

INFLUENCE OF EMPLOYEE RELATIONS STRATEGIES ON RETENTION OF EMPLOYEES IN UNIVERSITIES IN KENYA

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Abstract: Good employee-employer relations in an organization are necessary because it allows and provides forums and avenues within the organization structure where both parties can meet on a regular basis to ventilate their grievances and iron out their contentious issues. This will likely foster healthy working relationship between the two parties and contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the organization, thus reducing staff turnover, improve service delivery and ultimately contribute the improved competitiveness of the organization. Given this, the primary purpose of this study was to analyze the influence of employee relations strategies on retention of employees in universities in Kenya. The specific objective of the study was: To analyze the influence of employee relations strategies on retention of employees in universities in Kenya. The study is likely to aid university management boards and councils, employee unions, Human Resource professionals, researchers and scholars and government in policy formulation for employee relations strategies as a reliable means to improve retention of employees in universities in Kenya. The study adopted descriptive design. The fundamental models shaping this study were the linear regression models. The target population of the study comprised all employees in 70 accredited universities in Kenya with a total population of 50,670 employees. The sample size of the study was 384 respondents chosen by stratified random sampling technique. Questionnaires were the primary data collection tool. Linear regression models were used to analyze data using SPSS (Version 23) software. The findings of the study were presented using tables and charts. The main findings from the study indicated that employee relations strategies influenced retention of employees in universities in Kenya. Also, this study found that 67.2% of retention of employees in universities in Kenya was explained by the variable under study; finally the study also contributed to theory and knowledge for humanity. The significant factor influencing employee retention in universities in Kenya was focusing on employee relations strategy with P-value standing at .672. However, the study had various limitations among them being lack of objectivity of the respondents and also limited scope regarding sample size. The study concluded that employee relations strategies influenced retention of employees in universities in Kenya and recommended that other employee relations strategies including providing communication channel for employees to channel their grievances towards top management, employee voice to give employee value and employee participation in the affairs for the company. This is likely to boost the employees' morale and motivate them to perform their job tasks with zeal thus increasing their productivity and hence enabling the universities in Kenya to achieve their mandate and more enormous competitive advantage.

Keywords: Employee relations strategies and retention strategies.

1. INTRODUCTION

Today's sophisticated and dynamic global economic environment has changed drastically and continued to do so. Social developments such as globalization, technological innovation and growing competition for scarce resources place pressure on organizations, universities included, and this emphasizes their need to maintain their competitive advantage, at least in part through maintaining the skills of their employees. Furthermore, owing to these new developments, organizations have been pressured into stiff competition with each other in the business environment and also to have to manage their assets as efficiently as possible especially their human assets (Korir, 2014). Having in place employee relation strategies and retention strategies will provide employees with opportunities to air their grievances and participate in decision making and makes them feel valued and recognized for their contribution to the organization, hence their willingness to stay and give their best so that the organization remains competitive (Kwon, 2009; HillTrop, 2009).

Due to acute shortage of labor force facing organizations, there is a cut-throat competition among them worldwide to keep the most highly skilled, experienced, committed and talented employees for themselves as these serve as a source of their competitive advantage (Kwon, 2009). The emergence of psychological contract did not make the situation better because under the new contract, a large number of modern employees do not prefer a permanent career with one organization (Deloitte, 2015). Moreover, as a result, they are less devoted and more opportunistic than employees in the past. According to Global Human Capital Trends (Deloitte, 2015), many of today's employees work on global teams that operate on a 24/7 hours economy and an increasing number of skilled and experienced employees in the world today continually change jobs throughout their careers, endeavoring to secure the best for themselves. Beyond these economic pressures, organizations also face difficult demographic changes resulting in drastic changes in the composition of the current workforce.

Johns (2017) categorizes generational cohorts into three groups; generation X, Y and Z according to human resourcing and retention strategies of employees in the workplace. Generation X belongs to the age group (1960-1980) while generation Y also called millennials falls in between (1981-1990). Generation X grew up before the internet inclusion but has learned over time to deal with online environments. Generation Y and Z (Palmer, 2009) grew up with technology based on the generational cohort theory. Nevertheless, generational cohorts do not act in the same manner (Meriac et al., 2010), since consumers' behavior and attitudes vary with age (PwC, 2016; San-Martín et al., 2015). Generation Y are generally young, well informed, educated and have their unique needs and wants. Organizations will face grave challenges in attracting, recruiting and retaining generation Y (Hay group recruiting experts, 2016) since they view the world as a global village where they can bump from one job to another easily hence attracting, recruiting and retaining them is difficult. Furthermore, upon the retirement of generation X, there is a significant loss of skills and the capabilities which cannot be easily replaced by merely hiring new employees, all of which are essential in the current economic environment in which organizations have to compete (Kwon, 2009). According to Myskova (2011) and Ongori (2013), the Human Resource is strategically the most important asset in an organization through which organizations achieve competitive advantage. Human Resources are the life-blood of organizations, be they casual, temporary or permanent (Ongori, 2013). They are the ones capable of executing innovative activities with precision on a daily basis. These resources have to be acquired, developed and deployed in ways that will benefit the organization. Thus, this makes human resourcing function critical to the success and survival of organizations.

Studies have shown that limited research work has been done on employee relations practices by organizations despite its importance leading to employee relations-research gaps thus validating this study (Ployhart, 2006). At the same time, employee relations strategies have also been moving rapidly, changing, becoming complex, dynamic, unpredictable and highly competitive in global markets, since firms worldwide are facing significant decisions and challenges in attracting, recruiting and selecting and retaining their employees and also improving them in learning and capacity development programmes to enhance their skills and the methods of rewarding employees for the acquisition of extra skills (Schuler, 2011). Researchers such as Bushe (2012) have confirmed that human resourcing and retention of key employees poses a significant challenge to organizations including universities. It is a global problem both for the developing and developed countries (Bushe, 2012). Ng'ethe (2012) further confirms: employee retention is one of the key challenges facing modern organizations whether small, medium or large, be they public or private, occasioned by globalization that has intensified competition and increased the mobility of highly skilled employees. In order to achieve their mandate, organizations including universities ought to secure trained, skilled, experienced and committed employees. Studies have shown a

tendency of academic staff in other parts of the world to quit their positions and to look for other lucrative job positions elsewhere.

