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**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FLEXIBLE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS AND EMPLOYEE RETENTION AMONG
STATE CORPORATIONS IN MOMBASA COUNTY**

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RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FLEXIBLE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS AND EMPLOYEE RETENTION AMONG STATE CORPORATIONS IN MOMBASA COUNTY

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ABSTRACT

The focus of the study was the relationship between flexible working arrangements and talent management in Mombasa County state corporations (coast development authority, Kenya bureau of standards, Kenya coast water services board, Kenya maritime authority, Kenya ferry services, and Kenya marine and fisheries research institute). A variety of theories were employed in this investigation, including the path-goal leadership theory as well as theories based on equity, role theory, component theory, and the work-family boundary theory. The study adhered to the research philosophy of pragmatism. The research design utilized in this study was a cross-sectional survey. The six state corporations functioning in Mombasa County comprised the unit of analysis. Human resource managers and staff of the six state corporations in Mombasa County were included in this study. 293 people work for the six state corporations collectively. The sample size of 169 people was calculated using the Yamane method. The study used variety of ways to choose participants. First, purposive sampling was employed to select the six state firms' HR managers. The researchers then randomly selected the remaining 163 individuals working in diverse departments for the experiment. A questionnaire was used to collect data from the employees of state corporations operating in Mombasa County. Data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics with the aid of SPSS version 26. Descriptive statistics involved the use of frequencies and percentages while inferential statistics involved the use of logistic regression. The results of the analysis revealed that there is a correlation between employee flexible working arrangement and employee retention in state corporations operating in Mombasa County. The study recommended that in order to promote employee loyalty to the organization, managers of state corporations should develop and support flexible working policies and procedures that include time constraints and time autonomy policies. Proper performance measurement, as well as clear communication of policies, are essential for effective implementation. It is vital to evaluate and monitor the success of such regulations, as it is possible that certain employees will abuse such policies. Employee commitment, job satisfaction, and reduced turnover are predicted to rise as a result of a successful implementation.

Key words: Flexible Working Arrangements, Employee Retention

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INTRODUCTION

Retaining employees involves taking actions to encourage workers to continue working for the same company over an extended period of time. These actions are referred to as employee retention strategies (Marchington and Wilkinson, 2018). One definition of "employee retention strategy" is "a set of rules and programs designed to ensure that a business continues to have access to the talents for which it is responsible" (Armstrong, 2017). As a direct consequence of this, retention programs guarantee an unwavering commitment on the part of workers to the firm. The goal of employee retention is to prevent the loss of personnel, which has a negative influence on the productive capacity of the organization (Samuel and Chipunza 2019).

Due to the multifaceted nature of the task, there is no single formula for retaining employees. The firm enjoys a competitive advantage as a result of the high rate of staff retention (Bhatnagar, 2017). The working environment is becoming more competitive hence it makes it more important for organizations to reap every talent they have on their employees. Adoption of efficient methods by businesses to keep skilled staff members on staff is essential to the companies' performance in dynamic markets (Huselid, 2015).

The factors that have an impact on increasing employee retention can be broken down into seven categories: reward for work that has been completed; provision of challenging task; provision of opportunities for promotion; conducive working environment within the organization; good working relationships with coworkers; provision of a balance between one's professional and personal lives and effective means of communication (Walker, 2018).

The competition for talent has had an effect on virtually every sector in the UK, to the point that the few highly skilled applicants who are still available are being swamped with job offers while companies struggle to locate people who are a suitable fit for open positions. 53 percent of firms, according to the findings of a poll that was conducted by Robert Half in 2020 on Salary Guide, find it difficult to

source people who have the appropriate abilities. This is confirmed by statistics from PwC, which indicate that CEOs are concerned that a lack of talent will have an impact on growth plans and digital transformation projects for the coming year.

The Zambia Health Workers Retention Scheme (ZHWS), which is an incentive scheme aiming at the attraction, retention, and growing availability of workers in the rural areas, was developed in 2003 by the Zambian government in conjunction with the Netherlands (Makasa, 2021). Other efforts have been made in the health sector to prevent employees from leaving the country. These efforts include agreements between SADC countries not to hire health professionals from other member states and an intervention by the WHO in Africa to assist governments in increasing salaries and improving recruitment and training. Both of these initiatives are examples of efforts that have been made to prevent employees from leaving the country (Makasa, 2021).

