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INFLUENCE OF RETENTION STRATEGIES ON EMPLOYEES' TURNOVER INTENTIONS IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY IN NAIROBI COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

The hospitality industry contributes to key employment opportunities in various ways which include; travel and tourism, food and beverage as well as accommodation. The industry however faces high turnover rate which has been worsened by COVID-19. As a result, this study interrogated the influence of retention strategies on employee's turnover intentions in the hospitality industry in Nairobi County, Kenya focusing on the influence of remuneration, work-life balance, recognition and involvement practices. A descriptive research design was adopted and the target population comprised of 1,202 registered business in the Nairobi region under Tourism Regulatory Authority. Out of the number, 291 firms were established and sampled through stratified random methods where the human resource managers were targeted. A structured questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data which was analyzed through descriptive and inferential statistics that is correlation and regression analysis. The regression results indicated that remuneration practices, employee recognition practices, work-life balance practices and employee involvement practices have a negative and significant influence on turnover intentions (P-Value < 0.05).



The findings imply that a unit increase in adoption of employee retention practices leads to decrease in the turnover intentions among the employees in the hospitality industry in Kenya. The study recommends firms in the hospitality industry to fastrack adoption of remuneration practices which are currently being moderately adopted. Specifically, they include provision of commuter allowances, leave allowances, different employee benefit schemes (pension scheme and medical scheme) as well as incentives. There is also a need for the firms to continue adopting the work life balance practices so as to retain more of their employees, given that Covid-19 is still around focusing on flexible work schedules and occasionally allowing employees to work from home. The firms can also appreciate good performance by employees.

Key Words: *Remuneration, Work-Life Balance, Recognition, Involvement, Hospitality Industry*

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The most recent epidemic, Covid 19, has changed people's lives and the prospects for most economies throughout the world. In late December 2019, the virus first appeared in Wuhan, Hubei, China, and has since spread to every continent except Antarctica. Authorities in a number of nations have taken steps to stem the spread of the virus. Similar experiences with a similar disease have proven that, despite the importance of human costs, the quantity of economic costs is decided by individuals' preventative behavior as well as government transmission control regulations (Brahmbhart & Dutta, 2018). The Covid 19 pandemic is not unlike previous outbreaks, and it has led to social isolation activities like as employment restrictions, educational institution closures, individual mobility restrictions, and lockdowns in a number of places both domestically and globally. These anti-coronavirus actions have had a negative impact on both the formal and informal sectors, resulting in a decrease in the number of hours worked and, as a result, job losses (ILO, 2020).

Turnover intention is when an employee goes through a process of contemplation, thought, and development of a desire to leave a certain organization or department, as well as planning to act on that desire, considering both internal and external considerations (Hung-Wen Lee & Ching-Hsiang Liu, 2017). The desire to leave creates a likelihood or probability of leaving the organization or department (which an employee prepares to act on before making the final decision to leave or stay (Addae et al. 2018). On the contrary, an employee's intent to stay in an organization determines his or her likelihood of continuing membership and in this regard, a large body of research has looked at turnover intention as a predictor of actual turnover (Jiang et al. 2012). Longitudinal research by Yalabik et al. (2013) demonstrated differences in the time between employees' declarations of turnover intention or stay and actual turnover. When working conditions and causes at the apex of turnover intentions alter before actual turnover, such research have demonstrated that intentions are likely to change within six months after the time of behavioral cognitions. As a result, those who had declared a desire to leave stay, while those who did not do so lose their jobs (Lopina et al. 2012). Employee retention methods that result in organizational commitment have been advised based on evidence as it is often viewed as having a major influence on turnover intentions and thus turnover (Mignonac & Richebe, 2013).

Workers in the informal sector have been most vulnerable to job loss. This is due to the fact that they have employment contracts and hence do not receive the perks that contract employees do. Rural areas and the agriculture industry have the highest rates of informal employment. The majority of people working in these fields are self-employed, wage earners, or primary breadwinners for their families. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), over 90% of agricultural workers in developing countries operate in the informal sector. Wage employees in agriculture, in instance, make up nearly half of the total workforce, but often go unrecognized by policymakers and decision-makers. As a result, they are particularly sensitive to the economic consequences of the Covid 19 epidemic because they are among the most



unfortunate employees who are engaged seasonally or on a temporary basis (FAO, 2020). Covid-19 has also had a negative impact on the hotel business in some nations.

It has been struck the most because of fears of spreading to a huge community that travels in groups. As a result of Covid news, there has been an immediate negative growth of travel and tourism for both business and pleasure. This has been facilitated through event cancellation and postponement of sports leagues, conventions and conferences (Combs, 2020). With an aim of obeying the phrase (Social distancing) many consumers are forced to stay at home. On the other hand, some other consumers are trying to work in line with the government restrictions to earn their living. In relation to bars, cafes and restaurants, a precarious business climate has been facilitating by curfews as well as lockdowns in some cities. The bottom line of this sector has been significantly impacted by these roadblocks. This has led to significant job losses and pay cuts among the employees in the hospitality sector (Combs, 2020).

In Kenya, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought the country to a halt, with the travel and tourism industries being the hardest damaged. There have been hotel closures, airline groundings, and tight travel restrictions in practically every country. According to UNWTO estimates, the epidemic has wreaked havoc on the tourism industry, decreasing international visitors to a sliver of what they were in the first quarter of 2019 (Irandu, 2020). As a result of the government's lockdown, social isolation, and stay-at-home programs, several hotels in the country have decided to close down, according to Okuoro (2020). As a result of these activities, the hotel's guest count has decreased, and profitability have decreased as well. As a result, the majority of staff have lost their jobs, with some being sent home on unpaid leave. Other hotels have gradually reopened in response to government directives to reopen for sit-in and take-out services, but only after the government issued covid-19 management directives requiring all service providers to be tested, all incoming customers to be screened, and social distancing seating arrangements in the hotel. On the one hand, the slow reopening has helped hotel employees keep their jobs, but it hasn't helped hotel owners save money because they now have to pay for sanitizers and screening devices for their clients (Shah, 2020).

