

Effect of Talent Management Practices on Employee Performance in the County Government of TransNzoia, Kenya

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Abstract: Talent management mainly focuses on the employees identified by the company as talented. However, there is no universal definition of talent management. All the definitions of talent management include identifying, selecting, developing, appraising, motivating and retaining talent to secure the organization's sustainable competitive advantage. We can refer to talent management as the activities and processes which involve the systematic identification of the critical position which differentially contributes to the organizations' sustainable competitive advantage, the development of the talent pool of high-performing and high-potential incumbents to fill these roles and the development of the differentiated human resource architecture to facilitate filling those positions with competent incumbents and to ensure their continued commitment to the organization. The study aimed to examine the effect of talent management practices on employee performance in the county government of Trans Nzoia. The following objectives guided the study: to determine the effect of talent retention on employee performance in the county government of Trans Nzoia, The study was anchored on Human Capital Theory and Talent management Theory. The study adopted a descriptive research design. The target population of the study comprised management and a supervisory cadre of 100. The study used the census technique since the target population is small. The data collection instrument was a structured questionnaire. Pilot testing was done to test the validity and reliability of the research instrument. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics and presented in tabular form. Data were subjected to correlation and Multiple Regression Statistical Methods. The study findings will help counties evaluate the importance of talent management on the performance of their employees. Based on the findings, talent retention was positively related to employee performance in the county government of Trans Nzoia. Therefore, the study recommends that the management of the county governments should consider means of avoiding employee turnover by providing job security and good working conditions together with working tools to save on the cost of fresh recruitment. The county governments should ensure they work on their image, provide quality work life and pay the employees well according to their efforts for employee attraction. The counties should also be able to recognize and dignify their employees as part of the organization and provide training opportunities to enhance high performance.

Keywords: Employee Retention, Employee performance.

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's competitive job market, talent is the central aspect of every Organizational success (Sivathanu & Pillai, 2019). In every organization, a talented Employee builds the performance of an organization and is the arch to the victory of Competitiveness (Powell & Gifford, 2019). Manpower is essential to the The service sector (Mburu, 2018) and returns of

competent human resources are a menace To organizational development. Prassl (2018) revealed that appropriate administration and the invention of enthusiasm in human resources promises to evade negative returns. Human resources form an important competitive advantage for the firm (Chakraborty et al., 2020), have a big impact on the contribution to achieving business results (Trivedi et al., 2019, Zirar et al., 2020), and have a fundamental influence on organizations' sustainable business (Horváthová et al., 2020).

The most valuable asset in any organization is the employees (Drahoslav et al., (2021). Satisfied, highly-motivated and loyal employees represent the basis of a competitive company. The growth of satisfaction is reflected in the increase of productivity, improvement of the products' quality or rendered services and higher number of innovations. Satisfied employees form positive references to the employer and thus increase its attractiveness for potential job seekers and strengthen its competitive position in the market (Ahmad A. A., 2020). In a knowledge-based economy and highly competitive environment, recruiting skilled and knowledgeable human resources (HR) is important for creating and sustaining competitiveness (Baporikar, 2014). However, such employees are scarce and mobile as they have unlimited job opportunities in the labour market ((Drahoslav et al., (2021), Turner & Kalman, 2014). The failure to retain talented employees can interrupt production and working processes, as the organization will suffer from losing key talent who hold the know-how of production (Velloso, Da Silva, Dutra, Fischer & Trevisan, 2014).

According to Kontoghiorghes (2016), effective talent management recommends that talented employees begin to see themselves as part of the organization, add value to it, and remain glued to it. It ensures that employees remain professional always in their business practices, serves meritoriously, has the right people made up of experienced professionals who have excelled in their various professions, possessing the needed integrity, skills and experience (Nzewi, Chiekiezie, and Ogbeta, 2016). By engaging employees in improving their performance, a successful and highly productive organization can be achieved. Therefore, to sustain a competitive advantage, employees should be able to exhibit a total commitment to the required performance standards (Ahmad, 2020); Zahargier and Balasundaram, 2011). To align with great demands, unpredictable business environments, and intense competition, companies are now forced to greatly improve their performance (Muda, Rafiki and Harahap, 2014). Talent management is an important activity in that it enables an organization to have the right people with the skills and expertise to meet the immediate and future needs of the firm (Neha. S2020). According to Armstrong (2014), talent management is hinged on the belief that those organizations with the best workforce are the winners in their industries. Talent management is therefore considered a tool to strengthen organizational capability (Kibui, Gachunga & Namusonge, 2014). Talent management refers to the 'systematic attraction, retention and deployment of individuals' who are valuable to an organization with regard to current critical roles or for future endeavors (CIPD, 2013; Kibui *et al.*, 2014).