In Kenya, Safaricom has implemented a variety of measures and programs to increase the rate of employee retention, which has provided them with a competitive advantage over their competition. These measures and programs include the development of a department to harness worker abilities as a result of the center duty, the evaluation of personnel with the goal of retaining them, and the alignment of Safaricom values in a manner to apprehend their employees. Safaricom is committed to being an overall market leader in terms of reimbursement package, supply of appropriate working circumstances, and other relevant factors (Nzuve, 2019).

Problem Statement

At least twenty percent of an organization's workforce resigns from their position on a yearly basis, as reported by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (2019). The impact of people leaving their jobs in vast numbers in search of better terms of employment has been felt by state corporations (Murungi, 2018). For example Kenya Airlines lost majority of its workers to rival airlines (Mumero,

2017). It suffered losses of 20 pilots and 80 engineers to Qatar airlines in 2016, and it suffered losses of 130 pilots to Middle Eastern carriers in 2018 (Ndetei, 2019).

Although studies have been done on factors influencing employee retention in organizations, the role of flexible work arrangements in enhancing employee retention in state corporations has not come into the attention of researchers even at a time when these state corporations are facing high staff turnover. Whereas researchers have found significant relationship between flexible work arrangement and employee retention in other organizations, no study has sought to establish the relationship between flexible work arrangements and employee retention in state corporations (Botrel Vilela, 2021; Muchiti and Gachunga, 2015; Hashmi, Al Ghaithi, and Sartawi). Since employee retention remains an issue of concern especially in state corporations, this study sought to determine the influence of flexible work arrangement on employee retention in state corporations in Mombasa County.

Objective of the study

This study evaluated the relationship between flexible working arrangements and employee retention among State corporations in Mombasa County. The study was guided by the following research hypothesis;

- H_0 : There is no significant relationship between flexible working arrangements and employee retention among State corporations in Mombasa County.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Researchers from the Gallup Institute for Public Opinion (2020) have found that employees' perspectives on flexible working arrangements were quite different prior to and after the pandemic. The ability for many employees to work from home on a few days a week was once a perk of the job, but that perk has since been removed from the benefits package. There is a pervasive sense of entrapment among employees, which has

repercussions for the emotional and physical wellbeing of those workers.

It was found out that Aline Botrel Vilela (2021) had done an exploratory study on the impact of flexible work arrangements on employee engagement and satisfaction: An exploratory study of employee age and gender. This was discovered. In Dublin, my master's thesis was recently published by the National College of Ireland. The results of this study demonstrated that flexible working practices may be tremendously advantageous to employee engagement and satisfaction, as well as to the overall performance of a business when they are implemented effectively. There were also some perceptive remarks made on the expectations of people of different ages and genders, as well as their preferences for flexible working arrangements.

Choi (2021) investigated the connection between employee retention and flexible work arrangements by conducting a longitudinal study of federal workforces for the purpose of his research. According to the data, businesses that had a greater number of teleworkers also had lower levels of voluntary employee turnover. Companies with lower rates of voluntary employee turnover are more likely to be those who encourage and facilitate telework for their staff members. In addition to organizational characteristics such as average pay and length of service, researchers discovered that the proportion of different occupational categories, full-time employment, and female employees all had significant effects on employee voluntary turnover.

Elke and Beblo (2018) investigated the influence that flexible work time schedules have on the efficiency of firms using data from a representative sample of establishments in Germany. They came to the conclusion that while work time schedules that allow for a moderate amount of flexibility are connected favorably to technical efficiency, very flexible work time arrangements appear to be related negatively to efficient management of the work flow (Elke and Beblo 2018). They suggest that

their findings should not be considered as evidence of causality because it is anticipated that extremely flexible work time schedules were established in organizations that were struggling financially.

According to a study by Jain and Swami (2014), flexible work schedules can increase employment and improve uniformity between qualification and job skills by allowing them to work from home. These work schedules encourage commitment to the organization, work-life balance, stress relief, and longer containment within the organization. They also encourage longer containment within the organization. The workplace should be restructured to include some programs, such as shortening workweeks for all employees in order to avoid inequity between uneven time periods, and providing flextime or shorter work hours to people who have family responsibilities. This would increase employee commitment and talent retention by increasing employee commitment and talent retention.

