



## Strategic Human Resource Management Practices and Employee Retention in a Private Commercial Bank in Nairobi County, Kenya

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### ABSTRACT

*Employees are always regarded as an organization's biggest asset because the workforce is a major component of every business. Organizations cannot deliver business results, satisfy organizational goals, or reach their financial targets without personnel. The majority of corporations understand how crucial human resources are to their businesses' success. It is impossible to overstate the importance of employing excellent strategic human resource management techniques, particularly when dealing with a dynamic workforce. Employee replacement costs are high, it might be challenging to locate qualified candidates, and expenditures on training are currently less secure, making employee turnover expensive. This study sought to investigate the relationship between Strategic Human Resource Management practices and employee retention in a Private Commercial Bank in Nairobi County, Kenya. Specifically, the study sought to determine the effects of recruitment, career management practices, and training on employee retention in the Private Commercial Bank. The study adopted a descriptive cross-sectional research design. The target population consisted of all the 198 employees of the Private Commercial Bank. This study used simple random sampling to determine the employees who participated in the study. The sample size was 93 respondents which was determined by the use of the formula developed by Yamane. The study utilized primary data that was collected by the use of questionnaires that were administered to the employees. The study data was analyzed using descriptive statistics through the use of means and standard deviation. Further, regression analysis was used to test the relationship between the study variables. The results indicated a positive significant correlation between recruitment and employee retention ( $r = 0.419$ ,  $p\text{-value}=0.000$ ), significant positive correlation between career management and employee retention ( $r = 0.230$ ,  $p\text{-value}=0.000$ ) and a significant positive correlation between training and employee retention ( $r = 0.589$ ,  $p\text{-value}=0.000$ ). The study concluded that employee recruitment was crucial for improving staff retention in the private commercial bank in Kenya. Additionally, the research found a strong correlation between staff recruitment and retention. The study came to the conclusion that career management practices, as a strategic HRM practice, had a substantial impact on improving employee retention in the bank, particularly in light of the fact that workers respond favorably to possibilities for career growth and promotion. The study also came to the conclusion that career management methods and employee retention had a very strong favorable association. The study also came to the conclusion that training, as a strategic HRM practice, was essential to improving employee retention, particularly in light of the idea that when organizations support employees' training, everyone is given a clear understanding of their responsibilities as well as the skills and knowledge required to do their jobs.*

**Keywords:** Career Management, Recruitment, Retention, Strategic Human Resource Practices, Training

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### I. INTRODUCTION

The majority of enterprises are aware of how crucial human resources are to their ability to run successful businesses. Without a competent workforce to carry out their different tasks and responsibilities, a profitable firm could have the strongest advantage in terms of technology, depth of capital, market position, etc., but it would not be able to advance to reach any of its organizational or corporate goals (Mwami, 2014). Unwanted employee turnover is one of the most significant and expensive business issues that organizations may have (Lim, 2017). Therefore, the role of human resource strategies in boosting employee engagement is crucial as firms fight to get the most out of their current workforces in a setting marked by a skills scarcity. Since there is significant discussion regarding its applicability, contribution to the bottom line, and organizational performance, strategic human resource management (SHRM) is at a crossroads, poised between becoming a strategic business partner or fading into obscurity. It appears that a unified approach to identifying those human resource practices which create and support attachment to the organization is crucial if strategic human resource management is to tip the scales toward being viewed as a business partner (Vance, 2015). Employees have typically traded their loyalty and diligence for the promise of job security inside the employment relationship. The psychological contract between an employer and an employee has changed in the modern environment

as a result of organizational structure changes that encourage more flexible work practices and a decrease in job security (Jagero, 2012).