Research indicates that companies doing their best to manage their talent deliver better results (Abdi, Omwenga, & Guyo, 2020). Kehinde (2012) argued that the concept of talent management is difficult to measure, defining talent management as processes, strategies and systems that increase workplace productivity to attract, develop, and retain employees with the skills and talent to meet organizational objectives. Kim *et al.* (2014) emphasized how organizations should develop their technical talent professionals who must be trained or certified to perform their roles successfully. Chitsaz-Isfahani and Boustani (2014) assert that the recruitment and retention rate can be improved by implementing talent management. Likewise, for Vivas-López (2021), the key aim of talent management is to retain staff. Sparrow and Makram (2017) argue that if an organization perceives skills and knowledge as important and it needs to protect them, then the talent management architecture must have the capability to capture and store the know-how and be able to recall and understand the information. Likewise, Kim and Kotchegura (2017) stated that governments could only build their ability to deliver by creating a strong ability to attract, retain and develop talented employees, but it is public institutions that are having difficulties attracting and retaining talent.

Organizations around the world are competing for the same pool of talent (Ahmad A. A. 2020). This has resulted in some unethical practices, such as the poaching of talent. Johansdottir, Olafsson, and Davidsdottir (2014) suggested that many firms compete with other industries for talent while clients constantly demand more of them. Talent management has become the focus of U.S. recruiters, human resources (HR) managers, and organizational managers. The definition is stated as the HR practice that addresses competition for highly skilled, high-value labor in global markets (Huang & Tansley, 2012). Linah T.A. (2018) states that talent management has been a top priority in developed countries for decades now, as expressed in literature for countries such as the UK, USA, France, China, and Australia (Coulson-Thomas, 2012, Chugh &

Bhatnagar, 2011, Egerová, 2013, Lewis & Heckman, 2016). These past studies show that the concern and search for talent are universal. The shortage of skills within the organizational workforce may threaten the growth potential of companies because of the lack of formal education of some insurance professionals (Johansdottir, Olaffson, & Davidsdottir, 2014). Many organizations need to consider strategies used during daily operations to retain talented employees to avoid excessive employee turnover rates. Leaders in a highly competitive industry such as counties should emphasize the importance of attracting, retaining, and managing talent to their management teams and employees (Johansdottir, Olaffson, & Davidsdottir, 2014).

Constance and Nambuswa (2022) state that equal importance is hiring talent that is highly skilled and competent. Hiring managers in the counties should be intentional in developing strategies to maximize employee retention (Belbin, Erwee & Weisner, 2012). For instance, Bright (2012) conducted a study on three organizations in China and found that there were different understandings and perceptions of the definition of talent management (TM) in the organizations. Likewise, Poocharoen and Lee (2013), in their study in Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand, found that TM in the public sector has different focuses and scopes. Employers face extreme obstacles related to managing talented employees because of the shortage of critical skills and potential employees' reluctance to affiliate themselves with particular employers (Aned, Zainal, & Alya, 2013). A study of more than 120 organizations' Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) found that between 50-60% of the organizations' executives stated that identifying and attracting new talent is becoming increasingly difficult (Johansdottir *et al.*, 2014).