Kenya Airways is not immune to the effects of coronavirus on Kenya's aviation industry. Kenya Airways has anticipated a monthly loss of Kshs 800 million as a result of the epidemic, but this figure might drastically change in the following days as further limitations are imposed globally. As a result, Kenya Airways implemented steps such as a 50% wage cut for staff and an 80% salary cut for the CEO (Ombati, 2020). In addition, certain non-essential personnel have been placed on annual leave, with 65 percent of their flights canceled and 50 percent of their aircraft being placed in long-term storage. Kenya Airlines' scenario demonstrates how much Covid -19 has resulted in most staff not being kept owing to financial restrictions. High youth unemployment caused by the cCovid-19 pandemic poses a security danger to Kenya's governance and security system, as most youths who have lost their occupations are likely to fall into militant groups' traps (KNBS, 2020). Terrorist acts, adolescent radicalization, and violent extremism may all be on the rise as a result. The curfew, which runs from 7 p.m. to 5 a.m., is the most severe measure the government has taken to reduce juvenile violence. The measure, however, resulted in a number of instances of police abuse. When enforcing the curfew period in Mombasa on March 27, 2020, police wounded a number of people. A motorbike driver died on March 28, 2020, from injuries inflicted by a police officer after dropping off an expectant woman at a hospital after the curfew hours had expired (Tato, 2020).



STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In Kenya, the hospitality sector alone caters for over 509,000 jobs annually, a ten percent of total employment in Kenya (Ondieki & Kung'u, 2013). Despite such impressive figures, this industry has been faced with the challenge of high labour turnover for a long period which is characterized by low employee commitment and high turnover intentions (Ondieki & Kung'u, 2013). Research on labour turnover in hospitality industry in Nairobi County (ILO, 2011) indicated similar trends of labour turnover and a high employee turnover intention in up to 60% of the employees. Furthermore, Ondieki and Kung'u (2013) indicated that in Kenya, the high turnover intentions among the employees were driven by frequent low status, low pay and poor working conditions. Phillips and Connell (2017) also indicated that voluntary termination of employment was on the increase within the hospitality industry indicating high level of dissatisfaction and turnover intentions within the industry. Research, by the Kenya Tourism Board (2014) showed that the rate of turnover has been high in the hotels in Kenya and that less than 25% of employees were being retained annually.

Kinyita (2015) added that uncondusive work conditions in the hotel industry in Kenya has resulted to the employees developing work related stress, reduced employees' commitment and increased employee turnover intentions. These sentiments are supported by an argument by Rieu and Kamara (2016) who agree that employee commitment continues to be a contentious issue in the hospitality industry in Kenya and most of the employees were willing to leave. The situation was worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic that has seen the turnover rate increase to above 70% (ILO, 2020). Given the importance of the industry to the Kenyan economy, this study interrogated some of the retention strategies adopted by the firms in the industry and its influence on employee's turnover intentions narrowing down to the hospitality industry in Nairobi County, Kenya.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- i. To establish the influence of remuneration practices on employee's turnover intention in the hospitality industry in Nairobi County, Kenya
- ii. To determine the influence of work-life balance practices on employee's turnover intention in the hospitality industry in Nairobi County, Kenya
- iii. To establish the influence of recognition practices on employee's turnover intention in the hospitality industry in Nairobi County, Kenya
- iv. To establish the influence of involvement practices on employee's turnover intention in the hospitality industry in Kenya

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study was anchored on the AMO theory as well as Harvard Framework. The two are discussed below.

AMO theory

The abilities, motivation and opportunity to participate (AMO) theory whose proponents are Appelbaum *et al.* (2000) states that an organization's performance is a function of employees' ability, motivation and opportunity to participate. Firms can generate competitive advantage through improving employee's ability, motivation and providing employees



with opportunities to participate in value creation, which will result in higher productivity and better organizational performance (Miller et al. 2005). This theory explains the operationalization of Human Resource Management Practices (HRMP) from the individual employee's perspective as stated by Godard, 2004; that HRMP are the composite of 'high-performance paradigm' which includes HR policies and initiatives based on both alternative work practices and high-commitment employment practice targeting the individual employee. In furtherance to this theory, Godard (2004) categorizes the individual-based systems to include rigorous recruitment and selection procedures, extensive and relevant training and management development activities, incentive pay systems and performance management processes.

From the AMO theory, it can be inferred that HRMP are generally associated with employers providing opportunities for worker partnership and participation, intensive training and development, and incentives (Gerhart, 2007). The aim of AMO theory is therefore to adopt the HRMP as a way of thinking about organizations to help achieve a 'fit' between information, technology, people and work (Nadler and Gerstein (1992). According to Thompson and Heron (2005) these HRMP may consist of work practices that invest in the skills and abilities of employees, work designs that enable employee collaborate in problem solving and incentives that motivate workers to use their discretionary effort. Becker and Huselid (1998) cited by Armstrong (2011) describe the HRMP as 'an internally consistent and coherent HRM system focused on solving operational problems and implementing the firm's competitive strategy', 'the key to the resourcing, motivation and development of the underlying intellectual assets that can be a source of sustained competitive advantage'.

