is the most significant factor affecting retention rate. For the organizations sampled without a talent management program (the remaining 31 per cent of those studied), indicated absence of executive management support.

Ochieng (2016) carried out a study to establish the relationship between Talent Management Practices

and Employee retention at DHL Supply Chain Kenya Ltd. The study employed a descriptive research design. The findings reveal a strong positive significant correlation between DHL's talent management practices and employee retention.

Isfahani and Busatani (2014) carried out a study on the effects of talent management on employee retention for staff of the University of Isfahan in Iran and found out that there is a positive relationship between talent management and employee retention regardless of the firms' characteristic.

A study by Mangusho (2015) on Evaluation of Talent Management on Employees Performance in Beverage Industry: a case of Delmonte Kenya Limited established that through career management practices such as job rotation there was increased employee competence and therefore achievement of high employee performance. The study also established that through a clear plan for the career growth and progression the organization was able to develop its talent which directly influenced employee performance (Mangusho, 2015).

METHODOLOGY

A research design is the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). This study used the lenses of the pragmatism philosophy to adopt a descriptive study research design. Descriptive studies are data collection methods and techniques which are based on an in-depth rather than in breadth analysis of a research unit in detail. The study targeted a population of 4192 employees of Safaricom (Safaricom Annual Report, 2016). These employees mainly categorized into three levels of operation; top management, supervisory and general staff. The instrument for the collection of data as used in this study was a structured questionnaire. The questionnaires were self-administered to the top management, supervisors and the general staff. Correlations and regressions were inferentially used to test for the various objectives. Linear and multiple regressions were also used to establish the direction and

strength of the relationship between talent management practices and employee retention

RESULTS

Competency Management

This study sought to find out the extent to which Safaricom Plc carried out competency management

on its employees. Competency management was operationalized on two construct; performance assessment and competency analysis. All the measures of competency management were used on a five point likert scale from 1=strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree. The results obtained were presented in table 1:

Table 1: Competency Management Practices

Competency Management Practices	SA	A	N	D	SD
Performance assessment					
My organization carries out performance assessment based on individual competencies	44.5	42.7	9.1	2.9	0.7
My organization always encourages employees to undertake self-development initiatives in their area of operation	39.8	44.2	11.7	2.6	1.8
My organization regularly administers competence tests to ascertain our levels of skills in different aspects of our job/tasks	40.5	38.7	6.6	12.8	1.5
My organization allows all employees to utilize talent skills	30.3	43.1	18.2	4.4	4.0
Competence Analysis					
My organization always stresses the importance of different competencies for different tasks	61.3	26.6	12.0	0.0	0.0
My organization allocates tasks based on specific competencies	31.0	42.7	25.5	0.7	0.0
My organization regularly looks for specific skills during recruitment and selection	45.6	44.9	8.4	0.4	0.7
My organization regularly undertakes training needs assessment to help identify training needs	47.4	33.6	16.1	2.6	0.4

Key; SD=Strongly agree, A= Agree, N= Neither agree nor disagree, D= Disagree; SD= Strongly Disagree

On performance assessment, table 1 revealed that Safaricom Plc carried out performance assessment based on individual competencies. This statement was favoured by 87.2 per cent of respondents against the 3.6 per cent who cumulatively disagreed. In addition, 9.1 per cent neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. A majority of respondents 85.0 percent, cumulatively agreed (39.8= strongly agreed, 44.2= agreed) that the organization always encouraged employees to undertake in self-development activities in their area of operation. This was against a paltry 4.4 percent who were against the statement. 11.7 percent did not disagree or agree with the statement. 79.2 percent of respondents acknowledged that the organization administered regular competence tests to its employees to ascertain levels of skills in different aspects of job/tasks. This was against 12.8 percent of

respondents who strongly disagreed and 1.5 per cent who disagreed with a cumulative percent of 14.2. Only 6.6 per cent would not agree or disagree with this statement. Similarly, table 1 revealed that most respondents (73.4 per cent) agreed that Safaricom Plc allowed them to utilize their skills in their areas of operation. This was against 8.4 per cent of respondents who disagreed and 18.2 per cent, who were undecided about the statement.

On competence analysis, the results from table 1 indicated that Safaricom Plc stressed the importance of different competencies for different tasks. This was supported by 87.9 per cent of respondents who either agreed (26.6 per cent) or strongly agreed (61.3 per cent) with the statement. On the other hand, only 12.0 per cent were in neither agreement nor disagreement with this statement. In addition, a majority (73.7 per cent) also agreed cumulatively that tasks in the

organization are allocated based on specific competencies. On the other hand, 0.7 per cent of respondents disagreed with the statement as declared. Another statement sought to establish from respondents whether the organization looked for specific skills and competencies during recruitment and selection. Overwhelming 90.5 per cent respondents agreed while only 1.1 per cent disagreed. 8.4 per cent of respondents did not agree neither or disagreement that Safaricom Plc looks for specific skills and competencies during recruitment and selection. In all responses, there was consistency to indicate that Safaricom Plc had a competency management framework in place that emphasizes on performance based on skills set and competencies and that task allocation at the organization is based on specific skills and

competencies. The cumulative agreement of 87.9, 73.7, and 90.5 percent was indicative of the fact that competency management was a core practice at Safaricom Plc.