In the United Kingdom, a report written by Bunoti (2011) to Higher Education Statistics Agency, shows that there are numerous reports about the constant flow of scholastics willing to move abroad, enticed by reports of higher pay rates and better profession prospects. According to Hong, Hao, Kumar, Ramendran and Kadiresan, (2012) in Malaysia due to intense competition in higher education institutions which has rare high education talent, makes employee retention a significant move in keeping a competitive edge. Institutions tend to satisfy employees' satisfaction in their jobs by providing support to their motivational aspects, such as self-esteem, self-fulfillment and basic needs. The problem remains on whether or how high is the effect of each aspect having toward overall employee's retention. Furthermore, in a paper titled "Challenges facing higher education in America: Lessons and opportunities" by Steven J. Rosenstone (revised 2017), it was noted that public universities in the U.S have witnessed dramatic cuts in state financing forcing both public and private universities to embark on capital fundraising drives to mitigate the consequences of cuts in state funding. The key consequences of this adverse action include; cutting faculty positions, closing programs and trimming support for research, student grants and employees' compensation. In addition, competition will further intensify as „baby-boomers“ begin to retire over the next decade, increasing the number of outstanding scholars and teachers in the hiring pool. Unless the gap in resource allocation in universities is significantly narrowed, only very few of the nation's public universities would be competitively positioned to attract, recruit and retain distinguished faculty and talented graduates, professionals and undergraduate students. A study in Australian higher education institutions also indicated that 68% of the academic personnel wished to leave higher education (Anderson, Richard & Saha, 2002).

According to Tettey (2006), retention of academic staff remains a challenge across the globe; the situation in many African countries appears to be notably worse. Pioneers of African Universities and colleges have as of late recognized the overwhelming effect of staff deficiencies on the objectives of establishments of advanced education and caution that if something is not done soon, the African Universities and colleges would not just lose their capacity to deliver satisfactory workforce to help the nations' human resource needs but also to uphold and protect the quality of intellectual life in the Africa region. In South Africa concerns of teachers' turnover has been noted because of its adverse effects on the provision of education. In a study in 2004 in South Africa by the Human Sciences Research Council for Education Labor relations council, it was found that 55% of the teachers would be leaving teaching if they could. In Uganda according to Chacha (2007) and Businge (2009), lecturers and tutors tend to dodge tertiary/university education due to poor remunerations hence most tertiary institutions and universities operate at a deficit staff numbers. In Nigeria, two-thirds of its 36,134 academic staff positions remain unfilled (Jaiyeoba & Jibril, 2008). This is due to poor remunerations offered by public universities in Nigeria.

Kenya also faces a similar problem in the form of "brain-drain" (Waswa & Katana, 2008; Monis & Sreedhara, 2011; Waithaka, 2012; Oduma & Abbas, 2014; Hayes, 2015) where qualified academic and other professional personnel look for jobs abroad and spend most of their productive years working in foreign countries. A study by Mwiria (2007) also confirms that public universities, in particular, have precarious Human Resource Management practices such as poor remunerations. Empirical studies by Guma (2011) have also shown that public universities, in particular, have weak or poor retention policies for their employees. Selesho and Naile, (2014) have rightly observed that organizations must utilize an extensive range of Human Resource Management factors to influence retention of employees. Kipkebut (2010) and Ng'ethe (2011) also examined factors that make academic staff, particularly in public universities to be committed and to stay. Their findings established that Human Resource Management practices such as good compensation packages, good corporate governance (Tettey, 2009) and education support for their families were among the factors that made the academic staff to be retained and to be committed. According to Global Human Capital Trends; (Deloitte, 2015) organizations are recognizing the needs to focus on culture and dramatically improve on employee engagement as they face a looming crisis in engagement and retention. The latest studies by Ngui, Elegwa and Gachunga, (2014) confirmed that human resourcing strategies could help in employee retention. Therefore, this study is relevant and timely and in particular, proposes the use of employee relations strategies as a reliable means of influencing retention of employees in universities in Kenya.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Employees are the most important asset in any organisation, whether they are on permanent, contract or temporary terms of service. In order to achieve their goals and objectives all organisations, including universities, need to secure trained, skilled, committed and engaged employees. Due to both internal and external factors in the business environment, employees in higher education institutions worldwide have shown a tendency to quit their positions and look for lucrative jobs elsewhere resulting in high staff turnover. According to Deloitte (2014), 68% of organizations in Kenya experience high rate of employees' turnover which hinders their competitive advantage. Ng'ethe (2014), provides supporting statistics between 2006-2011 for public universities as follows; JKUAT a total of 2100, had left, the University of Nairobi lost 98, Kenyatta University 121 had left, Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology had lost 88, Maseno University 124 had left while Egerton had lost 102 and at Moi University, 100 had left. Indeed private universities in Kenya have faced similar challenges.

Similarly, records obtained from Central and personnel registries of private universities such as, at KCA University show that 106 employees had left (2010-2016), Zetech University, 25 had left (2014-2017), Mount Kenya University, 70 had left (2010-2017), Pan African Christian University, 20 had left (2010-2016), Catholic University, 40 had left (2010-2016) and USIU University, 15 had left (2010-2016) amongst others. The high rate of employee turnover leads to decreased performance of the organizations, hampered continuity and succession, reduced innovativeness as well as standards (Kipkebut, 2010). This has been made worse by poor corporate governance (Tettey, 2009), internal strategic poaching amongst universities, poor employee relations strategies, precarious Human Resources practices (Mwiria, 2007) and poor or weak retention policies practiced in particular by public universities (Guma, 2011).

Effective employee relations and Retention of employees are critical to success or failure of any organization. The National Commission of Science, Technology and Innovation report of (2014) also underscored the critical role universities play in national development considering the development challenges the country is facing. Empirical studies show that extensive use of employee relations practices may lead to improved retention of employees. Although studies are already available on retention of employees (Ngu, Mukulu & Gachunga, 2014) in their study identified the need for further research on retention of employees particularly in other organizations, universities included. So far, insignificant and inconclusive studies have been done on the influence of employee relations strategies on retention of employees in universities in Kenya. This study, therefore seeks to fill that knowledge gap. It strives to examine the influence of employee relations strategies on retention of employees in universities in Kenya.

1.2 Specific Objective

1. To analyze the influence of employee relations strategies on retention of employees in universities in Kenya.

1.2.1 Research Hypothesis

A. H_{01} : Employee Relations strategies have no significant positive influence on retention of employees in universities in Kenya..

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the review of literature related to the subject under the study. It consists of the theoretical review, conceptual framework and furthermore, it also presents the key findings of past similar studies, a critique of existing literature, research gaps and finally the summary.

2.2 Social Reciprocity Theory

The social reciprocity theory is the action of rewarding an affirmative action for another positive action (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). This involves relationship that brings about obligations to give back. It is a social exchange (Blau, 1964), where employers bestow benefits to employees that creates a feeling of mutual obligations between the employer and employee. It is rewarding kind actions and punishing unkind actions. It is cognizant that people evaluate the kind actions by consequences and the underlying intentions. The Social reciprocity theory is an inducement model (Marth & Simon, 1958) where the employer offers inducements in return for employee contribution; the employee is satisfied when there is a more significant difference between the inducements offered by the organization and the contribution given in return by

the employee. This will elicit long-term cooperation's (Gouldner, 1960), so long as the benefits are valued by the employees (Eisenberger et al., 2001) and promote work-life balance as seen by (Smola & Sutton, 2002). A large body of evidence shows that reciprocity is a commanding determinant of human behavior. It is a powerful method for gaining one's compliance with a request. Experiments and questionnaire studies performed by economists and psychologists as well as remarkable literature in sociology, anthropology and ethnology emphasize the omnipresence of reciprocal behavior.