Harvard Framework

The Harvard model advanced by Beer et al. (1984) provided one of the first comprehensive statements on the nature of Human Resource Management (HRM) and the issue of management goals and specific HR outcomes. The model consists of six basic mechanisms namely; Situational factors, Stakeholder interests, HRM policy choices, HR outcomes, Long-term consequences and a feedback loop through which the outputs flow directly into the organization and to the stakeholders. According to Armstrong (2014), many HR burdens are calling for a broader, more comprehensive and more strategic perspective with regard to HR practices to create a need for longer-term perspective in managing people and consideration of people as potential assets rather than merely a variable cost.

Whilst the model appreciates environmental and stakeholder influences, Loosemore (2003) observed that the nature of the causal chain it suggests remains unclear. Indeed, the Harvard Framework does not explain how the four policy areas are influenced by the identified environmental and stakeholder influences and how it does in the long-term affect HRMP. The model is of relevance to the study as it helps to explain the role of the managers in developing policies (which are part of the practices) which they wish to see employees involved in. The framework is based on the belief that, the problems of historical personnel management can only be solved when general managers develop a viewpoint of how they wish to see employees involved in and developed by the enterprise, and of what HRM policies and practices may achieve these goals.



EMPIRICAL LITERATURE

Remuneration Practices on Employee's Turnover Intention

According to Maicibi (2005), remuneration is a reward or pay accorded to persons for work done. According to him, indicators for remuneration include responsibility allowances, overtime allowances, basic salary, transport allowances, wages, pension schemes and health schemes. On a similar account, remuneration is a financial or monetary benefit in the dimension of benefits, salaries, allowances, wages, incentives or bonuses given to employees by employer (firm) resulting from services employees renders, organizational commitment, or employment reward. Assessment of remuneration by employees is based on the principle of equity, defined as a process of weighing people's beliefs on what they think they ought to be paid versus what others deserve to be paid (Jackson & Schuler, 2000).

Internal and external equity are used by employees as evaluation factors. Internal equity (Adams' Equity Theory) considers a person's remuneration in the context of their contributions to the company. External equity evaluates a person's salary in relation to remuneration received from other organizations and remuneration given for similar jobs in other organizations. As a result of these comparisons, an individual may feel underpaid, which can lead to a loss in job satisfaction, diminished dedication to work, and even an increase in volatility. Many people are aware that remuneration is one of the general aspects that influence employee performance in any particular setting or business (Muogbo, 2013). Employees' work performance improves dramatically when they are motivated by attractive remunerations. On the other hand, according to Armstrong (2003), job satisfaction is primarily dependent on participative management, fairly competitive pay, equity, genuine advancement chances, a high level of social work connection, and engaging work with some control over work pace and methods.

Okumbe (2001) asserts that an effective system of remuneration in an organization is characterized by its ability to motivate, retain and attract its employees. The basic compensation (basic remuneration) promotes organizations ability of attracting and retaining employees (Okumbe 2001). The main objective of a well – contemplated system of remuneration enables organizations in attracting and retaining competent career staff; motivates employees to attain optimal performance; enables organizations to maximally gain returns in employee's services; helps in reducing staff turnover and enables development of employee's confidence in organizations with respect to objectivity and equity.

Recognition on Employee's Turnover Intention

Elton and Gostick (2007) defines recognition as an act of praising or acknowledging achievements through a personal note or small gestures to employees. A valuable reason and outcome for employee recognition is that people who are feel appreciated turn to be positive on themselves and their contribution abilities. Example recognition of employees boosts their satisfaction and increases productivity (Nelson, 2005). According to Elton and Gostick (2007) study, they concluded that if there is a proper execution of employee recognition, it translates to increased profitability and levels of customer service, and heighten employee satisfaction and engagement. Nelson (2005) on his study concludes that employee recognition culminates to improved communication, better cooperation, and decreased turnover and absenteeism.



Recognition have the possibility of motivating that helps in building the feeling of satisfaction and confidence (Keller, 1999) and inspiring commitment and loyalty, and in encouraging extension of efforts by employees as noted by Judge and Robbins (2008). According to Darling *et al.*, (1997), praising a job well done boosts employee's morale effectively. She further adds that rewarding and recognizing employees acts as the simplest way of keeping employees productive and satisfied. For many people, self-worth feelings directly relate with the work they do. Recognition is a crucial tool for business owners, HR professionals and managers in enhancing organizational success and employee motivation. A study by Helms and Allen (2002) confirmed the importance associated with regular appreciation expressions by leaders and managers in encouraging employee's behaviors to attain strategic goals.

Employees can be recognized and appreciated in a variety of ways. Recognition can take the form of postcards or letters ("Thanks! You Made a Difference" Award), memory items (a plaque or mug) that last longer, nonmonetary awards with trophy value, lunch with supervisors/managers, a picture displayed prominently, candy bar, having a room or hallway named after the employee, coffee card, posting names (employee of the week or month) in the organization's notice board or website, a video rental certificate, or an event recognizing the employee (University of Iowa, 2009). Childs (2005) understands that recognition is one of most powerful motivators which significantly contribute to effective practices of reward. Effective measures of recognition also include written and verbal praise, symbolic gestures and public praise by managers (Spritzer & Nelson, 2002). Efforts of recognition that are personal, sincere and timely serves as a major motivation means to employees. Spitzer and Nelson (2003) stated that managers ought to keep close contacts with employees to be in a position of determining what employees' value and design ways of responding systematically on the ascertained rewards and recognition methods once they show good performance. This implies that managers are expected to vary recognition methods, adding new stuffs, experimenting with them while eliminating others that no longer motivate employees. When managers are specific, sincere and timely in thanking employees on work well done, it maintains the credibility of the recognition process.