Regionally, talent management practices should be keenly observed. The most important challenge in today's business arena is not just a matter of technology. Also, the benefit of efficient and intelligent manpower and talented human capital is important. Therefore, human capital is the most valuable asset of any organization. Cognition abilities and qualifications of potential employees and administering them to actualize the potential to improve job satisfaction and organizational performance is a critical task manager; talent management shows us how to do it. In Africa, the concept of talent management picked up between 2004 and 2006. According to a report by Price Water House Coopers (2012), 75% of CEOs surveyed in the PwC report indicated that they lacked the adequate talent to accomplish employee goals. The study also established that 85% of CEOs indicated that they planned to focus their strategies on talent management. The case for talent management in Africa is dire since Africa has lost critical talent to countries like the USA, the UK, France, and Australia (Pfeffer & Sutton, 2011). The African Association of Public Administration and Management (AAPAM) (2008) study found Africa countries have not been able to recruit and retain talent due to various factors, including lack of adequate compensation, poor working environments, uncompetitive environments, and lack of growth opportunities. The study also revealed that Egypt has a greater need for talent in the areas of telecommunication engineers, financial planners, information technologists, and investment bankers, among others. In his research to investigate the relationship between employee morale and perceived performance in industrial organizations in Nigeria, Akintayo (2012) determined that talent management practices like training improve the morale of industrial laborers. The major problem confronting the firms in Nigeria, apart from capturing individuals and businesses to subscribe to their products and services, is the problem of employee compensation and motivation. (Oreshile, 2013).

Nationally, talent management has positively impacted employee performance. Kenya, just like any other African country, faces challenges with talent management. According to Business Management Review (2013), Kenya has challenges with talent management, particularly in recruitment processes, talent development, and retaining and motivating professional talent. For instance, Kenani (2011) argues that Kenya needs to develop talent in scientific areas where Kenya still lags behind other African countries like Egypt and South Africa. In Kenya, the talent management domain is not given much emphasis within the public sector and this has lowered the level of employee retention by 30% in over 60% of state corporations. Njoroge (2012) posits that as organizations continue to pursue high performance and improved results through talent management, they are taking a holistic approach to talent management. The importance of talent management in Kenya is ensuring that firms are future-oriented, that is to have the right skills in place to be able to grow and perform in the future, which is increasingly unpredictable, but not to wait for future challenges before attempting to solve them through talent programs (Oppong, 2013). Oppong (2013) suggests that organizations should ensure that they are better positioned to meet the problems of the talent shortage. Several studies have been done in the Kenyan context to determine whether Kenyan firms have started implementing talent management initiatives and what effects have resulted from such initiatives (Nebat and Nambuswa 2021). The county governments are a major players in the financial services sector of the Kenyan

economy. This study is focused on examining the effect of talent management practices on employee performance in the county government of Trans Nzoia.

Rajani K. S. (2020) states that the achievement of any association relies emphatically upon having talented people. TM advances workforce efficiency and effectiveness in work association (Kehinde, 2012; Lucy et al., 2015; Goswami, 2016). Late patterns in HRM are consistently setting off the work force's performance and the organization's (Goswami, 2016). TM should be viewed as fundamental for accomplishing the organization's objectives and goals if it is managed appropriately and in a thorough manner (Milky, 2013). Payambarpour and Hooi (2015) believed that TM is a cycle of interrelated organizational exercises, for example, identifying, selecting, developing, and retaining talented representatives and guaranteeing their improvement that will contribute towards worker commitment prompting better OP. Moreover, Arif and Uddin's (2016) investigation identified a positive connection between TM and OP in the retail area. On the other hand, Rajani (2020) indicated that talent development and attraction elements are generally pertinent in improving faculty members' performance. Numerous other researchers (for example, Kehinde, 2012; Kumar & Sankar, 2016; El Dahshan et al., 2018) likewise expressed that TM has a critical positive effect on OP. Moreover, Ogbari et al. (2018) demonstrated that TM plays a vital role in OP's determination. Talent management is an organization's core functional unit to enhance employees' productive performance; talent management uses human resource planning to achieve this goal. Efforts have been made to retain, develop, attract, and reward employees to make them a part of talent management and strategic workforce planning. Talent management can lead to a higher level of employee performance and satisfaction instead of hiring, reinforcing and evaluating aptitude.