Employee Retention

The study went further to determine the extent to which employees at Safaricom Plc were committed to their organizations and how such commitment was influenced by talent management practices. The predicted variable of employee retention was operationalized by the indicators of turnover, intention to stay and intention to leave. Similarly, all measures of employee commitment used a five point likert scale as from 1= strongly disagree (SD) to 5=strongly agree (SA). The results obtained were as shown in table 2:

Table 2: Employee Retention

Employee Retention Practices	SA per cent	A per cent	N per cent	D per cent	SD per cent
Turnover					
My organization has had minimal rate of turnover	47.4	31.8	8.8	6.6	5.5
Intention to Stay/Satisfaction					
I have no intention of leaving the organization	34.3	27.4	23.7	2.9	11.7
Within this organization, my work gives me satisfaction.	32.1	37.2	15.7	8.4	6.6
I see a future for myself within this organization.	24.8	41.6	20.8	6.9	5.8
If it were up to me, I will be working for this organization for the next five years.	41.6	26.3	23.4	3.6	5.1
I love working for this organization.	38.0	43.8	17.9	0.0	0.4
The work I am doing is very important to me.	51.1	39.1	4.0	5.5	0.4
Intention to leave					
If I could start over again, I would choose to work for another organization.	31.4	26.6	21.2	4.7	16.1
If I received an attractive job offer from another company, I would take the job.	61.3	19.3	11.7	4.7	2.9

On turnover the findings presented revealed that a majority (31.8 per cent) of respondents simply agreed that Safaricom Plc had a minimal turnover while 47.4 per cent of them strongly agreed with the same statement. However, this was against 5.5 per cent who strongly disagreed with the statement and 6.6 per cent who simply disagreed. A further

8.8 per cent neither agreed nor disagreed with the same statement.

On intention to stay/satisfaction the findings showed that a majority of respondents at 34.3 per cent (strongly agreed) and 27.4 per cent (agreed) of respondents had no intention to leave Safaricom Plc. This was against 11.7 per cent (strongly disagreed) and 2.9 per cent (disagreed) who felt like

it would be easier for them to leave. This was against 23.7 per cent of respondents who were unsure whether they wanted to leave Safaricom Plc or not. Also, 32.1 per cent (strongly agreed) and 37.2 per cent (agreed) of respondents revealed that they were satisfied by the work they were doing at Safaricom Plc. This was against 5.8 per cent (strongly disagree) and 6.9 per cent (disagree) who did not feel the same way. Similarly, the result indicated that 41.6 per cent (strongly agreed) and 26.3 per cent (agreed) if it were up to them, they would still work for Safaricom Plc for the next five years. However, 3.6 per cent (disagreed) and 5.1 per cent (strongly disagreed) that they would not be working at Safaricom Plc in the next five years. 23.4 per cent were unsure if they would work for Safaricom Plc in the next five years. This meant that a majority of the respondents (67.9 per cent) were willing to work for the organization for the next five years as compared to 8.7 per cent who seemed uncomfortable with the same.

In addition, the findings revealed that a majority, 81.8 per cent (38.0 strongly agreed, 43.8, agreed) of respondents revealed that they loved working for the organization. This was against 0.4 per cent (strongly disagreed) of respondents who did not feel the same way and 17.9 per cent who were not sure. At the same time, 90.1 per cent (51.1 strongly agreed 39.1 per cent agreed) of respondents felt that the work they were doing at Safaricom Plc was very important to them, unlike 5.5 per cent (disagreed) and 0.4 per cent (strongly disagreed) who felt it was not. These findings could also mean that these employees were satisfied with their current organization and therefore did not feel like taking up other jobs elsewhere.

On the intention to leave, results revealed that most respondents, 26.4 per cent (agreed) and 31.4 per cent (strongly agreed) felt that, if they were to start their careers afresh, then it would not be with the current organization. This was against 16.1 per cent (strongly disagreed) and 4.7 per cent (disagreed) who felt that if they were to start afresh, then they would start at Safaricom Plc. 61.3 per cent (strongly agreed) and 19.3 per cent

(agreed) that if they could receive an attractive job offer from another organization, they would not hesitate to leave Safaricom Plc. This was against 2.9 per cent (strongly disagreed) and 4.7 per cent (disagreed) who felt that should they receive another attractive job offer they would stay with Safaricom Plc. 11.7 per cent of the respondents were unsure whether they would turn down an attractive offer or take.

Consequently, 20.9 per cent (strongly disagreed) and 21.3 per cent (disagreed) were negative to the statement that they would consider working elsewhere had they not put much of their effort in their current organizations. However, 29.9 per cent (agreed) and 9.1 per cent (strongly agreed) responded in the affirmative. Nonetheless, a majority 52.0 per cent (agreed) and 24.0 per cent (strongly agreed) felt that their respective organizations were nice places to work which they loved. This was contrary to the 7.9 per cent (strongly disagreed) and 3.9 per cent (disagreed) who felt the opposite.