Caligiuri *et al.*, (2010) in support of Finney and Sartain (2003) findings agrees that managers are also expected to create action plans and goals that recognize accomplishments and behaviors that call for rewards in the organization. Consequently, they should formulate criteria to be used in identifying eligible employees for recognition followed by recognizing employees who meet the formulated criteria in a fairly manner. Recognition programs should as well be tied to business related activities and achievement (Caligiuri *et al.*, 2010). Managers also ought to be timely and specific when offering recognition since it creates positive feelings that positively affect performance of employee (Daniels, 1999). Elton and Gostick (2007) notes that if recognition on employee aim at providing favorable outcomes, it ought to be affected in the perspective of open communication, goal-setting, accountability and trust. A good program of recognition has to communicate behaviors and attitudes recognized by the organization.

Involvement on Employee's Turnover Intention

Employee involvement is a method of granting autonomy, participation in decision-making, and two-way information sharing to employees, which is said to be beneficial to both the organization and the employees in achieving employee satisfaction (Michie and West 2004) and organizational commitment, thereby lowering turnover intentions. However, the needed and real level of commitment remains unclear to both management and staff. Kittler et al. (2011) praised communication for contributing greatly to the organization's long-term effective functioning. It has an effect on job



satisfaction, organizational commitment, and the likelihood of turnover (Back et al. 2011). Employees trust one another to share information about the company, and as a result, they provide objective feedback (Hom &, Xiao, 2011).

The limitation, according to Rust et al. (1996(8)), is management's acceptance of employees as useful contributors whose thoughts and perceptions are valuable sources of knowledge. "Trust people and treat them like adults, enthuse them by likely and imaginative leadership, develop and demonstrate an obsession for quality, make them feel like they own the business, and your work force will respond with total commitment," Peters and Waterman (1982), as cited by Armstrong (1988 (8), p.1; 2009 (8), p.345), emphasize the importance of trust: "Trust people and treat them like adults, enthuse them by likely and imaginative leadership, develop and demonstrate an obsession. A point of interest is the degree to which employees are trusted, allowing them to feel empowered, openly communicate their thoughts, and exert influence over work. Within the framework of HPWS, management's distribution of information to employees and receiving input from them on the organization's overall business plan for effective communication is of particular relevance (Love and Singh 2011).

While Back et al (2011) found that communication has a substantial impact on job satisfaction and retention among casino employees, information exchange is more effective when done on a mutual basis between employees and management rather than focusing on the seniority gap as in the public sector. Similarly, successful communication necessitates consideration of culturally distinctive aspects that are crucial in the comprehension and interpretation of the issues at hand (Kittler et al. 2011). Employees are also said to like it when they feel that they have a say in their job, rather than just providing ideas that may or may not be implemented (Chen et al. 2012). Employees' ability to make meaningful decisions and have influence over their work (Pare and Tremblay 2007) is another issue of empowerment that necessitates strengthening their capacity and trust in order to solve some employees' risk aversion (Jiang et al. 2012).

Work Life Balance on Employee's Turnover Intention

Work-life balance, according to Munn (2013), is a system in which each aspect of work and life is depending on the other components of the organization. He claims that work-life balance, work-life schemes, and work-life arrangements connect people, businesses, and government, and that work-life balance policies have a positive impact on both employees and businesses. On the same line, Gunnigle et al. (2011) claim that there is tension between work and life, and that most study focuses on this strain, which leads to stress. This is backed by Eby, Casper, Lockwood, Bordeaux, and Brinley (2005), who discovered emerging evidence of work-family support. Work-life balancing practices are purposeful organizational adjustments in programs or organizational culture aimed at reducing work-life conflict and enabling individuals to be more effective at work and in other responsibilities (McCarthy, 2008). The change from considering work-life balance strategies primarily as a way to accommodate individual employees with caregiving duties to acknowledging their contribution to corporate success and employee engagement is a significant paradigm shift that is currently in progress.

Employees' competing and multi-faceted demands between work and home responsibilities have become more relevant in recent years, thanks in part to demographic and workplace changes such as: a greater number of women in the workforce (dual-career couples), changes in family structures (a rise in the number of single parents), a growing reluctance to accept the longer hours culture, the rise of the 24 per 7 society, and technological advancements (McCarthy et al., 2010). Organizations are increasingly under pressure to adopt various sorts of strategies to help employees meet



both their work-related and personal responsibilities as a result of these changes and the tension they create among the multiple roles that individuals occupy (McPherson & Reed 2013).

Bui, Liu, and Footner (2016) performed research to see how employment attitudes, such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and perceived organizational support, shape their perceptions of organizations' HR procedures. The suggested framework was tested with structural equation modeling analysis using a survey study of 709 residential care service professionals. The study's findings revealed that implementing HR practices in the UK care industry can boost workers' job motivation while also assisting them in resolving their work-life balance, both of which have different effects on workers' attitudes. Kato and Kodama (2015) used unique Japanese firm-level panel data to give new evidence on the impact of human resources management (HRM) practices on gender equality in the workplace. The study specifically looked at a number of work-life balance (WLB) techniques that are being developed in part to improve gender equality, as well as performance-related pay (PRP), which is one of the most frequently discussed reforms in the Japanese HRM system.