Boston Consulting Group (2015); Deloitte (2015) have asserted that organizations that wish to realize a consistent growth trajectory will need to envisage, embrace, and navigate around the challenges of implementing Talent Management (TM) in their companies. This has been echoed by PWC (2015), and PWC (2016) report notes that today's competitive marketplace continues to make human talent a primary driver for competitiveness. However, there is little research on talent management's influence on employee performance in county governments. This has created a knowledge gap that this study seeks to address by studying the effect of talent management on employee performance in county governments in Kenya.

Recent research indicates that the war for talent is intense due to labour market shortages, yet very little research attention has been aimed to competitive talent management strategies. The county government is not immune to this; the current demand in the labour market has become so complex that simply concentrating on traditional aspects like compensation, career path, training efforts, and investing heavily in employee development is not enough. However, there was complaints of lack of management support, high employee turnover, lack of career growth, low esteem and lack of defined career path within the organization (IRA, 2014). Therefore, this study sought to determine the effect of talent retention on employee performance in the county government of Trans Nzoia, Kenya.

2. TALENT RETENTION AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

Talent retention is a process in which there is total encouragement to the employees to remain in the organization for a long period of time (Sandhya and Kumar, 2011). A high turnover rate is a serious problem that most counties are now facing and this is due to reasons such as poor working conditions, lack of career advancements, job dissatisfaction as well as lack of a decent salary package (Ivancevich, 2010). This, in turn, leads to low employee performance and as a result, counties have to come up with practices and policies on employee retention. This will also ensure that employees are more willing to stay in the county for a longer time as well as have a positive impact on their performance. In order to optimize the alignment between TM and organizational strategy, researchers emphasize that the TM strategy should be aligned vertically and horizontally with other business processes, strategies and policies. This approach will enable the counties to realize the benefit of utilizing TM and to optimally manage and retain talent. Jackson, Schuler and Werner (2009), Werner *et al.* (2012) and Stahl *et al.* (2012) explain that vertical alignment is achieved when the TM strategy is aligned with the vision, mission and strategic goal of the organization, and horizontal alignment is achieved when the TM strategy is in line with other HRM strategies and functions.

Hejase *et al.* (2016) indicate that organizations should have a clear understanding of why TM is required and be able to identify those employees who are viewed as talented and who can deliver on the strategic objectives. The findings of the study conducted by Bright (2012) in China reveal that the TM of each of the organizations studied had different focus areas. The first organization used TM as a strategy to develop a talent pool by targeting top-performing employees with high

potential to fill top positions. The other organization used TM to retain talented employees, as it was experiencing high staff turnover. There is a tendency amongst younger workers to change jobs regularly, whereas older workers require security and job stability. Altinöz *et al.* (2013) postulated that organizations need to clearly define the strategies and targets to be addressed by TM initiatives. According to James and Mathew (2014) and Mathis, Jackson & Valentine (2016), counties will need to understand the reasons for an employee's resignation by engaging in an ongoing diagnosis to establish the cause of attrition and in order to formulate effective retention strategies. The literature reveals that, in general, the reasons for employees resigning range from a lack of career advancement, poor salaries, lack of training and development, and a poor management style and work environment, including organizational policies (Mathis *et al.*, 2016; Turner & Kalman, 2014).

Organizations should monitor and track the total number of employees who are resigning, especially for the identification of top and high potential performers, and including the reasons for leaving the organization (Dessler, 2014). This can be achieved by conducting an attitude survey or employee satisfaction survey, having an open-door policy and introducing an anonymous hotline (Dessler, 2014). Hejase *et al.* (2016) mention an exit interview as one of the diagnostic tools that can be used by organizations to collect valuable information about the factors that cause staff turnover. Likewise, Dessler (2014) mentions that exit interviews help to inform the employee of the development of the retention strategy. Furthermore, organizations should also measure both retention and turnover to build a complete picture of employee movement in the organization (Mathis *et al.*, 2016).

According to Rawat (2013), organizations face a lot of problems when they have a high turnover rate due to employees leaving the organization for reasons such as job dissatisfaction, poor working conditions, not having a decent salary package, and if there are no advancements in career. High turnover rates lead to low performance in the organization. Therefore, organizations have to come up with policies and practices on retaining employees so as to ensure that employees stay in the organization for a longer duration and have a positive effect on their performance. . The aim of this study will be to determine the effect of talent retention strategies on employee performance in the county government of Trans Nzoia.

