

Influence of Supervision on Employee Retention in Public Universities in Central Rift Valley Region of Kenya.

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ABSTRACT

The Public Universities are navigating an increasingly competitive landscape, necessitating the retention of key employees to secure and maintain a competitive edge. Globalization and innovative management practices have intensified competition for public universities, both locally and internationally. Critical human resource management practices such as promotion, training and development, remuneration, and employee supervision directly influence employee perceptions of their organization. This study aims to explore the impact of supervision on employee retention, grounded in expectancy theory. Utilizing a descriptive research design, the study targeted a population of 2,462 individuals, including teaching, administrative, and support staff. A sample of 217 respondents was selected through purposive, stratified, and simple random sampling techniques. The reliability of the research instruments was assessed using Cronbach's alpha and a coefficient score of 0.87 was obtained indicating high reliability. Primary data was collected via questionnaires. Data analysis was performed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), employing both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics were presented through frequencies, means, standard deviations, and percentages in tables and charts, while inferential statistics included Pearson's correlation analysis and both simple and multiple regression analysis, with hypotheses tested at a 5% significance level. Results from the Pearson's correlation analysis indicated a significant positive relationship between employee supervision and retention ($p < 0.05$). Regression analysis confirmed that supervision significantly influences employee retention ($p < 0.05$). Consequently, the study recommends that universities develop and implement effective supervisory support guidelines. Future research could explore the role of other factors such as compensation structures, institutional culture or career development opportunities in influencing employee retention, particularly in different types of academic institutions or in other geographical regions.

Keywords: Employee Supervision, Employee Retention

INTRODUCTION

Employee retention has become a pressing challenge in workforce management. Brenyah and Tetteh (2016) describe it as the measures organizations take to encourage employees to remain with them for as long as possible, noting that skilled employees are vital to organizational success, and their departure can have severe consequences. Hom (2005) defines employee retention as the processes that promote loyalty and encourage employees to stay until project completion or longer.

Research indicates that future successful organizations will be those that adapt their practices to the realities of today's work environment, where innovation, creativity, flexibility, and employee retention are crucial (Armstrong, 2012). The modern workforce is diverse, with varying motivations and values. To remain competitive, universities must ensure that high performers are motivated to stay while addressing low performance effectively (Nouri & Parker, 2013).

To effectively manage their workforce, universities need to adopt innovative human resource practices. Sorasak (2014) identifies a range of practices, from high to low performance. High-performance practices that can be implemented include job security, institutional culture, career development, selective recruitment, competitive compensation, recognition, and effective communication. These practices are shown to enhance organizational performance and boost employee retention. Previous studies highlight a connection between human resource practices and employee retention, indicating that organizational culture, fair remuneration, recognition, a positive work environment, and training can significantly influence employee commitment (Haider et al., 2014).

Supervision

Supervision refers to the process of overseeing, instructing, and guiding employees with a focus on achieving organizational objectives through the effective management of tasks, skills, and performance. Unlike leadership, which involves creating a vision and inspiring others, supervision is task-oriented and emphasizes adherence to set goals and competencies (Obiwuru et al., 2011). Quality supervision enhances retention by providing direct support, instructions, and guidance that help employees improve their skills and productivity. Effective supervision ensures that employees are equipped with the necessary knowledge and competencies, which is vital in retaining key personnel.

Employee supervision plays a critical role in organizational success. Obiwuru et al. (2011) emphasize that management approaches and leadership styles directly impact an organization's ability to retain its workforce. Quality supervision and supportive leadership enhance retention by valuing employee contributions.

Employee Retention

Haider et al. (2014) define employee retention as a strategic process that begins with understanding why employees choose to join an institution. Factors such as institutional structure, culture, work environment, employee programs, compensation, and promotion structures play a vital role in retention. By addressing these factors, institutions can significantly reduce employee turnover. Employees often make job decisions based on their perceptions of safety and appreciation in their roles (Yang & Alves, 2021).

According to Silva and Shinyashiki (2014), academic staff retention is a pressing concern for higher education institutions, with turnover influenced by factors such as age, marital status, length of service, educational attainment, academic rank, and income. Improvements in these areas can act as incentives for employees to remain within their institutions.

Objective of the Study

To examine the influence of supervision on employee retention in public universities in the Central Rift Valley region of Kenya.