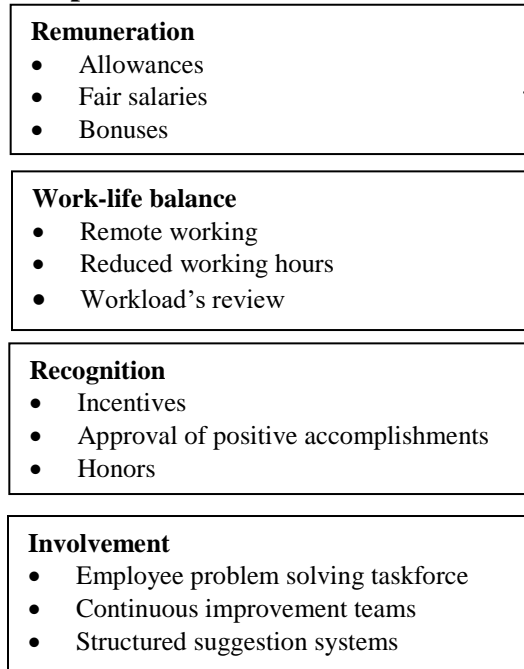
According to the findings, policymakers may need to pay special attention to the heterogeneous efficacy of specific WLB practices and the adverse effect of PRP, as well as the mediating role played by management by objectives (MBO), information sharing, and other factors in designing, developing, and revising public policy instruments to achieve the goal of increasing the share of women in leadership positions to at least 30% by 2020 in all fields across the country. Work-Life Balance Policies: Organizational and Human Resource Responses was the subject of a study conducted by Sorensen (2014). The study's goal was to determine how organizations respond to external or external pressure on work-life balance policies. From an interpretive standpoint, a case study methodology was used, and qualitative data was gathered through unstructured interviews with two Human Resource managers from separate companies in the same industry. Secondary data was gathered from the literature, background information on the industry, an analysis of organizational documents, and theories related to work-life balance, such as social exchange and spillover theory. Work-life balance policies were altered or established as a result of external influences such as legislation, according to the findings of the study. Second, it was discovered that internal pressure from employees who had family obligations that spilled over into work was met through individual flexible arrangements.

The study conducted by Russell, O'Connell and McGinnity (2009) into the area of flexible working conditions lessening work-life conflict, found that if employees have a larger amount of flexible work policies it will result in reduced work pressure. The findings also identified the role of Human Resource manager as having diminished involvement in Work-life balance policy arrangements. They concluded that legislative conditions in Ireland were negligible and employer's policies were vital as a result. Russell, O'Connell, and McGinnity (2009) concluded that having more flexible work policies lowers work-life conflict. In addition, the function of the Human Resource manager was found to be less involved in work-life balance policy arrangements, according to the findings. They concluded that Ireland's legal circumstances were non-existent, and that employer practices were crucial as a result.

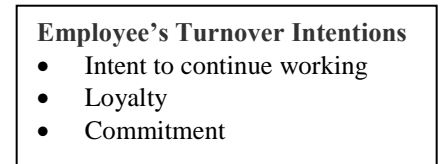


CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Independent Variables



Dependent variable



RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design for this study was descriptive. The study targeted firms in the hospitality industry, that is, tour operators, travel agencies, hotels, and restaurants in the Nairobi region registered with the Tourism Regulatory Authority (TRA). As of June 2020, there were 1,202 registered business in the Nairobi region. Of the 1202, 98 are restaurants, 171 hotels, 194 travel agencies and 739 tour operators (TRA, 2021). The unit of analysis for this study was the hospitality businesses, while the Human Resource Managers were targeted as the unit of observation as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Target Population

Sub-Sector	Population	% Representation
Tour Operators	739	61%
Hotels	171	14%
Restaurants	98	8%
Travel Agencies	194	16%
Total	1202	100%

Source: TRA (2021)

Krejcie and Morgan (1970) was used to calculate the sample size of this study based on two factors: confidence interval and confidence level. The researcher adopted a confidence interval of $\pm 5\%$ and a confidence level of 95%. The study used Krejcie and Morgan (1970) formula below to determine the sample size.

$$S = \frac{X^2NP(1-P)}{d^2(N-1) + X^2P(1-P)}$$



Where:

- S = Sample size being calculated
- X = Z-score at 5% significance
- N = Population
- P = Population proportion
- d = Degree of accuracy
- = $\frac{(1.96)^2(1,202)(0.5)(0.5)}{(0.05)^2(1,202) + (1.96)^2(0.5)(0.5)}$
- = 291

To distribute the sample size across the sector's, proportionate sampling procedure was adopted and then stratified random sampling conducted. The study used primary data collected through questionnaires which were administered to selected respondents through mail using google forms. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) computer program version 24 was used to code and analyze quantitative data. The data in frequency distributions was analyzed using descriptive statistics and percentages were presented in tables and figures. To test the relationships between the variables, the study used multiple regression analysis. The regression model adopted was in form of a multiple linear regression:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + \beta_4X_4 + \varepsilon$$

Where:

- Y = Employee's Turnover Intention
- X₁ = Remuneration Practices
- X₂ = Work-life balance practices
- X₃ = Recognition practices
- X₄ = Involvement practices
- β₀ = constant,
- β₁, β₂, β₃ and β₄ = Regression Coefficients
- ε = Error Term.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Introduction

The total number of questionnaires that were administered was 291. The study targeted human resource managers of the firms in the hospitality industry, that is, tour operators, travel agencies, hotels, and restaurants in the Nairobi region and out of the 291 targeted number, 178 questionnaires were properly filled without blank spaces. This represents a response rate of 61%. This response rate is satisfactory given the argument by Lewis *et al* (2007) that a response rate above 50% is satisfactory to be used in generalizing study findings.

Description of Remuneration Practices in the Kenyan Hospitality Industry

The first objective of the study was to establish the influence of remuneration practices on employee turnover intention in the hospitality industry in Kenya during COVID-19. The respondents were asked likert scale questions to establish the extent of adoption of various remuneration practices on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 = Not at All (NA), 2 = Low Extent (LE), 3 = Moderate Extent (ME), 4 = High Extent (HE), 5 = Very High Extent (VHE). The findings are presented in Table 2.