Wakio (2019) carried out a study on the effect of working hours on employee retention and discovered that when employees are dissatisfied with the number of hours worked, they are more likely to leave their jobs. Particularly difficult are the working conditions in the nursing profession, which include long hours, little job autonomy, brain drain, and extraordinary job demands. The nursing profession is subjected to long working hours in high-pressure environments while also receiving inadequate compensation. This is exacerbated by emotional toil, bureaucracy, and insufficient overtime compensation, all of which have contributed to low employee retention levels.

Coti, Haley, and Miller (2016) carried out research to investigate the extent to which workers' ratings of job satisfaction are correlated with the degree of workplace flexibility. The findings of the study showed that alterations to one's salary did not have a substantial impact on one's level of job satisfaction; rather, alterations to one's level of workplace flexibility had this effect. According to the results of the research conducted, workplace

flexibility was found to have an 8.1% link with an increase in the degree to which employees are satisfied with their jobs. Understanding the inversely proportional link between employee turnover and job satisfaction, as well as how job satisfaction can have an impact on the retention or loss of skilled and competent employees, is beneficial to businesses. Businesses also benefit from understanding how job satisfaction can have an impact on the retention or loss of skilled and competent employees.

According to research conducted by Goldsmith (2017), the availability of flexible working arrangements is one of the most critical variables that impact an employee's decision to remain within an organization and, as a result, retain workers. In addition, it was found that having a degree of control over one's working conditions is one of the most important factors in overall job satisfaction.

According to the findings of a study on flexible work practices in the United States that was carried out by Leslie, Manchester, Park, and Mehng (2016), flexible work arrangements are common among employees and companies all over the country. In general, advancements in technology make information and communication technology (ICT) readily available to workers. This enables workers to perform their jobs from remote locations, such as their homes or other off-site locations. It is also crucial that women have the opportunity to work from home because this enables them to provide for their families while continuing to be employed. Telecommuting makes it possible for working women to fulfill their childcare responsibilities in a more timely manner while allowing them to keep their competitive edge in the workplace.

According to the findings of a study conducted by Heejung (2016), flexible work arrangements are a business necessity in order to fulfill strategic targets such as increased employee productivity, job satisfaction, and lower absenteeism. According to the findings of this study, there is a favorable association between work time flexibility and

employee job satisfaction. Consequently, the deployment of flexible work arrangements patterns in the workplace increases the level of employee job satisfaction.

According to a study conducted by Barton (2014), nurses who chose to work permanent overnight shifts reported less health, sleep, and social concerns than those who did not want to work the night shift. Furthermore, scheduling has been shown to be connected with higher levels of dedication and delight, as well as reduced levels of burnout in certain situations. Some employees choose to work at night because they are employed at more than one job, and others choose to work at night since it allows them to spend more time with their own families during the day.

The findings of a study conducted by Muchiti and Gachunga (2015) on the impact of work-life balance on worker productivity in Kenya at the Milimani Law Courts in Nairobi revealed that flexible running schedules boosted unquestionably employee productivity in the court. Furthermore, the research revealed that respondents were in agreement about how technological assets such as flex time, component time, and timework might inspire employee productivity in the legal profession.

According to a study conducted by Edwards and Robinson (2016), component-time employees experienced lower levels of task enjoyment. In addition, the study asserted that because part-time employees have less contact with the organization than full-time employees, it should be expected that part-time employees will have higher levels of activity pleasure because they will have less opportunity to expand feelings of dissatisfaction than full-time employees.

According to a study by Stock and Schmidt (2017), employees recognize that flextime working is crucial when it comes to establishing a solid work-circle of relative consistency. Flextime helps employees maintain stability and wellness in their work and personal lives by reducing work-life conflict, pressure, and stress. This is due to the convenience

of flexible operation hours, which allows people to complete the task at hand without jeopardizing other important elements of their personal and professional lives.

Flexible work schedules such as flextime, according to Murphy and Kaskubar (2017), can have an effect on the overall profitability of a business through two strategies: company sales and corporate charges. Because it attracts higher-quality candidates and increases the marginal productivity of existing employees, flextime has the potential to increase firm revenues

Data Analysis Methods

The study undertook cross-sectional survey research design. The unit of analysis consisted of the HR managers and all the employees of the 6 state corporations in Mombasa. The six state corporations are well suited for this study because they appeared in the Brighter Monday Kenya 2020 annual survey as the best in 100 Companies in Kenya. A sample was decided on from the 293 employees working in the 6 state significantly. By reducing turnover and absenteeism, flextime has the potential to cut charges as well. corporations in Mombasa County. The research used Taro and Yamane (1967) method when computing the sample size (169). Simple random sampling technique was adopted in deciding on the different employees operating in state corporations operating in Mombasa County. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics with the aid of SPSS version 25.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Descriptive Analysis of the study variables

This section presents the preliminary analysis of the study variables. The analysis is done using descriptive statistics. The results of the analysis are presented in Table.