According to a research by Day (2007), 80% of global company leaders think that "people issues" are more crucial now than they were three years ago, and 68% think that keeping talent on board is more crucial than bringing in "fresh blood." This acknowledgment, together with the exceptional efforts some businesses are making to entice and keep great personnel, signify major changes in the dynamics between employers and employees. In essence, more businesses are beginning to understand that retention is a strategic concern and a source of competitive advantage (Whitner 2001). Businesses can successfully retain crucial employees by implementing a holistic retention plan with the assistance of pertinent HR programs. This research examines the current human resource practices on the retention of core employees in a private commercial bank in Nairobi County. It explores the relationship between strategic human resource (SHR) practices and retention and further identifies the elements of HR practices which strongly influence the decision for core employees to stay.

### 1.1 Research Hypothesis

H<sub>01</sub>: There are no differences in recruitment practices and employee retention among employees in the private commercial bank in Nairobi County, Kenya.

H<sub>02</sub>: There are no significant relationships between career management and retention among employees in the private commercial bank in Nairobi County, Kenya

H<sub>03</sub>: Training does not have significant effect on staff retention in in the private commercial bank in Nairobi County, Kenya.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Strategic Human Resources Management Practices are those procedures that have been explicitly created, adopted, and carried out in accordance with a company's strategy (Karunathilaka, 2016). Employees are referred to as strategic resources in the phrase "strategic human resource management." This means that in order to carry out the company plan, the human capital must be managed and utilized. The intersection of strategic management and human resource management is called strategic human resource management (Jagero, 2012). Strategic management is a series of choices and actions that lead to the creation and application of plans intended to help an organization reach its goals (Lim, 2017). According to Fuertes et al. (2020), strategy is the means by which an organization attempts to achieve its goals. Using human resource strategies, integrated human resource policies, and practices, strategic human resource management outlines how an organization's goals will be accomplished through its workforce. Instead of being a collection of methods, strategic human resource management can be thought of as a mindset supported by a few key ideas. It serves as the basis for strategic reviews, when decisions on strategic plans for the development of general or targeted human resource strategies are made after studies of the organizational context and current practices. Making strategic decisions and establishing strategic priorities are part of strategic human resource management.

Various studies have been conducted to investigate the relationship between strategic human resource practices and employee retention. Fahim (2018) on a study on Strategic human resource management and employee retention at National Bank of Nigeria found a significantly positive relationship between strategic human resource management and employee retention. The study concluded that the employment of best HRM practices is deemed a remarkable strategic tool in the retention of core public employees. Further, the results of analysis provide evidence that SHRM contributes to employee retention at NBE. Similarly, Fitz-Lewis (2018) on a study on Human Resources Strategies for Retaining Employees in St. Lucian Banks in Malaysia found a strong positive significant relationship between strategic human resource management and employee retention. Locally, Mkungo (2011) researched on strategic human resource management practices that influence the retention of core employees at Becton Dickinson Kenya Limited. The study found a positive significant relationship between strategic human resource management and employee retention. This study also expects to find a positive relationship between strategic human resource management and employee retention at the private commercial bank in Nairobi County.

The goal of recruitment is to create a pool of candidates from which to draw candidates for further consideration. To successfully implement the predetermined business strategy, employees must be chosen and hired based on how well they would be able to perform their duties. Karemu, Kahara and Josee (2014) research analyzed the effect of employee recruitment strategies on employee retention at Equity Bank, Kenya. The findings showed that employee recruitment

strategies were found to have a positive and significant effect on the employee retention. Career development is an organized planning method used to match employee goals with the business needs of an organization. It consists of activities undertaken by the individual employees and the organization to meet career aspirations and job requirements. On a study on influence of career development programs on employee retention in international nongovernmental organizations in Kenya, Wane (2016) found that career development programs affect employee retention. Training refers to the teaching and learning activities carried on for the primary purpose of helping members of an organization acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes needed by a particular job and organization. Chen (2014) found a positive relationship between training and employee retention.