It was established that during this Covid-19 period, the firms in the hospitality industry provide fair salaries in relation to an employee's qualifications and work experience to a high extent ($M = 3.60$), provide overtime payment of work to high extent ($M = 3.52$) as well as house allowances ($M = 3.52$).

However, the firms provide commuter allowances ($M = 3.37$), leave allowances ($M = 3.34$) as well as different employee benefit schemes (pension scheme and medical scheme) to a moderate extent ($M = 3.24$). In addition, the firms provide incentives to their employees to a moderate extent ($M = 3.44$). Overall, it was indicated that remuneration practices have been adopted only to a moderate extent by the firms in the hospitality industry during the Covid-19 period (Overall $M = 3.43$).

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics of Remuneration Practices

Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation
My employer provides fair salaries in relation to an employee's qualifications and work experience	3.60	1.46
My employer provides overtime payment of work	3.52	1.49
My employer provides commuter allowances	3.37	1.38
My employer provides house allowances	3.52	1.35
My employer provides leave allowances	3.34	1.34
My employer provides different employee benefit schemes (pension scheme and medical scheme)	3.24	1.41
There is provision of incentives by my employer	3.44	1.32
Average	3.43	1.39

Description of Work-life balance Practices in the Kenyan Hospitality Industry

The second objective of the study was to determine the influence of work-life balance practices on employee turnover intention in the hospitality industry in Kenya during COVID-19. The respondents were asked likert scale questions to establish the extent of adoption of various work-life balance practices on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 = Not at All (NA), 2 = Low Extent (LE), 3 = Moderate Extent (ME), 4 = High Extent (HE), 5 = Very High Extent (VHE). The findings are presented in Table 3. It was demonstrated that during this Covid-19 period, the firms in the hospitality industry provide supportive working environment to their employees to a high extent ($M = 3.73$), accord employees flexible work schedules to a high extent ($M = 3.69$), assure employees of their income regardless of their levels of performance to a high extent ($M = 3.82$) as well as support employees towards work-life balance to a high extent ($M = 3.60$).

It was also established that the firms have allowed their employees to work for the required number of hours with compensation for extra working time to a high extent ($M = 3.74$), have put in place flexible working time arrangements for their employees to a high extent ($M = 3.72$), occasionally allow employees to work from home to a high extent ($M = 3.76$), have come up with favorable employee leave arrangements to a high extent ($M = 3.54$) and strictly adhere to regulations governing employee leave to a high extent ($M = 4.11$). It was further shown that the firms provide workplace facilities for people with disabilities to reduce their costs of getting the same to a high extent ($M = 3.98$). Overall, it was established that work-life balance practices have been adopted to a high extent by the firms in the hospitality industry (Overall $M = 3.77$).



Table 3 Descriptive Statistics of Work-life balance Practices

Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation
The firm provides supportive working environment	3.73	1.38
Employees are accorded flexible work schedules	3.69	1.39
Employees are assured of their income	3.82	1.24
The firm supports work-life balance	3.60	1.25
Employees work for the required number of hours with compensation for extra working time	3.74	1.38
The firm has flexible working time arrangements	3.72	1.40
Some of the employees are occasionally allowed to work from home	3.76	1.24
The firm has favorable employee leave arrangements	3.54	1.22
The firm strictly adheres to regulations governing employee leave	4.11	0.85
The firm provides workplace facilities for people with disabilities to reduce their costs of getting the same	3.98	0.81
Average	3.77	1.22

Description of Employee Recognition Practices in the Kenyan Hospitality Industry

The third objective of the study was to determine the influence of employee recognition practices on employee turnover intention in the hospitality industry in Kenya during COVID-19. The respondents were asked likert scale questions to establish the extent of adoption of various employee recognition practices on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 = Not at All (NA), 2 = Low Extent (LE), 3 = Moderate Extent (ME), 4 = High Extent (HE), 5 = Very High Extent (VHE).

The findings presented in Table 4 established that during this Covid-19 period, the firms in the hospitality industry have continued to appreciate excellent performance by employees to a high extent (M = 3.62), provide incentives awards for good performance to a high extent (M = 4.17), provide honors for outstanding performance to a high extent (M = 4.25), approve individuals’ positive accomplishment to a high extent (M = 3.82) as well as approve team’s positive accomplishments to a high extent (M = 3.70). Overall, it was documented that the firms have continued to adopt employee recognition practices to a high extent (Overall M = 3.91).

Table 4 Descriptive Statistics of Employee Recognition Practices

Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation
My employer appreciates excellent performance by employees	3.62	1.02
My Employer provides incentives awards for good performance	4.17	1.36
My Employer provides honors for outstanding performance	4.25	1.05
My Employer approves individuals’ positive accomplishment	3.82	1.01
My Employer approves team’s positive accomplishment	3.70	1.07
Average	3.91	1.10



Description of Employee Involvement Practices in the Kenyan Hospitality Industry

The fourth objective of the study was to determine the influence of employee involvement practices on employee turnover intention in the hospitality industry in Kenya during COVID-19. The respondents were asked likert scale questions to establish the extent of adoption of various employee involvement practices on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 = Not at All (NA), 2 = Low Extent (LE), 3 = Moderate Extent (ME), 4 = High Extent (HE), 5 = Very High Extent (VHE). The findings as presented in Table 5 showed that during this Covid-19 period, the firms in the hospitality industry in Kenya uses problem solving groups headed by employees as part of employee involvement to a high extent (M = 3.55), involve employees in developing company practices to ensure employee engagement in achieving agreed objectives and standards in the performance management processes (to a high extent (M = 3.63), have encouraged down-top employee participation to a high extent (M = 3.63), have come up with work organizations which permit employees to participate in decisions that alter organizational routines and methods of work to a high extent (M = 3.65) and frequently conducts attitude surveys to know employee opinions to a high extent (M = 3.52).