The sociologist Gouldner (1960) who is the architect of the theory observed that the rule of reciprocity is "no less universal and important an element of culture than the incest taboo." The essence of reciprocity is very nicely captured in a quote from the Edda, the medieval collection of Icelandic epic poems: "A man ought to be a friend to his friend and repay gift with a gift. People meet smiles with smiles and lies with treachery." The quote includes positive reciprocity which is the reward of kind treatment and negative reciprocity which means punishment of an unkind treatment. Importantly, reciprocity means behavior that cannot be justified regarding selfish and purely outcome-oriented references. To avoid terminological confusion the study, therefore, clarify that reciprocity sharply distinguishes from "reciprocal altruism." Reciprocal altruism is only willing to reciprocate if future rewards are arising from reciprocal actions. The rule of reciprocity has the power to trigger the feeling of the indebtedness even when faced with an uninvited favor and irrespective of liking the person who executed the favour (Gouldner, 1960).

This theory predicts the stylized facts of a wide variety of experimental games. In the ultimatum games, proposers offer between zero and half of the total pie. Rejections are decreasing gain the level of the offer and increasing the strength of the responder's concern for reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960). In the dictator's game, the theory predicts offers which are lower in the ultimatum game. In the gift-exchange game, the theory predicts a positive relationship between wages and effort levels. Moreover, firms offer above-minimum wages as reported in the experimental literature. In the sequential prisoner's dilemma theory predict conditional cooperation. Similarly, in public goods games the more subject contributes, the more they expect others to contribute. Moreover, contribution increases in the marginal capital return on the investment of the public good. Finally, the theory explains why in bilateral relations results tend to be 'fair' whereas in competitive markets extremely unfair distributions may arise. Evidence indicates that many people tend to co-operate if treated fairly and to punish non-co-operators voluntarily. This is called behavioural propensity 'strong reciprocity' and it can lead to almost universal co-operation in the situation which purely self-interest behavior which would lead to a complete breakdown of co-operation (Gouldner, 1960). Good employee-employer relations results in the improvement of the morale of the employee and can as well lead to improved productivity and profitability. The theory brings out the idea that workers who do not co-operate with their colleagues and also managers are not only rewarded but are also punished and that there is the reward for co-operating and teamwork will lead to the success of the organization. One of the factors listed for influencing retention is co-operation by fellow workers. The employees feel happy and satisfied to stay when they receive co-operation from their co-workers hence decision to stay. This theory guided objectives two, three, five and six of this study.

Conceptual Framework

According to Young (2009), a conceptual framework is a diagrammatic representation showing the relationship between the independent variables and dependent variable.

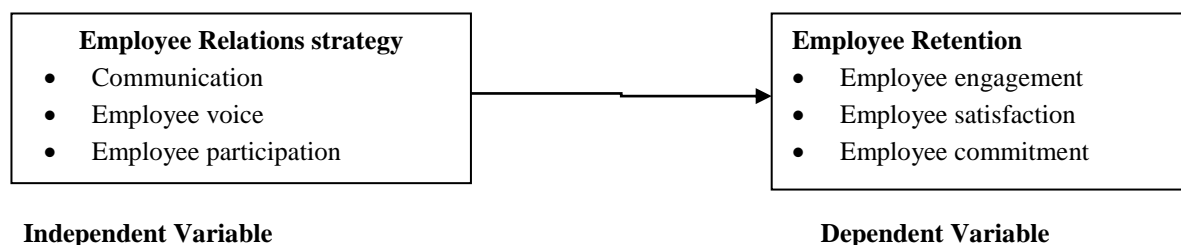


Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework

2.3 Empirical Review

Employee relations strategy can help an organization to retain their employees. A research study by CIPD (2011) has shown that the informal workplace climate appears to have a stronger influence than collective consultation machinery on

employee satisfaction and commitment. Studies by Purcell and Georgiades (2007) also concluded that voice systems which combine direct forms of involvement with indirect voice via representative bodies are strongly associated with higher levels of organizational commitment. A study by Watson Wyatt Worldwide (2009-2010) demonstrated that companies that focus on effective employee communication achieve up to 47% higher returns. It therefore helps organizations to set out their goals so that employees understand where they fit in. In yet another study by Noah (2008), it was also established that employee involvement in decision making helps in creating a sense of belonging among employees which leads to creating a good congenial working environment and contributes towards building a good employer-employee relationship. Finally, in a study conducted by Sturgers & Guest (2001) their research explored the factors influencing employed graduates and their decisions to stay or leave their first employer. This study used a conceptual framework to assess organizational commitment. The results provided a deeper understanding of employee relations and how leadership can maximize organizational retention.

2.4 Critique of the existing literature review relevant to the study

The findings of a study by Werhane and Royal (2009), recommended that employee relations ought to be viewed as comprehensive, every part is key for businesses in the event that they wish to get the best out of their kin, enhance efficiency, increment optional exertion and decrease the time it takes to oversee individuals issues and hierarchical change. In their study, Purcell and Georgiades (2007) indicated that the more broad the range or voice frameworks utilized as a part of organizations the more probable it is that supervisor report benefits, from expanded yield to declining non-appearance which is convergent with the findings of (CIPD, 2011), indicating that setting up a formal mechanism is important especially if organizations wish to get a collective view of plans and proposals. Research has shown that the informal workplace climate appears to have a stronger influence than collective consultation machinery on employee satisfaction and commitment. With regard to employee relations strategy the unitary and the pluralistic views explain the basis of the relationship between the management and trade union. The unitary view is that management has all the authority while the pluralistic view sees the enterprise as a place where the two groups should work together in harmony. Currently, the new Human Resource Management approach mode to employee relations has also been introduced and tried. This model emphasizes mutuality and commitment “winning the heart and minds of employees”. The message in this approach is that “we are all in this together” and the interest of management and employees coincide.

2.5 Research Gaps

Despite the vast studies on retention, Hausknecht (2009), noted that literature on employee turnover which is aimed at identifying factors that caused employees to quit, much less is still not known about factors that compelled employees to stay. Ng'ethe (2011), investigated determinants of academic staff retention in five public universities in Kenya and another study by Kipkebut (2010), also explored factors that caused academic staff in public universities in Kenya to be committed. Their findings established that top universities’ management boards and councils should pay great attention to a number of Human Resource Management practices if their staff are to be retained and to be committed. The latest study on the effect of human resourcing strategies focused on performance of Commercial banks in Kenya (Ngui, Mukulu & Gachunga, 2014). The main research gap in this study was to show how organizations including universities can achieve retention of their valued employees from the time of recruitment through to selection and to exit using employee relations strategies. It is unclear whether or not universities in Kenya have put in place effective employee relations and retention strategies. A study by Mwiria (2007), found that public universities in Kenya in particular have precarious Human Resource Management practices. Furthermore, in his study, Guma (2011) also confirmed that public universities in Kenya had poor/weak retention policies and practices. However, these studies are inadequate; in exhaustive, inconsistent and inconclusive. Therefore, this study focuses on the influence of employee relations strategies on retention of employees in universities in Kenya to fill the knowledge gap left by scholars and researchers.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methods to be used in this study. It describes the research design, study population, sampling frame, sample size and sampling techniques, data collection methods and techniques of data analysis. The statistical models that were used in the analysis and the tests for the research hypothesis were also provided.