### III. METHODOLOGY

A descriptive survey research design was applied for the current study in order to effectively explain the effect of strategic human resource practices on employee retention. Fowler (2013) describes a descriptive research design as a technique that enables the research to observe and describe the behaviour of variables without influencing them. The study was conducted at the private commercial bank's 14 branches in Nairobi County. The target population consisted of all the 198 employees of the bank. This study used simple random sampling to determine the employees who participated in the study. The sample size was determined by the use of the formula developed by Yamane (1967).

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e^2)}$$

Where:  $n$  = the sample size;  $N$  = the size of the population;  $e$  = the error of 7.5%

Substituting values in the above formula gave a total of 93 employees. The study utilized primary data that was collected by use of questionnaires that were administered to the employees. The study used electronic survey questionnaires that were sent to the respondent's email addresses. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics through the use of means and standard deviation. Further, regression analysis was used to test the relationship between the study variables. The study was conducted with due consideration of research ethics. At the beginning of the survey conducted, it was stressed that honesty for self-assessment was very important for getting accurate data as well as for the respondents' personal ethics. It was also emphasized that all the questionnaires were anonymous and responses would be kept confidential. In assessing the reliability of research instruments, internal consistency reliability, which is the most commonly used test, was used. The rationale for internal consistency is that the individual items should all be measuring the same constructs and thus correlates positively to one another (Hair *et al.*, 2012). Data from the pilot study was used to analyse Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient using SPSS and thereafter the questionnaire was edited prior to the main study. The reliability coefficient for the pilot study was 0.898, which showed that the data collection instrument was reliable.

### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.1 Descriptive Statistics of Strategic Human Resource Management Practices

This section presents the results of descriptive statistics of responses on strategic human resource management practices which were categorized to consist of recruitment, career management and training. Questionnaire items were measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neutral; 5= Strongly Agree. The responses were analysed using mean scores and standard deviations.

##### 4.1.1 Role of Recruitment Practices on Employee Retention

The study sought to establish how the respondents would rate the role of recruitment practices on employee retention in the bank. The findings were as shown below.

**Table 1: Results of Descriptive Statistics on the Responses of Recruitment Practices**

Statements	Mean	Std. Dev
The bank has a recruitment and selection policy.	4.18	0.2178
I understand how the recruitment and selection policy works	3.83	0.3245
Human Resource Unit consistently implements the recruitment and selection processes as outlined in the policy when recruiting employees.	3.90	0.1867
This bank is a preferred employer	4.26	0.2365
The recruitment method used reaches all the majority of the intended recipient.	4.27	0.4322
Recruitment method used promotes fairness.	4.35	0.3181
The bank recruits staff for competency/skills.	4.49	0.2345

From the findings the respondents agreed that the bank had a recruitment and selection policy, they understand how the recruitment and selection policy works, human resource unit consistently implements the recruitment and selection processes as outlined in the policy when recruiting employees, the bank is a preferred employer, the recruitment method used reaches all the majority of the intended recipient, recruitment method used promotes fairness and the bank recruits staff for competency/skills. The results indicate that the bank has a recruitment and selection policy in place and that the bank recruits for competencies/skills

#### 4.1.2 Role of Career Management on Employee Retention

The study sought to establish how the respondents would rate role of career management on employee retention in Absa Bank. The findings were as shown below.

**Table 2: Results of Descriptive Statistics on the Responses of Career Management**

Statements	Mean	Std. Dev
I feel there are better career and learning opportunities in my organization as compared to others	3.85	0.8120
My organization sometimes sponsors me to participate in training or career development programs	3.70	0.9623
I have received sufficient training in my organization to enable me do my job effectively	3.62	0.7556
My supervisor takes an interest in my professional growth and career development	3.98	0.6543
There are opportunities for me to advance my career in my organization	3.52	0.8897
My organization provides opportunities for staff training and career development on a regular basis	3.48	0.3456

From the findings the respondents agreed that there are better career and learning opportunities in their organization as compared to others, their organization sometimes sponsors them to participate in training or career development programmes, they have received sufficient training in their organization to enable them do their job effectively, their supervisors takes an interest in their professional growth and career development, there are opportunities for them to advance their career in their organization and their organization provides opportunities for staff training and career development on a regular basis. This analysis depicts that there are career management programmes in the bank.