Table 1: Flexible working arrangements

Flexible Working Arrangements	Disagreed	Neutral	Agreed
Employees in state corporations are allowed to trade scheduled shifts with their colleagues	0(0%)	6(4.1%)	140(95.9%)
Shift arrangement helps in reducing accidents and fatigue hence improving employee job satisfaction	0(0%)	2(1.4%)	144(98.6%)
Flexible working arrangements in state corporations decreasing the level of employee absenteeism	0(0.0%)	0(0%)	146(100%)
Employees in Part-time working arrangement lack the opportunities for self-development hence affecting their job satisfaction	19(13%)	76(52.1%)	51(34.9%)
The organization's working arrangements is flexible in terms of working time and working location	26(17.8%)	63(43.2%)	57(39%)
It is difficult for me to adopt a flexible working arrangement because of a lack of support from my supervisor.	102(69.9%)	4(2.7%)	40(27.4%)
My commitment to the organization would be questioned if I worked flexibly	136(93.2%)	0(0%)	10(6.8%)
Women are actively encouraged to adopt flexible working arrangements in this organization.	1(0.7%)	30(20.5%)	115(78.8%)
My job gives me the flexibility to meet the needs to manage my work and non-work interests	17(11.6%)	87(59.6%)	42(28.8%)

As shown in table 1, majority of the respondents 140(95.9%) felt that employees in state corporations are allowed to trade scheduled shifts with their colleague's. Only a small proportion 6(4.1%) of the sampled respondents neither agreed nor disagreed to the statement that employees in state corporations are allowed to trade scheduled shifts. respondents neither agreed nor disagreed to the statement that managers in state corporations understand and support their career aspirations. A very small percentage 5(4.1%) felt that managers in state corporations do not understand and support their career aspirations. On whether shift arrangement helps in reducing accidents and fatigue hence improving employee job satisfaction, Majority of the respondents 144(98.6%) were of the opinion that shift arrangement helps in reducing accidents and fatigue hence improving employee

job satisfaction. Only a very small percentage 2(1.4%) neither agreed nor disagreed to the statement that shift arrangement helps in reducing accidents and fatigue hence improving employee job satisfaction.

The study also sought to determine the respondent's perception about flexible working arrangements in state corporations decreasing the level of employee absenteeism. From the results of the analysis, all the respondents 146(100%) were in agreement that flexible working arrangements in state corporations play a leading role decreasing the level of employee absenteeism. On whether employees in Part-time working arrangement lack the opportunities for self-development 51(34.9%) of the respondents agreed to the statement while 19(13%) of the respondents felt that the statement

is not true. However, more than half 76(52.1%) of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement.

On whether the organization's working arrangements is flexible in terms of working time and working location, 57(39%) of the respondents felt that the organization's working arrangements is flexible in terms of working time and working location, while 26(17.8%) were of the opinion that the organization's working arrangements is not flexible in terms of working time and working location. However, the majority 63(43.2%) neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement that the organization's working arrangements is flexible in terms of working time and working location

Regarding the statement that it is difficult for me to adopt a flexible working arrangement because of a lack of support from my supervisor, majority of the respondents 102(69.9%) disagreed with the statement, implying that managers in state corporations don't suppress adoption of flexible working arrangement. 40(27.4%) of the respondents agreed that managers suppress adoption of flexible working arrangements. This consequently implies that some state corporations don't have provisions for flexible working arrangements. Only a small proportion 4(2.7%) neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement that "it is difficult for me to adopt a flexible working arrangement because of a lack of support from my supervisor".

The results also indicated that women are actively encouraged to adopt flexible working arrangements in state corporations at 115(78.8%) agreeing to the statement. A very small proportion of the respondents 1(0.7%) disagreed with the statement that "women are actively encouraged to adopt flexible working arrangements in this organization". However, 30(20.5%) of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement that "women are actively encouraged to adopt flexible working arrangements in this organization."