3.2 Research Design

According to Orodho (2008), research design is a comprehensive plan for data collection and analysis. The researchers' beliefs and understanding of the world influence the research design. The study used descriptive survey design which adopted mixed mode research approaches, that is, both qualitative and quantitative. Kumar (2012) defines quantitative research as a formal, objective, systematic process to describe and test relationships and examine cause and effect interaction among variables. Surveys may be used for descriptive, explanatory and exploratory research. A descriptive survey is necessary because it provides an accurate portrayal or account of the characteristics. Qualitative research on the other hand, involves the interpretation of phenomenon without depending on the numerical measurements or statistical methods. It is mainly concerned with observing, listening and interpreting phenomenon (Zikmund et al., 2010).

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), the advantages of this design are: it is an efficient way to collect information about a large group of people, it is flexible medium that is standardized, so less susceptible to error, easy to administer and finally it can be tailored exactly to the phenomena the researcher wish to study. This design had been successfully used by the following scholars: Gathenya (2012), Machuki (2011), Murgor (2014) and Ongeti (2014) in their PhD degree dissertations.

3.3 Target Population

Any group of employees or observations which includes all the possible members of that category is called population. According to Kumar (2012), a population is an entire group of individuals, events or objects with some observable characteristics. A study population comprises of individuals, households or organizations with similar characteristics about which a study wants to make inferences (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). In this study, the target population comprised employees in all the 70 accredited universities authorized to operate in Kenya by the Commission for University Education. According to records available at CUE (2016) there are 50,670 employees in the all the 70 accredited universities in Kenya. Table 3.1 shows the categorization of the 70 accredited universities in Kenya with their corresponding number of employees.

Table 3.1: Categories of Universities in Kenya

Serial No	Accredited Universities	Number of Accredited Universities	Population
1	Public Chartered Universities	30	32,300
2	Public University Constituent Colleges	3	7,800
3	Private Chartered Universities	18	9,230
4	Private Universities constituent Colleges	5	3,000
5	Institutions with Letter of Interim Authority	14	1,340
Total		70	50,670

(Source: Commission for University Education in Kenya, 2016)

3.4 Sampling Frame

Sampling and selection are the means by which a researcher identifies, selects and gains access to the appropriate subjects (Sekaran, 2010). According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), a sampling frame is a list of all sampling units for a study. The sample frame for this study consisted of a list of all 70 accredited universities in Kenya which was obtained from the Commission for University Education (October, 2016). In this study each university acted as stratum from which samples were selected, that is, the study had 70 stratas because the study considered the population of each university to be homogenous and therefore each university constituted a stratum that is, each stratum consists of each university with their own employees constituting a population.

3.5 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

According to Kothari (2012), sampling refers to the process of obtaining information about an entire population by examining only a part of it. Sampling technique is the method of choosing a sample from a population. There are two main sampling techniques: probability and non-probability (Kothari & Garg, 2014). Sampling techniques are methods that are used to select a sample size from the population by reducing it to a more manageable level (Saunders, Lewis and

Thornhill, 2009). According to Harkness and Janett (2008), sampling techniques were used when inferences were being made about the target population. In this study, the sample size was drawn from the target population of 50,670 employees in all the 70 accredited universities in Kenya by use of stratified sampling technique. According to Cooper and Schindler (2008), stratified sampling is a technique used when the population is not homogeneous, that is, re-arranging population into sub-groups (strata) which are homogeneous in nature. The respondents should be as closely representative of the total population as possible (Kothari, 2009).

Kim and Park (2010), defines a sample as a part of a large population, which is thought to be representative of the large population, as it is not possible to study all members of the population due to the tremendous amount of resources and time (Mugenda & Mugenda 2003). In this study, the expression below was used by the researcher to obtain the sample size as suggested by Kothari and Garg (2014). The formula used is:

$$n = \frac{[z^2 pq]}{d^2}$$

where n is the sample size, z is the standardized normal distribution set at 1.96 which correspond to 95% confidence interval, p is the expected population proportion with desired characteristic being measured (0.5) level of statistical significance, set as 0.05.

This formula is applicable only when the population size of a study is more than 10,000. In this study, the sample size was 384 because the target population was more than 10,000 as indicated in (appendix III), that is, the total workforce figure for all the 70 accredited universities in Kenya was 50,670 employees. From each stratum the sample size was arrived at through proportional sampling; a technique where the selection of elements from every stratum is kept proportional to the size of the stratum. This method involves dividing the population into homogenous sub-groups called strata and then taking a random sample from each stratum (Kombo & Tromp 2011). Kothari and Garg (2014) contended that one major advantage of this method was that the researcher classified the units into strata on the basis of characteristics which if not properly represented in the sample, may bias the inference of the study. In this study, the strata are the universities in Kenya and from this the study obtained the following sample size per each university (See appendix III).

3.6 Data Collection Instruments

Data collection can be derived from a number of methods, which include oral interviews, focus groups, surveys, telephone interviews, field notes, taped social interaction or questionnaires (Heaton, 2004). The choice of instruments was dictated by the nature of the problem and both the availability of time and financial resources. There were two major sources of data that were used by researchers. These are the primary and secondary sources. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), primary data are those items that are original to the problem underway. Primary data was gathered using structured and semi-structured questionnaires (Creswell, 2009). In this study, the main data collection instrument was questionnaires. A questionnaire is a technique of data collection in which each person is asked to respond to the same set of questions in a pre-determined order (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). Questionnaires were regarded as effective data collection instruments that allowed respondents to give much of their opinions pertaining to the research problem. The questionnaires were designed to address specific objectives, research question(s) or to test hypothesis. Questionnaires are economical to administer in terms of time and cost to a large number of respondents (Denscombe, 2014). They also ensured anonymity as questions have no room for researcher's biases (Kasomo, 2010). The choice of the semi-structured questionnaire allowed the researcher to collect quantitative data on closed-ended questionnaires as well as allowing the researcher a room for a few questions to collect data that may generate unexpected insights not available from structured quantitative data.

3.7 Pilot Testing

Pilot testing was done before data collection. To ascertain the validity and the reliability of the questionnaire, pilot testing was conducted. Pilot testing is a trial-run done in preparation of the major study (Kombo & Tromp, 2011). According to Kothari and Garg (2014) at least 10% of the sample size would consist of the pilot testing. In this study, the questionnaire was pre-tested using a representative sample identical to, but not those to be included in the actual study, before administering it to respondents in a field setting (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). Such pre-testing was important as it may uncover ambiguity, lack of clarity or biases in questions wording, which could be eliminated before administering the questionnaires. The pilot testing helps in detecting potential problems in research design and instrumentation (Cooper &

Schindler, 2014) as well as helping to check whether or not the questions asked are intelligible to the targeted population and ensure that the measurement instruments used in the study was reliable and valid. In this study the suitability of the questionnaires was first pre-tested by administering it to thirty eight (38) respondents selected randomly.