#### 4.1.3 Role of Training on Employee Retention

The study sought to establish how the respondents would rate the role of training on employee retention in the bank. The findings were as shown below.

**Table 3: Results of Descriptive Statistics on the Responses of Training**

Statements	Mean	Std. Dev.
The bank has adequate coaching programs	3.67	0.1321
The bank has structured mentorship programs	3.82	0.1973
My employer has sponsorship/ scholarships to employees for higher learning	4.26	0.2564
On-the-job training programs are available in the bank	4.39	0.2389
There is job rotation at different departments in the bank	4.22	0.1575
There re formal lecture sessions so as to stay abreast with current best practices	4.11	0.1972
The bank offers free membership registration to professional association annual conferences and seminars.	4.20	0.1321
Field trips to other organizations for bench-marking	3.99	0.3244



From the findings the respondents agreed that there are adequate coaching programs at the bank, there are structured mentorship programs at the bank, there are sponsorship / scholarships to employees for higher learning, the bank has on-the-job training programs, there is job rotation at different departments in the bank, there are formal lecture sessions so as to stay abreast with current best practices, the bank offers free membership registration to professional association annual conferences and seminars and there are field trips to other organizations for bench-marking. This analysis depicts that there are adequate trainings opportunities in the bank.

#### 4.1.4 Employee Retention

The dependent variable of the study was staff retention which had nine (9) items. Table presents the results of the analysis.

**Table 4: Results of Descriptive Statistics on the Responses of Retention**

Statements	Mean	Std. Dev
I am aware of the retention policy used the bank	4.20	0.1375
I understand how the retention policy works.	3.95	0.3181
The retention strategy used by the bank is effective	4.35	0.3195
The working conditions in the bank are favourable	3.84	0.2138
If I leave the bank I will consider coming back.	4.14	0.1246
I feel to be part of the bigger team	4.27	0.4322
Opportunities for career progression exist	4.29	0.2345
There is quality communication with staff	3.89	0.1008
The level of supervision is encouraging.	4.16	0.2564

From the findings the respondents agreed that they were aware of the retention policy used at the bank, the employees understands how the retention policy works at the bank, the retention strategy used by the bank is effective, the working conditions in the bank are favorable, if the employees left the bank, they will consider going back to work at the bank, they felt to be part of the bigger team, opportunities for career progression exists, there is quality communication with staff and the level of supervision is encouraging.

#### 4.2 Results of Regression Analysis

This section presents results for hypotheses testing using Regression analyses

**H<sub>01</sub>: There are no differences in recruitment practices and employee retention among employees in the private commercial bank.** This hypothesis was analysed using simple regression analysis and the results are presented in Table 5 below:



**Table 5: Results of Simple Regression Results Establishing the Effect of Recruitment Practices on Employee Retention**

Model Summary							
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate			
1	.546 <sup>a</sup>	.298	.295	5.34726			
a. Predictors: (Constant), recruitment							
ANOVA <sup>a</sup>							
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
1	Regression	696.363	1	696.363	24.354	.000 <sup>b</sup>	
	Residual	8520.767	53	28.593			
	Total	9217.130	57				
a. Dependent Variable: employee retention; b. Predictors: (Constant), recruitment							
Coefficients <sup>a</sup>							
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	18.298	1.537		11.902	.000	
	Recruitment	.186	.038	.419	4.935	.000	
a. Dependent Variable: employee retention							

The model summary of the results of simple regression analysis presented in Table 5 indicate that recruitment explain 29.8% of the variance in employee retention (R square=0.298). This shows that 70.2% of the variance in employee retention was explained by factors not in the study. The results also show that there is a significant correlation between recruitment and employee retention ( $r = 0.419$ ,  $p\text{-value}=0.000$ ). Further, the  $F$ -test statistic ( $F = 24.354$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ) shows the fitness of the regression model, which means that recruitment was a significant predictor of Organizational Performance. The standardised beta coefficients showed that recruitment was a significant positive predictor of employee retention ( $\beta = 0.419$ ,  $p=0.000$ ). This implies that employee retention increased when the recruitment policy in the organization was implemented in the bank. The study findings further show that banks that have appropriate recruitment strategies in place are likely to achieve higher employee retention.