Research Hypothesis

H01: Supervision does not significantly influence employee retention in public universities in the Central Rift Valley region of Kenya.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive research design aimed at capturing the situation and phenomena within the specified population. The cross-sectional nature allowed data to be collected at a single point in time, focusing on the influence of supervision on employee retention in public universities located in Central Rift Valley Region, Nakuru County. The target population consisted of 2,462 employees, encompassing teaching, administrative, and support staff across the main campuses.

Using Yamane's formula (1967) with a 5% margin of error, a sample size of 217 employees was determined. A questionnaire was the primary data collection instrument, designed to gather information on employee supervision and its influence on retention. The questionnaire included a section for demographic information and another focused on employee supervision, measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = extremely dissatisfied, 5 = extremely satisfied). The validity of the instrument was established through face validity, while reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Coefficient alpha, with a threshold of 0.7 deemed acceptable.

Inferential statistics, including Pearson's correlation and regression analysis, were used to test the hypotheses at a 5% significance level. The regression model is expressed as follows:

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \varepsilon$$

Where Y = Employee Retention, α = Constant, β_1 = Regression coefficient, X_1 = Training and Development, and ε = error term.

Supervision Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 reveals that a majority of respondents (71.4%) reported having read their university's service charter while 86.1% felt it was developed with their input, making it easy to follow policies. Additionally, 76.9% agreed that their supervisors were well trained and capable in their role, while 74.6% felt overqualified compared to their supervisors, which affected their productivity. Most respondents (81.6%) felt respected and happy in their work environment, and 77.9% believed their supervisors were receptive to their contributions. Furthermore, 75.6% agreed that their supervisors had confidence in them and empowered them to make important decisions, with 70.1% feeling appreciated. However, 45.8% disagreed that their supervisors strictly follows the service charter, indicating a disconnect between supervisors' practices and established policies. This may stem from the sentiment that many respondents felt overqualified compared to their supervisors, leading to critical perceptions of supervisory performance.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Supervision

	Statement	SD %	D %	N %	A %	SA %	Mean	Std. dev
1	The Service Charter was developed with my input, making it easier to follow policies	1.4	2.3	10.1	58.5	27.6	4.09	0.768
2	I feel respected and happy to work in this university	2.3	4.6	11.5	58.1	23.5	3.96	0.862
3	My supervisor demonstrates confidence in my abilities and allows me to make crucial work decisions	1.8	4.1	18.4	48.4	27.2	3.95	0.888
4	My supervisor is well trained and capable in their role	1.4	3.7	18.0	53.9	23.0	3.94	0.825
5	I feel overqualified compared to my supervisor, which affects my productivity	1.4	6.0	18.0	46.5	28.1	3.94	0.908
6	My supervisor values and listens to my input	1.4	5.5	15.2	56.2	21.7	3.91	0.843
7	I feel valued and recognized for my contributions	0.9	9.2	19.8	43.8	26.3	3.85	0.946
8	I have read and understand the Service Charter of this University	2.8	6.0	19.8	48.8	22.6	3.82	0.941
9	My supervisor strictly follows the Service Charter, ensuring compliance in decision making	19.8	29.0	15.7	27.2	8.3	2.75	1.278

Employee Retention Descriptive Statistics

Table 2 shows that a significant majority of respondents (67.7%) are satisfied with their work at the university, attributing their contentment to effective management practices. Additionally, 69.2% of respondents feel valued and appreciated in their roles. Over half of the participants (53.4%) believe their contributions to the

university are recognized. Notably, 73.7% of respondents have a long tenure at their university and plan to stay for the near future. Furthermore, 47% of respondents feel that, when they are away from the university, they represent the institution as ambassadors, while 64% agree that their work positively reflects on the university. The promotion criteria at their university are perceived as fair and straightforward while majority of respondents expressed agreement with various aspects of employee retention, with an average rating of approximately 4 (indicating agreement).