3. METHOD

This study adopted a descriptive research design. the target population for the study comprised 100 management and a supervisory cadre within the county government of Trans Nzoia. Since the study population is small, the study worked with an entire population which was a census study. The data collection instrument was a questionnaire and other information relevant to the study. A structured questionnaire was administered to the respondents. The Secondary data collection instruments were used. Piloting was done to test the validity and reliability of the data collection instrument. The data were reduced, organized, coded, edited, and classified using a table and analyzed to bring out the meaning of each of the factors. Once data was collected, it was crosschecked and verified for errors, completeness and consistency. It was then coded, entered and analyzed descriptively using IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 23). Pearson correlation analysis was used to test the relationship between variables in the study hypotheses. ANOVA multiple linear regression analysis was adopted and computed to determine the statistical relationship between the independent variable and the dependent. The multiple linear regressions model was used.

4. DISCUSSION

Talent retention is a process in which there is a real encouragement to the employees to remain with the organization for a long period (Sandhya and Kumar, 2011). A high turnover rate is a serious problem that most organizations are now facing due to poor working conditions, lack of career advancements, job dissatisfaction, and lack of a decent salary package (Ivancevich, 2010). The study sought to determine the effect of talent retention on employee performance in the county government of Trans Nzoia. The findings are presented on a five-point Likert scale where SA=strongly agree, A=agree, N=neutral, D=disagree, SD=strongly disagree and T=total.

Table 4.1 below contains a summary of data relating to the attitude of respondents towards talent retention on employee performance in the county government of Trans Nzoia. For instance, respondents were asked whether the organization has low employee turnover. The distribution of findings showed that 50.0 percent of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement that the organization has very low employee turnover, 30.0 percent of them agreed, 16.0 percent of the respondents were neutral, 4.0 percent disagreed, and none of them strongly disagreed. These findings implied that the organization has very low employee turnover.

The respondents were also asked whether the organization has a competitive compensation system compared to other organizations. The distribution of the responses indicated that 41.0 percent strongly agreed with the statement, 48.0 percent agreed, 9.0 percent were neutral, and 2.0 percent disagreed. In contrast, none of them strongly disagreed with the statement. These findings implied that the organization has a competitive compensation system compared to other organizations.

The respondents were also asked whether the county government assures employees job security to attract the right talent. The distribution of the responses indicated that 36.0 percent strongly agreed with the statement, 44.0 percent agreed, 18.0 percent were neutral, and 1.0 percent disagreed. In comparison, 1.0 percent of them strongly disagreed with the statement. These findings implied that the county government assures employees job security to attract the right talent.

The respondents were further asked whether the county government ensures a good organizational climate to attract the right talents. The distribution of the responses indicated that 44.0 percent strongly agreed with the statement, 43.0 percent of them agreed, and 10.0 percent were neutral. In comparison, 2.0 percent and 1.0 percent disagreed strongly with the statement. These findings implied that the county government ensures a good organizational climate to attract the right talents. The respondents were further asked whether talent retention enhances employee performance. The distribution of the responses indicated that 53.0 percent strongly agreed with the statement, 33.0 percent of them agreed, 11.0 percent were neutral, 2.0 percent disagreed, and 1.0 percent strongly disagreed with the statement, respectively. These findings implied that talent retention enhances employee performance.

Table 4.1: Effect of talent retention on employee performance in the county government of Trans Nzoia

Statements on Talent Retention		SA	A	N	D	SD
The county has very low employee turnover	%	50.0	30.0	16.0	4.0	0.0
The county government has a competitive compensation system in comparison to other organizations	%	41.0	48.0	9.0	2.0	0.0
The county government assures employees job security to attract the right talent	%	36.0	44.0	18.0	1.0	1.0
The county government ensures a good organizational climate to attract the right talents	%	44.0	43.0	10.0	2.0	1.0
Talent retention enhances employee performance	%	53.0	33.0	11.0	2.0	1.0

4.1. Inferential Statistics

4.1.1 Pearson Correlation

The study sought to establish the strength of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables of the study. Pearson correlation coefficient was computed at a 95 percent confidence interval (error margin of 0.05). Table 4.2 illustrates the findings of the study.