**H<sub>02</sub>: There are no significant relationships between career management and retention among employees in the private commercial bank.** This hypothesis was analysed using simple regression analysis and the results are presented in Table 6 below:

**Table 6: Simple Regression Results for Effect of career management on retention**

Model Summary							
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate			
1	.525 <sup>a</sup>	.276	.273	.59595			
a. Predictors: (Constant), career management							
ANOVA <sup>a</sup>							
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
1	Regression	633.672	1	633.672	22.077	.000 <sup>b</sup>	
	Residual	8524.730	54	28.703			
	Total	9158.401	58				
a. Dependent Variable: Employee Retention; b. Predictors: (Constant), career management							
Coefficients							
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			
	(Constant)	20.223	1.210		16.713	.000	
	career management	.144	.031	.230	4.699	.000	
a. Dependent Variable: employee retention							



The model summary of the results of simple regression analysis presented in Table 6 indicate that career management explain 27.6% of the variance in employee retention ( $R^2=0.276$ ). This shows that 72.4% of the variance in employee retention was explained by factors not in the study. The results also show that there is a significant positive correlation between career management and employee retention ( $r = 0.230$ ,  $p$ -value=0.000). Further, the  $F$ -test statistic ( $F = 22.077$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ) shows the fitness of the regression model, which means that career management was a significant predictor of employee retention. The standardised beta coefficients showed that career management was a significant positive predictor of employee retention ( $\beta= 0.230$ ,  $p=0.000$ ). This implies that retention increased when employees in the bank were satisfied with career management programmes provided in the bank. The study findings further show that banks that have career management programmes in place are likely to achieve higher employee retention.

**H<sub>03</sub>: Training does not have significant effect on staff retention in the private commercial bank.** This hypothesis was analysed using simple regression analysis and the results are presented in Table 7 below:

**Table 7: Simple Regression Results for Effect of Training on Employee Retention**

Model Summary						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
1	.563 <sup>a</sup>	.317	.315	5.25286		
a. Predictors: (Constant), Training						
ANOVA <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	983.607	1	983.607	35.648	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	8222.590	55	27.593		
	Total	9206.197	59			
a. Dependent Variable: employee retention; b. Predictors: (Constant), Training						
Coefficients						
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	
(Constant)	18.828	1.196		15.740	.000	
Career Management	.182	.030	.589	5.971	.000	
b. Dependent Variable: employee retention						

The model summary of the results of simple regression analysis presented in Table 7 indicate that training explain 31.7% of the variance in employee retention ( $R^2=0.317$ ). This shows that 72.4% of the variance in employee retention was explained by factors not in the study. The results also show that there is a significant positive correlation between training and employee retention ( $r = 0.589$ ,  $p$ -value=0.000). Further, the  $F$ -test statistic ( $F = 35.648$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ) shows the fitness of the regression model, which means that training was a significant predictor of employee retention. The standardised beta coefficients showed that training was a significant positive predictor of employee retention ( $\beta= 0.589$ ,  $p=0.000$ ). This implies that employee retention increased when employees in the bank were satisfied with training programmes that were provided in the bank. The study findings show that banks that have training programmes in place are likely to achieve higher employee retention.