However, they involve the employees on its views and concerns to a moderate extent (M = 3.10), encourage joint consultation with employees on decisions to a moderate extent (M = 3.48) and ensure collective representation in company committees making key decisions to a moderate extent (M = 3.34). Overall, the firms have demonstrated adoption of employee involvement practices only to a moderate extent (Overall M = 3.49).

Table 5 Descriptive Statistics of Employee Involvement Practices

Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation
The management involves the employees on its views and concerns	3.10	1.03
The company uses problem solving groups headed by employees as part of employee involvement	3.55	0.91
The management encourages joint consultation with employees on decisions	3.48	0.96
Employees are involved in developing company practices to ensure employee engagement in achieving agreed objectives and standards	3.63	0.87
There is collective representation in company committees making key decisions	3.34	1.03
The company has encouraged down-top employee participation	3.63	0.94
The work organization permits employees to participate in decisions that alter organizational routines and methods of work.	3.65	0.84
The company frequently conducts attitude surveys to know employee opinions	3.52	0.85
Average	3.49	0.93

Description of Employee Turnover Intention in the Kenyan Hospitality Industry

The study described the employees' turnover intention in the hospitality industry in Kenya. The respondents rated likert scale questions on their turnover intentions as shown in Table 6. It was established that during this Covid-19 period, the firms in the hospitality industry in Kenya encourage employees to stay longer in the institution to a high extent (M =



3.57), the firms have experienced less transfers in the recent past to a high extent (M = 3.53), have experienced high cases of staff leaving the organization voluntarily to a high extent (M = 3.67) and have experienced cases of staff redundancy to a very high extent (M = 4.55). Overall, it has been established that the cases of turnover intention have been high in the hospitality industry during Covid-19 (Overall M = 3.83)

Table 6 Descriptive Statistics of Employee Turnover Intention

Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation
My employer encourages employees to stay longer in the institution	3.57	1.46
There have been less transfers in the recent past	3.53	1.51
Staff leave the organization voluntarily	3.67	1.33
Staff redundancy takes place every year	4.55	1.33
Average	3.83	1.41

In addition, the study sought to establish the turnover rate in the hospitality industry for the last 5 years among the non-management employees. As indicated in Figure 2, even before Covid-19, the staff turnover in the non-management staff in the hospitality industry was as high as 43% (2017), 40% (2018) and 47% (2019) which agrees with the ILO (2015) report that turnover in the hospitality industry is very high averaging 50% across the world. However, after Covid-19 came in the year 2019 towards 2020, turnover rate rose sharply to 55% followed by 57% in the year 2021 which demonstrates that Covid-19 indeed had devastating effects on employee’s retention efforts.

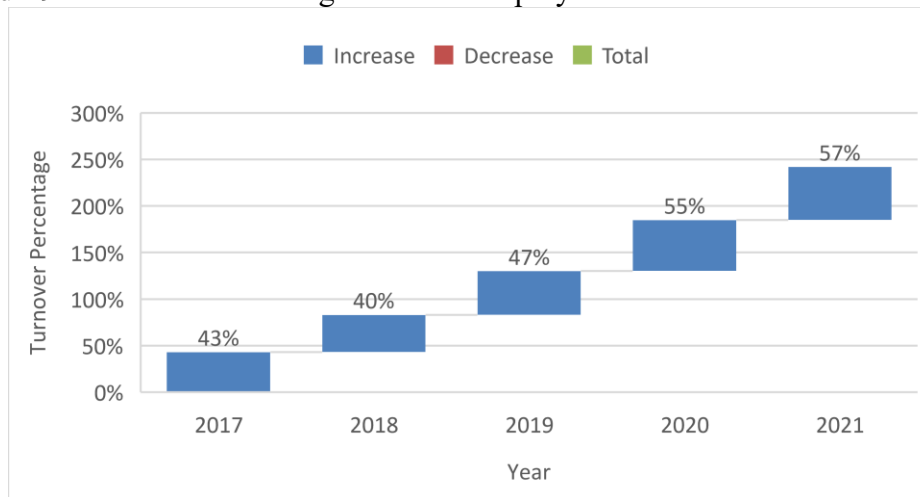


Figure 2 Turnover Rates in the Kenyan hospitality industry (2017 – 2021)

Regression Analysis

A multiple regression model was used to determine the relationship between the study variables. A regression model indicates the change in turnover intentions in the hospitality industry in Kenya during COVID-19 given various employee retention strategies adopted. The findings indicated coefficient of determination, model fitness and model coefficients as



discussed in the subsections.

Coefficient of Determination

A coefficient of determination is also called the R-square and it shows the percentage of the variation in the dependent variable (turnover intentions in the hospitality industry in Kenya during COVID-19) accounted by the independent variables (employee retention strategies). The findings are presented in Table 7. The findings indicate that employee retention strategies that is employee involvement practices, employee recognition practices, work life balance practices and remuneration practices account for up to 83.6% of the variation in turnover intentions in the hospitality industry in Kenya during COVID-19. This implies that the four variables were critical to the turnover intentions in the hospitality industry in Kenya during COVID-19.

Table 7: Model Summary

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.914	0.836	0.832	0.38773
Predictors: (Constant), Employee involvement practices, Employee Recognition Practices, Work Life Balance Practices, Remuneration Practices			

Model Fitness

The regression model fitness was also established and presented in Table 8. The findings in the Table indicate that the regression model linking independent variables that is employee retention strategies specifically employee involvement practices, employee recognition practices, work life balance practices and remuneration practices to the dependent variable (turnover intentions in the hospitality industry in Kenya during COVID-19) was significant (Sig < 0.05). This therefore implies that the four variables can be used to predict turnover intentions in the hospitality industry in Kenya during COVID-19. The model fit well and was hence significant.