Table 4.2: Correlation Matrix

		Employee Performance
Employee Retention	Pearson Correlation	.792**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	120

As shown in Table 4.2 above, the p-value for employee retention was 0.000, which is less than the significant level of 0.05 ($p < 0.05$). The result indicated a Pearson Correlation coefficient (r-value) of 0.792, representing a strong, positive relationship between employee retention and employee performance in the county government of Trans Nzoia.

4.1.2 Multiple Linear Regression

Multiple linear regressions were computed at a 95 percent confidence interval (0.05 margin error) to show the study's multiple linear relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

4.1.2.1 Coefficient of Determination (R²)

Table 4.3 shows that the coefficient of correlation (R) is positive at 0.231. This means a positive correlation exists between the effect of talent management practices and employee performance in the county government of Trans Nzoia. The coefficient of determination (R Square) indicates that talent management practices influence 53.0% of employee performance in the county government of Trans Nzoia. The adjusted R² however, indicates that 13.0% of employee performance in the county government of TransNzoia is influenced by talent management practices leaving 87.0% to be influenced by other factors that were not captured in this study.

Table 4.3 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. The error in the Estimate
1	.231 ^a	.053	.013	.99661610

a. Predictors: (Constant), employee talent retention,

4.1.2.2 Analysis of Variance

Table 4.4 shows the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The p-value of 0.000, which is < 0.05 indicates that the model is statistically significant in predicting how talent management practices affect employee performance in the county government of Trans Nzoia. The results also indicate that the independent variables are predictors of the dependent variable.

Table 4.4 ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	5.248	1	1.214	26.001	.268 ^b
	Residual	93.365	99	.993		
	Total	98.613	100			

a. Dependent Variable: Employee performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), employee talent retention,

4.1.2.3 Regression Coefficients

From the Coefficients table (Table 4.9), the regression model can be derived as follows:

$$Y = 42.123 + 0.770X_1 + 0.592X_2 + 0.621X_3 + 0.993X_4$$

The results in table 4.5 indicate that all the independent variables significantly positively affect employee performance in the county government of Trans Nzoia. The variable of employee retention had an influence to the dependent variable with a coefficient of 0.592 (p-value = 0.000). According to this model, when all the independent variables' values are zero, employee performance in the county government of Trans Nzoia will have a score of 42.123.

Table 4.5: Regression Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	42.123	3.812		55.420	.000
	Employee retention	.592	.160	.364	3.415	.000

4.1.3 Hypotheses Testing

H₀₂: Employee retention does not have a significant effect on employee performance in the county government of Trans Nzoia

From Table 4.5 above, employee retention ($\beta = 0.592$) was positively related to employee performance in the county government of Trans Nzoia. From the t-test analysis, the t-value was found to be 3.415 and the p-value 0.000. Statistically, this null hypothesis was rejected because $p < 0.05$. Thus, the study accepted the alternative hypothesis and concluded that employee retention affects employee performance in the county government of Trans Nzoia.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In conclusion, based on the findings, Employee retention ($\beta = 0.592$) was positively related to employee performance in the county government of Trans Nzoia. From the t-test analysis, the t-value was found to be 3.415 and the p-value 0.000. Statistically, this null hypothesis was rejected because $p < 0.05$. Thus, the study accepted the alternative hypothesis and concluded that employee retention affects employee performance in the county government of Trans Nzoia.

The study recommends and confirms that talent management practices significantly enhanced the performance of the County government of Trans Nzoia, Kenya. All counties must embrace talent management practices through the applications of these components, such as; talent retention to attain better performance in their counties. Therefore, this study sought to strengthen what other past scholars had established in relation to employee talent management practices and performance. The study recommends that the management of the county governments should consider means of avoiding employee turnover by providing job security, good working conditions, and tools for working to save on the cost of fresh recruitment. The county governments should ensure they work on their image, provide a quality of work life and pay the employees well according to their efforts for employee attraction. The counties should also be able to recognize and dignify their employees as part of the organization and provide training opportunities to enhance high performance.

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