3.8 Validity of the research Instruments

According to Kothari and Garg (2014), validity is the extent to which differences found with a measuring instrument reflect true differences among those being tested. According to Zikmund and Babin (2010), validity is the accuracy of a measure or the extent to which a scale truthfully represents a concept. Validity is concerned with the test being capable of testing what it was designed for, which is not as simple as it seems (Hair, 2009). Other scholars suggest it as the ability of the research instrument to measure what it purports to measure (Creswell, 2009; Bryman & Cramer, 2006; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009; Bryman, 2008). Validity is not a unitary concept. In fact, test developers use several widely accepted procedures to document the level of validity of their test, including content, criterion and construct related. In this study, the validity of the questionnaire was determined using construct validity method. Construct validity is a measure of the degree to which data obtained from an instrument meaningfully and accurately reflected or represented a theoretical concept. Construct validity refers to how well the researcher translates or forms a concept, idea or behavior into a functioning and operating the reality, the operationalization (Trochim, 2006). To ascertain the validity of the research instrument for this study, factor analysis was conducted. In factor analysis, the study employed Principal Component Analysis (PCA) and Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA). Factor analysis also showed any biases which might exist between the factors through Common Bias Method (CBM).

3.8.1 Reliability of Research Instruments

According to Saunders (2012), reliability is concerned with the robustness of the questionnaires and in particular, whether or not it will produce consistent findings. According to Zikmund and Babin (2010a); Sushil and Verma, (2010), reliability is an indicator of a measure of internal consistency. The most common method for testing the internal consistency of a scale for reliability is the Cronbach's alpha coefficient (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient ranges from 0 to 1 with a maximum of 0.6 while other studies suggest that anything above 0.7 to 0.9 will suggest a high level of internal reliability (Sushil & Verma, 2010). Internal consistency examines the inter-item correlations within an instrument and indicates how well the item fits together conceptually. Also, a total score of all the items is computed to estimate the consistency of the whole questionnaire. He further stated that reliability is a test of the amount of consistency between the different measurements of an individual's response, with the purpose of making sure that these responses are consistent and similar over a period of time and across situations (Hair, 2009). Furthermore, if the same test is conducted under the same circumstances, then the researcher should find similar results which will be called test-retest method (Zikmund & Babin 2010a).

According to Kothari and Garg (2014) there are two aspects of reliability: stability and equivalence. The stability aspect is concerned with securing consistent results with repeated measurements of the same person and with repeated measurements. The equivalence aspect considers how much error may get introduced by different investigators or different samples of the items being studied. To ensure reliability in this study, the following measures were taken: Standardizing the conditions under which the questionnaire administration took place. That is, ensure the external sources of variation such as boredom, fatigue and so on are minimized to the extent as possible. This improved stability respect. Carefully designing a questionnaire with no variation from group to group and using trained and motivated persons to conduct the research. This improved equivalence aspect. In this study, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was tested using the below formulae.

The standardized Cronbach's alpha can be defined as

$$\alpha(\text{alpha}) = \frac{K\hat{r}}{(1 + (K - 1)\hat{r})}$$

where K is as above and \hat{r} the mean of the $K(K-1)/2$ non-redundant correlation coefficients (that is, the mean of an upper triangular, or lower triangular, correlation matrix). Cronbach's α is related conceptually to the Spearman-Brown prediction formula. Both arise from the basic classical test theory result that the reliability of test scores can be expressed as the ratio of the true-score and total-score (error plus true score) variances. Also, by using SPSS (Version 23) software Cronbach's alpha coefficient (α) illustrated above was obtained.

3.9 Data Analysis and Presentation

This is the extraction of significant variables, detecting any abnormalities and testing assumptions (Kombo & Tromp, 2011). According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), data analysis refers to examining the coded data critically and making inferences. The presentation of data refers to ways of arranging data to make it clearly understood. Data analysis was guided by the objective of the study. Raw data collected from the questionnaires was first cleaned, sorted, coded and subjected to the SPSS software. Data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics (Mugenda & Mugenda). The SPSS (version 23) software was used. The descriptive statistical tool helped the researcher to describe the data and features of data that were of interest. In this study, the mode was used as the response measurement that appears most in a particular variable among a sample of subjects (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). Both qualitative and quantitative data were analyzed. Qualitative data was analyzed by noticing, collecting and thinking about things. The researcher looked for patterns and relationships both within a collection and also across a collection. Finally, the researcher made a general discovery about the phenomena(s) he/she was/were researching (Seidel, John & Claus, 1995). Descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) was computed for all the five objectives of the study. Quantitative data was computed for inferential statistics with a 0.05 (5%) test significance level and the resulting P values and coefficients was used to compare the variables, where two sets of the variables were compared to see the extent to which they are related and if they can be used to predict each other. In this study, the findings were presented using tables, graphs, histograms and bar charts. Data presentation made use of percentages, tabulations, means and other measures of central tendencies. Tables were used to summarize respondents for further analysis and facilitated comparison.

3.9.2 Statistical Models

In this study, linear multiple regression models were used to measure retention of employees in universities in Kenya. There were five (5) independent variables in this study. Thus the linear multiple regressions used was as shown below:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \epsilon_i$$

Where Y was the dependent variable (retention of employees) and β_0 was the regression co-efficient while β_5 was the slope of the regression equation.

X_1 is the independent variable (employee relations strategy)

ϵ is an error term normally distributed about a mean of 0 and for purposes of computation, is assumed to be 0. Error term is the part of the statistical equation that indicates what remains unexplained by the independent variable.

4. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Factor Analysis

To measure the influence of employee relations strategy on retention of employees in universities in Kenya, eight items were presented. For employee relations strategy, the entire eight items were found to have an acceptable loading factor between 0.490 and 0.844 with an average loading of .662 and were subsequently considered valid for inclusion in the data collection instrument for further analysis. As a conclusion in this study, the factor loading for employee relations strategy would be rated as very good as per the studies of Hair *et al.*, (2009) and Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) Table 4.1 shows the factor loading for all items.