From the findings it was clear that majority of respondents were willing to stay in the current organization. They were satisfied with the work they were doing and were committed to Safaricom Plc. The findings however, indicate clearly that a majority of respondents would take an attractive job offer any time should it come their way. This is a clear indication of the threat Safaricom Plc faces from rival telecommunication firms in retention.

Correlation on Competency Management and Employee Retention

On correlation analysis, the results indicated that the correlation between competency management variable and employee retention was strong, positive and significant ($r=0.768^{**}$, $p < 0.001$). The findings were supported Pinapati (2013) in a study about competency management as a tool of talent management: A study in Indian IT organizations. They were supported by those of Schweyer (2012) who investigated the role of competency in Integrated Talent Management. Jain (2013), Kumar (2013) and Chitalu (2011) findings also reveal the

same. Wuim-Pam (2014) and Kibui (2015) also corroborate these findings in the study, Employee core competencies for effective Talent Management. The study concluded that competency management through the tying core competencies with talent management was a win-win proposition as it provided organizations with a means of upgrading and retaining their valuable workforce.

Regression of Competency Management on employee retention

Table 3: Competency Management on Employee Retention

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics		
					R Square Change	F Change	Sig. F Change
1	.768 ^a	.590	.589	.53573	.590	392.144	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Competency Management

The regression analysis output in table 3 yielded a coefficient R value of 0.768 and R² of 0.590 which implied that 59.0 per cent of variance in employee retention can be predicted by competence management. The rest of the percentage could be explained by other variables not included in this model. The F test statistic gave a value of F= 392.144, P< 0.001, which was large enough to support the goodness of fit of the model in explaining the variance in the dependent variable (employee retention). This finding corroborated the fact that competency management is a useful predictor of employee retention. This meant that employees who experience higher levels of competency management will also have highest levels of employee retention as compared to the rest.

Furthermore, the adjusted R square (.589) also attempts to give a more honest value that tends to estimate the R square for the entire population at 58.9 per cent. In addition, the rest of variance could be explained by other variables included in the multiple regression model. It also showed that with a p value of less than 0.001, there was less than 1 in

Hypothesis predicted that competency management has a significance influence on employee retention in the Mobile Telecommunication companies in Kenya; a case of Safaricom Plc. Accordingly, the quantity of variation of the independent variable (competency management) on the dependent variable (employee retention) was found by regressing the two variables. In comparison, the results from a correlation matrix the results revealed that competency management had a positive and significant influence on overall employee retention r=0.768**, p<0.01).

1000 chances that the influence of competency management on employee retention could be described by a flat line. In addition, the regression analysis results revealed that there was a positive and significant relationship between competency management and employee retention ($\beta= 0.476$, p < 0.001). It thus implied that employees who experience high levels of competency management could most likely to be retained in the organization. The coefficients of the fitted model using the “unstandardized coefficients” were given in the table 4;

Table 4: Regression Coefficients of Competency Management

Model	Coefficients ^a					t	Sig.		
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Beta					
	B	Std. Error							
1	(Constant)	-1.190	.268			-4.450	.000		
	Competency Management	1.260	.064	.768		19.803	.000		

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Retention

Similarly, the results obtained revealed that the unstandardized regression coefficients β value of the computed (composite index) scores of competency management was 1.260 with a t-value of 19.803, at a significance level of $p < 0.01$. This implied that for every 1 per cent increase in competency management, there was a predicted increase in the percentage of employee retention of zero. Having achieved the objective, the study rejected the null hypothesis that: H_01 : *Competency Management has no significant influence on employee retention in the Mobile Telecommunication companies in Kenya; a case of Safaricom Plc*

SUMMARY

The objective of this study aimed at finding out the influence of competency management on employee retention in the mobile telecommunication sector in Kenya. Competency management was measured from the perspective of organizational activities and availability of competency mapping for the purpose of encouraging competency based assignment of roles among employees on a 5-point likert scale. The predictive power as calculated by R-squared indicated that building competency management could explain 76.8 per cent of variance in employee retention. The descriptive results showed that telecommunication companies assign employees roles based on their specific competencies to ensure there is a match between tasks and skills. Further, the correlation and linear regression analysis revealed that competency management had the highest and a positive and significant influence on employee retention in the mobile

telecommunication sector in Kenya. Therefore, the hypothesis stating that competency management has no significant influence on employee retention in the mobile telecommunication sector in Kenya was rejected

CONCLUSIONS

The study sought to find out whether competency management influences employee retention. The study concluded that competency management had a significant influence on employee retention in the mobile telecommunication sector in Kenya.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It was recommended that organizations should provide their employees with appropriate training on issues of talent management.

Areas for Further Research

Future studies should also focus on mediating roles of organizational support, and employee commitment. The studies should also look exhaustively on the influence of Skill development on employee retention.

Similarly, future studies should also incorporate a survey across the mobile telecommunication companies so that findings obtained can be used for generalization. Finally, future studies should also focus on other sectors such as manufacturing, banking and IT. If done, these studies will bring out unique characteristics of TMPs and their overall influence on employee retention. This will be necessary for HR managers, policy making and also legislation. Similarly, the studies can also explore public service sectors.

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