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Employee Retention

	Employee Retention indicators	SD %	D %	N %	A %	SA %	Mean	Std. dev
1.	My efforts at work are acknowledged	2.8	6.0	22.1	45.2	24.0	3.82	0.959
2.	I have worked here for a long time and intend to remain here for the next few years	2.3	6.0	18.0	59.0	14.7	3.78	0.854
3.	I am satisfied working at this university due to the management practices	1.8	10.6	19.8	45.6	22.1	3.76	0.977
4.	Whenever I am out of this university I feel am an ambassador for this university	6.5	21.2	25.3	34.6	12.4	2.75	1.120
5.	The promotion criteria in this university is fair and straight forward	3.7	10.1	22.1	41.0	23.0	3.70	1.050
6.	My input in this university is appreciated	8.8	17.1	20.7	41.9	11.5	2.70	1.147

Correlation Analysis

Table 3: Pearson's Correlation Analysis showing the relationship between supervision and employee retention

		Super vision	Employee Retention
Supervision	Pearson Correlation	1	.656**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	217	217
Employee Retention	Pearson Correlation	.656**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	217	217

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation analysis revealed a significant positive relationship between supervision and employee retention ($r = 0.656$, $p = 0.000$). This indicates that employees who are satisfied with their supervision tend to have higher retention rates, whereas those who are dissatisfied are more likely to leave their jobs.

Regression Analysis

The objective of the study was to examine the impact of supervision on employee retention. The hypothesis posited that supervision does not significantly affect employee retention among staff at public universities in the Central Rift Valley region of Kenya. This hypothesis was tested using simple regression analysis, and the results are presented below.

Table 4: Results of regression analysis establishing the effects of Supervision on employee retention among employees in universities Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.656 ^a	.430	.428	2.60387

a. Predictors: (Constant), Supervision

Table 5: ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1100.767	1	1100.767	162.352	.000 ^b
	Residual	1457.731	215	6.780		
	Total	2558.498	216			

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Retention

b. Predictors: (Constant), Supervision

Table: 6 Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.179	1.378		2.307	.022
	Supervision	.460	.036	.656	12.742	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Retention

The model summary from the regression analysis in Table 5 indicates that supervision explained 43% of the variance in employee retention at public universities in the Central Rift Valley region of Kenya ($R^2 = 0.430$). This suggests that 57% of the variance in employee retention is attributable to other factors not included in this study. Additionally, the F statistic ($F = 162.352, p = 0.000$) from the ANOVA results demonstrates that the regression model is a good fit, indicating that supervision is a significant predictor of employee retention. Since the p -value of 0.000 is less than 0.05, it can be concluded that supervision significantly influences retention among employees at public universities in the Central Rift Valley region of Kenya. Therefore, the null hypothesis, which stated that supervision does not significantly affect employee retention, is rejected, while the alternative hypothesis, which asserts that supervision does have a significant effect, is accepted.

The standardized beta coefficients reveal that supervision has a significant positive impact on employee retention ($\beta = 0.656, p = 0.000$). This finding implies that effective supervision enhances employee retention, while dissatisfaction with supervision increases the likelihood of employees leaving their positions.

The model equation can be expressed as: $Y = 3.179 + 0.460 X_1$

Where Y represents employee retention and X_1 represents supervision.

The empirical findings of this study demonstrate that supervision positively influences employee retention in the Central Rift Valley region of Kenya. An increase in supervisory support within public universities correlates with higher employee retention rates. This conclusion aligns with Zafari (2015), who found that supervisory support is crucial for employee retention. Kiptoon and Kipkebut (2019) also identified a significant positive relationship between supervision and staff retention. Similarly, Ilyas et al. (2020) reported significant negative correlations between supervisory support and turnover intentions. Furthermore, Casper et

al. (2011) found that supervisor support can enhance employees' effective commitment, leading to improved retention. Bowen et al. (2022) noted a significant negative relationship between supervisory support and turnover intentions, suggesting that employees satisfied with their supervisors are less likely to leave their jobs. Likewise, Mittala and Kaur (2022) identified supervisory support as a critical factor influencing employee retention.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that supervision has a significant positive influence on employee retention in public universities within the Central Rift Valley region of Kenya. The findings indicate that supportive supervision fosters higher levels of employee retention.

RECOMMENDATION

Given that supervision emerged as a significant positive predictor of employee retention in public universities, it is essential to integrate supervisory support into organizational policies and strategies aimed at retaining employees. Effective supervisory support provides staff with direction, coaching, skill development, guidance, and motivation, which are vital for achieving employee retention. Therefore, universities should establish and implement comprehensive supervisory support guidelines. Future research could explore the role of other factors such as institutional culture, compensation structures, or career development opportunities in influencing employee retention, particularly in different types of academic institutions or in other geographical regions.

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