Table 4.1 Factor loadings for employee relations strategy

Employee relations strategy statements	Factor Loadings
1. In this university there are effective strategies for employee relations management.	.834
2. In this university the employee relations strategy supports retention strategy.	.844
3. This university has clear and effective communication channels.	.571
4. Employees will likely be retained when they are conversant with the policies, rules, regulations and their roles.	.703
5. In this university cordial relationship exists between management and staff.	.636

6. This university has an effective 'hybrid' structures in advocating for employee voice.	.509
7. In this university employees participate in decision making.	.490
8. In this university the leadership style(s) helps to promote good employer- employee relations.	.711
Total Factor loading	.662

4.2 Employee relations strategy

The fifth objective of the study was to assess the influence of employee relations strategy on retention of employees in universities in Kenya. The respondents were asked to state their level of agreement with the following items based on employee relations strategy and how they are associated with retention of employees in universities in Kenya. The results were as follows: On whether or not the universities had effective strategies for employee relations management, 33.1% of the respondents agreed and 16.2% strongly agreed, 18.9% were neutral, 29.1% disagreed and only 2.6% of the respondents strongly disagreed. An average score rate of 3.250 was recorded with a standard deviation of 0.90011. This indicated that majority of universities in Kenya somehow have effective strategies for employee relations management. On whether or not in the universities, the employee relations strategy supports retention strategy, 30.6% of the respondents agreed, 7.3% strongly agreed, 36.9% were undecided 23.3% disagreed and 2.0% strongly disagreed. An average score rate of 3.1800 was recorded with a standard deviation of 0.89271. This suggested that in universities, the employee relations strategy moderately supports retention strategy with the majority being undecided.

The respondents were asked whether or not the universities have clear and effective communication channels. 44.9% of respondents agreed, 5.0% strongly agreed, 21.5% were undecided but 25.7% disagreed and 3.0% strongly disagreed. Average scale of 3.7267 out possible 5 and standard deviation of 1.81291 was recorded. This means that the universities have clear and effective communication channels which are consistent with the findings of the studies by Papasolomou and Vrontis, 2006; Werhane and Royal, 2009 and Greenberg and Antonucci, 2014, who all emphasized that organizations should be more concerned about employee communications. To find out whether or not employees will likely be retained when they are conversant with the policies, rules, regulations and their work roles in universities in Kenya, Majority at 9.2% of respondents agreed, 24.0% strongly agreed, 34.7% were undecided, but 24.1% disagreed and 5.0% strongly disagreed. Average score rate was 3.667 out of 5 and standard deviation of 0.89731 was recorded. This also indicated that most employees in universities will likely be retained when they are conversant with the policies, rules, regulations and their roles. This finding was consistent with the study by Dries and Permans (2008) who stated that organizations with policies that are clear and future-oriented are likely to retain their employees for a longer time.

Based on whether cordial relationship exists between management and staff in universities in Kenya or not, the finding suggests that; 38.0% of the respondents agreed 29.0% of the respondents strongly agreed that organizations behave wisely and honestly 21.8% of the respondents were undecided, 7.9% disagreed while 3.3% strongly disagreed. Average score rate was 3.91 out of 5 with a standard deviation of .87499. From the result, it can be concluded that there is a cordial relationship between management and staff in universities in Kenya. This finding was rightly captured in the definition of employee relations by Werhane and Royal (2009), as cited in CIPD (2011) when he defined employee relations as 'everything involved in the relationship between an employee and their employer.' He added that it is about creating the right climate within the organization to enable it to meet its objectives through employee. To achieve these objectives, there must be a cordial relationship between the universities' management and the employees. To find out if universities have an effective 'hybrid' structures in advocating for employee voice; 45.9% of the respondents agreed 9.2% of respondents strongly agreed that organizations behave wisely and honestly 23.1% of respondents were undecided, 19.1% disagreed while 2.6% strongly disagreed. Average score rate was 3.91 out of 5 with a standard deviation of 0.936. From the result, it can be concluded that the universities have an effective 'hybrid' structures in advocating for employee voice. From the other finding, we can conclude that the respondents agreed as far as the items listed under employee relations strategy are concerned with an overall rating of 3.832 out of 5 and standard deviation of 1.035. This was consistent with the findings of the studies by Sission (2000) and Purcell and Georgiades (2007) who stated that management should come up with 'hybrid' structures in advocating for employees voice through involvement and participation in the organization's decision making processes. Table 4.2 shows the details of the finding.

Table 4.2: Employee relations strategy descriptive statistics

Statement	S.D	D	N	A	S. A	Mean	Std. Dev
ERS1	2.6%	29.1%	18.9%	33.1%	16.2%	3.250	.9001
ERS2	2.0%	23.3%	36.9%	30.6%	7.3%	3.180	.8927
ERS3	3.0%	25.7%	21.5%	44.9%	5.0%	3.727	.8129
ERS4	3.3%	8.6%	19.9%	53.3%	14.9%	3.707	.9220
ERS5	5.0%	24.1%	34.7%	27.1%	9.2%	3.663	.8713
ERS6	3.3%	7.9%	21.8%	38.0%	29.0%	3.417	.8749
ERS7	2.6%	19.1%	23.1%	45.9%	9.2%	3.393	.9841
ERS8	3.3%	19.2%	32.1%	33.4%	11.9%	3.310	1.021
TOTAL						3.830	1.035

4.3 Retention of Employees

In this section, the study is concerned with the descriptive analysis of the dependent variable (retention of employees). The respondents were asked to state their level of agreement on the following items regarding retention of employees in universities in Kenya. The findings were as follows: On whether or not the university has a robust retention strategy in place and implements it, 33.1% of the respondents agreed and 16.2% strongly agreed, 18.9% were undecided, 29.1% disagreed and only 2.6% of the respondents strongly disagreed. An average score rate of 2.8963 was recorded with a standard deviation of 0.99290. This suggested that majority of the universities have a robust retention strategy in place and implements it. This finding contradicts that of Guma (2011) who found that public universities in particular have poor retention policies and strategies. Concerning whether or not the respondents would recommend this university to family or friends as a great place to work, 7.3% strongly agreed, 30.6% agreed, 36.9% were neutral, 23.3% disagreed and 2.0% strongly disagreed. This also indicated that majority the university employees would recommend this university to family or friends as a great place to work. This finding was consistent with the study done by Guma (2011) who stated that an 'employer of choice' is one who is highly regarded by a targeted population of employees because they offer great opportunities in line with niche market with attractive rewards. The overall mean rate of 3.2508 and standard deviation of 0.96271 was recorded. The respondents were also asked to state whether or not they are encouraged to come up with new ways of doing things in their role; 44.9% of respondents agreed, 5.0% strongly agreed, 21.5% were undecided, but 25.7% disagreed and 3.0% strongly disagreed. An average score of 2.9967 out possible 5 and standard deviation of 0.97105 was recorded. This suggested that employees within universities are encouraged to come up with new ways of doing things in their role.

This finding was closely consistent with the study done by Sofijanovna and Zabijakin-Chatleska (2013) who found out that employee involvement and participation are empowerment programs that have a direct and significant correlation to the managerial perception of organizational performance as this enhances the employees' innovativeness. In addition to that, the respondents were asked whether the universities employees have a clear understanding of their job responsibilities and what was expected of them or not. 53.3% of the respondents agreed, 14.9% strongly agreed and 19.9% were undecided 8.6% disagreed and 3.3% strongly disagreed. An average score rate of 3.6355 was recorded with a standard deviation of 3.08670. This also indicated that majority the university employees have a clear understanding of their job responsibilities and what was expected of them. This finding was consistent with the study by (Samuel & Chipunza, 2013) who stated that employees are likely to remain with an organization only if they believe that the organization shows more interest and concern for them, if they know what is expected of them, if they are given a role that fits their capabilities and if they receive regular positive feedback and recognition.