### 4.3 Discussion of Findings

The first hypothesis of the study was to test the relationship between recruitment and employee retention. Studies have found that recruitment is important in determining employee retention (Ramki, 2015; Tawarar, 2021; Adegoke, 2019). The results showed that recruitment was a significant positive predictor of employee retention. This finding is consistent with study by Karemu, Kahara, and Josee (2014) who found a positive and significant relationship between recruitment and staff retention among employees in Equity Bank, Kenya. Similarly, Mbugua, Waiganjo and Njeru (2015) found that through recruiting the right staff, organizations were able to develop their talent, which directly influenced



employee retention. Adegoke (2019) found that recruitment strategies had a positive significant influence on staff retention in Nigerian government-owned finance development institutions. The second hypothesis of the study was to test the relationship between career management and employee retention. Studies have found that career management is important in determining employee retention (Kiragu, Kipkebut, & Kipchumba, 2020; Wane, 2016; Kemboi, 2014; Khan, 2014). The results showed that career management was a significant positive predictor of employee retention. This finding is consistent with study by Khan (2014) which found a significant relationship between career management and employee retention. The study proposed that management of Pakistani banks should pay more attention towards career planning and development of their subordinates and frequently interact with them to facilitate them in choosing right career and timely achieving career milestones. Similarly, Opadeyi and Akpa (2020) found a significant relationship between career management and employee retention in selected deposit money banks in Ogun State, Nigeria. The third hypothesis of the study was to test the relationship between training and employee retention in Absa Bank. Studies have found that recruitment is important in determining employee retention (Abba, 2018; Bagha, 2020; Yarrow, 2020, Kiragu, Kipkebut & Kipchumba, 2020). The results showed that training was a significant positive predictor of employee retention. This finding is consistent with study by Aleem (2020) who found a positive and significant relationship between training and employee retention. Abba (2018) found that training has to be initiated by training needs assessment which forms the basis for designing, budgeting and implementing the training program. Refresher training for updating with the latest knowhow is essential even if the targeted employees are the best. The primary goal of the banks for conducting training is to equip the employees to bring about customer satisfaction by addressing the customer needs.

## V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Conclusion

The main objective of this study was to establish the effect of strategic human resource practices on retention among staff in a private commercial bank in Nairobi County, Kenya. The analyses showed that strategic human resource practices (recruitment, career management and training) had significant, positive relationships with staff retention. In view of the profound and protracted effects it has on employees' motivation, the study concluded that employee recruitment was crucial at improving staff retention in the private commercial bank in Kenya. Additionally, the research found a strong correlation between staff recruitment and retention. The study came to the conclusion that career management practices, as a strategic HRM practice, had a substantial impact on improving employee retention in the bank, particularly in light of the fact that workers respond favorably to possibilities for career growth and promotion. Employees are more inclined to stay in an environment where they have ongoing learning chances because the organization shows that it is committed to enhancing their competencies by offering career development options. The study also came to the conclusion that career management methods and employee retention had a very strong favorable association. The study also came to the conclusion that training, as a strategic HRM practice, was essential to improving employee retention, particularly in light of the idea that when organizations support employees' training, everyone is given a clear understanding of their responsibilities as well as the skills and knowledge required to do their jobs. This will boost their self-assurance, which could then increase their general productivity and loyalty.

### 5.2 Recommendation

The private commercial bank must put measures in place to make sure it become employer of choice. This can be achieved by adopting best practices that facilitates the growth and development of employees, which in turn reduces turnover as employees would become increasingly attached, engaged and satisfied. The bank must ensure that its recruitment policy should be based on getting the best people who have the suitably competencies and capabilities to match tasks. This helps in the development of talents to take over future roles within the organization, and also serve as a way of preventing shortages of competent people in the organization. The bank should also develop a strong succession plan. As employees are recruited, trained and developed, they must also see that there is possibility for them to navigate their career path within the organization. This practice also enables the organization to make plans for unforeseen circumstances, like sudden retirement, death, illness restructuring or downsizing, etc. The plan ensures that there are available people ready to step up and take responsibility when called upon. This help creates job satisfaction and also serve as a perfect way to retain employees.



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