Table 8 ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	132.413	4	33.103	220.2	.000
Residual	26.007	173	0.15		
Total	158.42	177			
Dependent Variable: Turnover Intention					
Predictors: (Constant), Employee involvement practices, Employee Recognition Practices, Work Life Balance Practices, Remuneration Practices					

Model Coefficients

The regression model coefficients were used to test the research hypotheses. The findings are presented in Table 9. The study results indicated that remuneration practices have a negative and significant influence on turnover intentions in the hospitality industry in Kenya during COVID-19 ($\beta = -.173$, Sig < 0.05). The findings imply that a unit increase in adoption of remuneration practices lead to a significant decrease in the turnover intentions among the employees in the hospitality industry in Kenya during COVID-19 by 0.173 units. The study results further showed that employee recognition practices have a negative and significant influence on turnover intentions in the hospitality industry in Kenya during COVID-19 ($\beta = -.201$, Sig < 0.05). The findings imply that a unit increase in adoption of employee recognition practices lead to a significant decrease in the turnover intentions among the employees in the hospitality industry in Kenya during COVID-19 by 0.201 units.



It was also demonstrated that work-life balance practices have a negative and significant influence on turnover intentions in the hospitality industry in Kenya during COVID-19 ($\beta = -.775$, Sig < 0.05). The findings imply that a unit increase in adoption of work-life balance practices lead to a significant decrease in the turnover intentions among the employees in the hospitality industry in Kenya during COVID-19 by 0.775 units. Lastly, it was shown that employee involvement practices have a negative and significant influence on turnover intentions in the hospitality industry in Kenya during COVID-19 ($\beta = -.425$, Sig < 0.05). The findings imply that a unit increase in adoption of employee involvement practices lead to a significant decrease in the turnover intentions among the employees in the hospitality industry in Kenya during COVID-19 by 0.425 units.

Table 9 Model Coefficients

	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	-2.232	0.252		-8.85	0.000
Remuneration Practices	- 0.173	0.047	0.192	- 3.661	0.000
Employee Recognition Practices	- 0.201	0.043	0.161	- 4.714	0.000
Work-Life balance Practices	- 0.775	0.059	0.623	- 13.05	0.000
Employee Involvement Practices	- 0.425	0.058	0.273	- 7.309	0.000
Dependent Variable: Turnover Intention Practices					

CONCLUSIONS

The study concludes that while some employee retention strategies have been pursued to a high extent by the firms in the hospitality industry during the Covid-19 period, such as work-life balance and employee recognition practices, others have been pursued to a moderate extent, specifically remuneration and employee involvement practices. However, the study concludes that joint implementation of the four employee retention strategies, that is employee involvement practices, employee recognition practices, work life balance practices and remuneration practices have to this extent accounted for up to 83.6% of the variation in turnover intentions in the hospitality industry in Kenya during COVID-19 which signifies their importance.

It can also be concluded that adoption of any of the four employee retention strategies, that is employee involvement practices, employee recognition practices, work life balance practices and remuneration practices is significantly associated with a decrease in the turnover intention in the hospitality industry in Kenya during COVID-19. In addition, the study concludes that the strengths of the influence of the various employee retention strategies, that is employee involvement practices, employee recognition practices, work life balance practices and remuneration practices on turnover intention in the hospitality industry in Kenya during COVID-19 varies with the highest significance being that of work-life balance practices, followed by employee involvement practices, then employee recognition practices and lastly remuneration practices in order of importance.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY

Given that adoption of remuneration practices has been established to significantly impact employee turnover intention, the study recommends the firms in the hospitality industry to fastrack adoption of remuneration practices which are



currently being moderately adopted. Specifically, they include provision of commuter allowances, leave allowances, different employee benefit schemes (pension scheme and medical scheme) as well as incentives. Based on the findings that work-life balance had the strongest significant effect on turnover intention during the Covid-19 period in the Kenyan hospitality industry, the study recommends the hospitality firms in Kenya to continue adopting the practices so as to retain more of their employees, given that Covid-19 is still around. Some of the practices they can continue to implement are providing supportive working environment, according employees flexible work schedules, assuring employees of their income regardless of their levels of performance, allowing employees to work for the required number of hours with compensation for extra working time, occasionally allowing employees to work from home, favorable employee leave arrangements and strictly adhering to regulations governing employee leave.

Since it was documented that adopting employee recognition practices can lead to a significant improvement in turnover intention among employees in the hospitality industry during this Covid-19 time, the study recommends the hospitality firms in Kenya to continue adopting the practices so as to retain more of their employees, given that Covid-19 is still around. The firms can focus on appreciating excellent performance by employees, provision of incentives awards for good performance, provision of honors for outstanding performance, approval of individuals' positive accomplishment as well as approval of team's positive accomplishments.

Given that adoption of employee involvement practices has been established to significantly impact employee turnover intention, the study recommends the firms in the hospitality industry to Fastrack adoption of such practices which are currently being moderately adopted. Specifically, there is a need to enhance involvement of employees on its views and concerns, encourage joint consultation with employees on decisions as well as ensure collective representation in company committees making key decisions.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Under the supervision of Dr. Christopher Mutembei as the university lecturer, Doyo Galgallo Galgallo wrote the concept paper, edited and proceeded to write the whole paper. Under the supervisor's guidance, he collected and analyzed data as reflected in the work. Therefore, any grammatical issues are solely hers.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION

The authors registered no conflict of interest in this study. In addition, the ethical issues; including plagiarism, informed consent, misconduct, data fabrication and (or) falsification, double publication and (or) submission, redundancy has been completely observed by the authors.



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