To find out if the employees within the universities do not want to leave their current jobs, the majority of the respondents at 34.7% were undecided 27.1% agreed, 9.2% strongly agreed, but 24.1% disagreed and 5.0% strongly disagreed. A mean score of 3.0836 out of 5 and standard deviation of 1.20807 was recorded. This implied that majority of university workers are somehow not satisfied with their work and as such are undecided whether to quit their current jobs or not. This finding was consistent with the study by Boomer Authority (2009) who found out that retention factors incorporating the needs and desires of employees at any age enhance levels of individual job satisfaction, loyalty and commitment and thus they will be retained for a longer time within the organization. To find out whether universities employees are in their current job assignment because they do not want to expose themselves to alternative employers or not, the majority of the respondents at 38.0% agreed, 21.8% were undecided, 29.0% strongly agreed, but 7.9% disagreed and 3.3% strongly

disagreed. Mean score of 3.0836 out of 5 and standard deviation of 1.23434 was recorded. In conclusion, many employees within universities in Kenya do not want to expose themselves to alternative employers. This is probably because of fear of losing their jobs, but further research should be conducted to investigate this. Similarly, the respondents were asked to state whether they are actively searching for an alternative job assignment elsewhere or not; 45.9% agreed, 23.1% were undecided, 9.2% strongly agreed, but 19.1% disagreed and 2.6 % strongly disagreed. A mean score of 2.9666 out of 5 and standard deviation of 1.22292 was recorded. Again the respondents were in agreement that they are actively involved in searching for other alternative job assignments.

The respondents were asked to state if they do interesting and challenging work; 33.4% agreed, 32.1% were undecided, 11.9% strongly agreed, but 19.2% disagreed and 3.3 % strongly disagreed. A mean score of 3.6622 out of 5 and standard deviation of 1.165 was recorded. Lastly, the respondents were asked to state if they feel the level of responsibility given to them was acceptable. The responses were as follows: 33.1% agreed, 18.9 % were undecided, 16.2 % strongly agreed, but 29.1% disagreed and 2.6 % strongly disagreed. A mean score of 3.6622 out of 5 and standard deviation of 1.165 was recorded. In general the respondents were in agreement as far as the items listed under retention of employees are concerned i.e. the respondents were in agreement that they are actively involved in searching for other alternative job assignments. This was consistent with the findings of the studies by Mwiria (2007), Waswa and Katana (2008), Schneider and Bowen (2009) and Waithaka (2012) whose studies had shown that universities' staffs in public universities had been quitting and searching for lucrative jobs in many countries like Namibia, South Africa, Canada, USA and Asia among others due to poor human resource management practices and poor governance Tetey (2009) by the universities. The details of the findings are shown in table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Retention of employee's descriptive statistics

Statement	S.D	D	N	A	S. A	Mean	Std. Dev
RE1	2.6%	29.1%	18.9%	33.1%	16.2%	2.896	.99290
RE2	2.0%	23.3%	36.9%	30.6%	7.3%	3.251	.96271
RE3	3.0%	25.7%	21.5%	44.9%	5.0%	2.997	.97105
RE4	3.3%	8.6%	19.9%	53.3%	14.9%	3.636	3.0867
RE5	5.0%	24.1%	34.7%	27.1%	9.2%	3.084	1.2080
RE6	3.3%	7.9%	21.8%	38.0%	29.0%	2.595	1.2343
RE7	2.6%	19.1%	23.1%	45.9%	9.2%	2.967	1.2229
RE8	3.3%	19.2%	32.1%	33.4%	11.9%	2.468	1.1707
RE9	2.6%	29.1%	18.9%	33.1%	16.2%	3.662	1.1656
Total						2.987	1.3562

4.4 Sample Adequacy Test (*Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO)*)

The sample adequate test was done to define if the sample used in the study was adequate or inadequate. It was measured using the Kaiser-Meyer- Olkin (KMO) test. The sampling adequacy should be greater than 0.5 for a satisfactory factor analysis to proceed. A common rule is that a researcher should have 10 – 15 participants per variable. Factor analysis is inappropriate when the sample size is below 50 (Fiedel, 2005). Orodho (2008) recommends 0.5 as a minimum (barely accepted), values between 0.7- 0.8 acceptable and values above 0.9 are superb. From Table 4.4, the sample was acceptable since the KMO values were mainly between 0.707 and 0.810. The least value was 0.644 which was also good enough since it was above the minimum of 0.5.

Table 4.4: KMO and Bartlett's test

Variables	Measure	
Employee Relations Strategy	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	.834
	Approx. Chi-Square	1136.598
	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Df
	Sig.	.000
Retention of Employees	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	.717
	Approx. Chi-Square	835.739
	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Df
	Sig.	.000

4.5.1 Skewness and Kurtosis test for normality

The study sought to find out how well the distribution could be approximated, that is, whether the data is normally distributed or not. Consequently, Skewness and Kurtosis was employed as shown in Table 4.5. Skewness measures the deviation of distribution from symmetry and Kurtosis measures 'peakness' of the distribution (Ming'ala, 2002; Orodho 2008). The values of Skewness and Kurtosis should be zero in normal distribution (Field, 2009).

Table 4.5 Skewness and Kurtosis

Variables	Descriptive	Statistic	Std. Error	Z score
	Std. Deviation			
Employee relations strategy	Skewness	-.875	.231	-1.978
	Kurtosis	1.163	.459	1.644
	Std. Deviation	.36153		
Retention of employees	Skewness	.085	.140	-0.873
	Kurtosis	-.573	.279	1.105

Although it is assumed in multiple linear regressions that the residuals are distributed normally it is a good idea before drawing final conclusions, to review the distributions of major variables of interest (Ming'ala, 2002). Histograms are a good way of getting an instant picture of the distribution of data (Field, 2009). Therefore a histogram was also employed in the study to test the normality of the dependent variable as shown in Figure 4.3 since t- test, regression and ANOVA are based on the assumption that the data were sampled from a Gaussian distribution (Indiana, 2011).