The study also sought to establish the employee's perception on whether "my job gives me the flexibility to meet the needs to manage my work and non-work interests". As per the results indicated that 42(28.8%) agreed that their job gives them flexibility to meet their needs to manage their work and non-work interests while few respondents 11(11.6%) disagreed with the statement that "my job gives me the flexibility to meet the needs to manage my work and non-work interests". However, were indeed satisfied with existence of opportunities to put their experience and talent in their daily duties. 19(13%) of all those interviewed. The results further indicated that majority of the respondents 142(97.3%) agreed that the firm recognizes completion of training

Hypothesis Testing

To determine the relationship between talent management practices and employee retention in state corporations, the following hypotheses were tested at 5% level of significance. The dependent variable was employee retention categorized as "low" and "high". This was achieved by consolidating all responses on employee retention and a retention test score computed. The questionnaire had nine items measuring employee retention on a five point likert scale. As per this study, retention test score ranging from 9 to 27 implied that employee retention is high. Scores above 27 implied that employee retention is low. Preliminary test of hypotheses was done using the chi square test of significance. Chi square is usually appropriate when determining existence of relationship between categorical variables. In this study, all the variables are categorical. The chi square statistics were obtained by running cross tabulations in SPSS version 25. However, it is worth noting that, correlation does not necessarily mean causality. For this reason, logistic regression was used to determine the cause and effect relationship among the study variables. Logistic regression is used when the dependent variable is binary in nature. As earlier stated in this section, the nine items measured on 5 point likert scale related to

access to employee retention were collapsed into binary outcome using the compute function in SPSS. Results of the test based on the research hypotheses are as follows:

Hypothesis

The study aimed at establishing whether flexible work arrangements are significantly associated with employee retention in state corporations. To guide the achievement of this objective, the following hypothesis was formulated and tested at 5% level of significance.

H₀: There is no significant relationship between flexible working arrangements and employee retention among State corporations in Mombasa County.

Preliminary analysis was done using chi-square test of significance. Chi-square results were obtained through cross-tabulations.

The chi-square results were as follows: The Pearson’s chi-square, $\chi^2 = 21.249$, $n = 146$, $p = 0.001$. These results indicate that the flexible work environment is statistically and significantly associated with employee retention among employees working in state corporations operating in Mombasa County. To quantify the results of chi-square, logistic regression analysis was performed. The results were as presented in table 2.

Table 2: Bivariate Logistic Regression Results

Variables	B	S.E	P-Value	Odds Ratio
Flexible Work Arrangements:				
No Flexible Work Arrangement (RC)	-	-	-	1.000
There Exist Flexible Work Arrangements	-0.828	0.24	0.009	0.436

The findings indicated that there is a Statistically significant relationship between the availability of flexible work arrangements and the rate of employee retention in state corporations operating in Mombasa County. When compared with their counterparts in other parastatals, employees who worked in parastatals where it was permitted for them to trade work schedules with their coworkers had a 0.436 times lower likelihood of quitting their jobs and leaving the organization. At a threshold of 5 percent, the results were statistically significant. The finding are in line with those of Coti, Haley and Miller (2016) who conducted a study on how workers job satisfaction levels correlate to workplace flexibility, and found that job satisfaction was considerably affected by flexibility in the workplace.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings indicated that flexible work arrangements positively influence employee retention in state corporations. In parastatals where employees are allowed to swap schedules with their

colleagues, they were 0.436 times less likely to exit the organization when compared with their counterparts in the other parastatals which don’t offer flexible work arrangements.

To improve employee retention rates in the public sector, the management of state corporations should develop a flexible work practice that allows for the provision of career advancement opportunities.

In order to promote employee loyalty to the organization, managers of state corporations should develop and support flexible working policies and procedures that include time constraints and time autonomy policies. Proper performance measurement, as well as clear communication of policies, are essential for effective implementation. It is vital to evaluate and monitor the success of such regulations, as it is possible that certain employees will abuse such policies. Employee commitment, job satisfaction, and reduced turnover are predicted to rise as a result of a successful implementation.

The current study was cross-sectional in nature. Future study should thus concentrate on longitudinal techniques that allow for data collection at many points. Cross-sectional research is less likely to give further insights into the dynamic

features of talent management practices, leadership style and employee retention. Future research should include other entities other than state corporations.

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