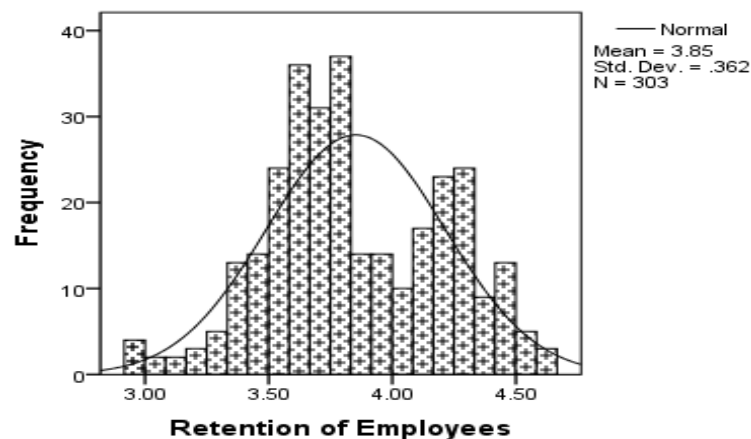


Figure 4.3 Histogram for normality test

4.5.2 Kolmogorov- Smirnov and Shapiro Wilk test for Normality

Kolmogorov- Smirnov and Shapiro Wilk test was also used to test the normality of all the study variables. The study compared all the scores in all the samples and checked whether they had the same mean or standard deviation or not. The findings for Kolmogorov- Smirnov test for normality showed that the p- values were greater than 0.05 indicating that the distributions were normal. The same case applied with Shapiro-Wilk. The details of the findings are shown in Table 4.6

Table 4.6 Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk

Variables	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statisti	Df	Sig.	Statistic	Df	Sig.
Employee relations strategy	.111	303	.056	.979	303	.216
Retention of employees	.109	303	.123	.974	303	.189

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

4.5 Correlation Analysis of Independent Variables

Correlation analysis gives the relationship between variables. In this study, Pearson product moment correlation coefficient (r 's) was used to establish the relationship between the independent variables. The correlation coefficients are

summarized in Table 4.7. The findings also revealed that there was a significant relationship between the independent variables since all the p-values were less than 0.01, that is p-values $0.000 < 0.01$. Even though there was a significant relationship between the independent variables, there was no problem of multicollinearity among the variables since all the r values were less than 0.8 as suggested by Tabachnick and Fidel (2007).

Table 4.7 Correlation analysis of independent variables

		HRPS	RS	EBS	CDS	ERS
ERS	Pearson Correlation	.565**	.597**	.596**	.625**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	303	303	303	303	303

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

4.7.1 Regression analysis for employee relations strategy

An R- square of 0.672 indicated that changes in employee relations strategy explain 67.2% of retention of employees.

ANOVA: employee relations strategy

The ANOVA table shows that the regression model between employee relations strategy and retention of employees in universities in Kenya was significant (it indicates the goodness of fit for the regression model established between the independent variables and dependent variable). F statistic of 616.939 indicated that the overall model was significant as this was further supported by a probability value of 0.000 which was less than 0.05 ($p=0.00 < 0.05$). This study was consistent with the studies done by Sofijanov and Zabijakin-Chatleska, (2013), which found that effective use of employee involvement, is positively related to perceived organizational performance.

Table 4.8: ANOVA- employee relations strategy

Indicator	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	26.529	1	26.529	616.939	.000 ^b
Residual	12.943	301	.043		
Total	39.473	302			

Coefficient: Employee relations (X_5)

The regression coefficient table shows that the regression model between employee relations strategy and retention of employees was given as $Y = 2.210 + 0.473X_5$ which indicated that there was significant positive relationship between employee relations strategy and retention of employees in universities in Kenya. The regression coefficient of 0.473 indicated that for a unit increase of employee relations strategy, retention of employees' increases by 0.473.

Table 4.9: Regression coefficients- employee relations strategy

Model		Unstandardized		Standardized	T	Sig.
		Coefficients				
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.210	.067		32.9	.000
	Employee Relations Strategy	.473	.019	.820	24.8	.000

a. Dependent Variable: retention of employees

5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

From the inferential findings, there was a positive significant relationship between the independent variable (employee relations strategy) and the dependent variable (retention of employees) in universities in Kenya. According to the study 67.2% of retention of employees was explained by employee relation strategy. The coefficient for employee relations strategy rejected the null hypothesis and accepted the alternative hypothesis and concluded that employee relations strategy had a positive significant influence on the retention of employees in universities in Kenya.

5.2 Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that there was a significant positive relationship between employee relations strategies and retention of employees in universities in Kenya. The study rejected the null hypothesis (H₀) which stipulates that employee relations strategies has no significant positive influence on retention of employees in universities in Kenya and accepted the alternative hypothesis (H_a), which stipulates employee retention strategies has a significant positive influence on retention of employees of universities in Kenya.

5.3 Recommendations

Above all, universities managements and councils should have a revised, robust and effective employee relations strategy in their human resource policy document and look upon to its implementation, monitoring and evaluation by ensuring that there is a will, resources and leadership. This can be done by inducing more staff meetings between management and staff to discuss matters of common interest and resolve matters that affect employees but also involve them in participative management like planning, decision making and problem-solving processes in the organizations. Also, Universities should also respond to employee queries/concerns in a supportive manner and take a constructive approach in solving them. The study recommended universities to use effective channels of communication (up-down and down-up) with their employees hence fostering team-work and smooth running of the operations within the organization. Consequently, there should be structures for employees to air their voice. They should frequently communicate to employees timely and handle them in a supportive manner when a retrenchment program is being undertaken and they need to regularly and consistently communicate on matters regarding employee performance and welfare such as health benefits, pension plan and benefits that come with exemplary performance. Communication reduces power distance between management staff which in turn reduces suspicion and promotes unity and oneness between both parties. This would make them feel engaged and consider their options to stay.

Further, the study also recommends that universities should also put in place trans-formative leadership style which builds strong feelings towards their subordinates and help create harmony between employees and management and also explore additional channels to foster good employer-employee relations. This can be done through training and seminars where all employees are invited. The study is also recommended to top universities top management, employee relations policies/strategies should also be periodically reviewed in tandem with the rapid and complex changes in the economic, social, cultural political and technological environment in which modern organizations operate today. Universities should also continue to explore better and effective employee human relation approaches, among them being employee engagement, involvement and consultation. Employee involvement is paramount in running universities, that is, universities should involve/seek employee's involvement/opinion in making serious and important decisions such as on management styles, leadership styles, marketing strategies and communication in the organization and their welfare to encourage consultative decision-making approach. Engagement ensures employees are well conversant with what is expected of them in terms of tasks, rules and regulations and knowledge of the mandate of the organization. This would foster feeling by employees to stay.

5.4 Areas for Further Study

The purpose of this study was to analyze the influence of employee relations strategies on retention of employees in universities in Kenya. A similar study could also be done to explore the influence of employee relations strategies on retention of employees in other organizations in Kenya such as non-profit organizations, manufacturing and commercial sectors considering the importance of human resources to their survival and success in the competitive business environment and their contribution to the economic growth and development in the country. Another area of study or research could also be done in universities or some other organizations to examine the influence of employee relations strategies on performance of their employees using entirely different set of independent variables such as age, gender, sample size, marital status or hierarchy. Thirdly, in this study it was also noted that employee relations strategies are many and dynamic hence another study could be done using an entirely different set of employee relations strategies to investigate their influence on retention, performance, commitment, engagement and even job satisfaction of employees in existing organizations in Kenya.

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