

Staff turnover and knowledge loss: a case study of the University of Nairobi Library

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Grace Anyango Nyambok

University of Nairobi Library

nyangig@gmail.com

Henry Ogada Hongo

The Technical University of Kenya

henryhongo55@gmail.com

Abstract

Rationale of Study – Staff turnover affects an organisation's ability to maintain knowledge continuity. This paper investigates staff turnover as a potential threat to knowledge loss at the University of Nairobi Library.

Methodology – Questionnaires were used to collect data which identified the factors within the University of Nairobi Library that determine staff exit. Correlation and regression were used to examine the verifiability of these parameters.

Findings – From the study, it was found out that the main determinants of staff turnover are inadequate training and development programmes for staff; job satisfaction depending on the favourability of the job; poor pay and lack of benefit conditions; as well as work climate or environment and leadership style. Staff turnover leads to reduced organisational output and productivity; loss of organisational or institutional memory; creation of gaps in service delivery and organisational structure; high cost of training and recruitment of new staff; low level of commitment since the teams are shaken by the loss of a team member; low organisational integration resulting from broken team; loss of library users; and increased work load amongst the remaining staff.

Implications – The authors recommend that the University of Nairobi Library should carefully look into the factors making the staff to migrate to other organisations. The library should also institute the necessary measures to reduce the staff turnover and enhance staff retention in order to reduce the knowledge loss.

Originality – The study is original to the University of Nairobi Library. The findings, however, may be applied to other academic libraries in Kenya and beyond.

Keywords

Staff turnover, knowledge loss, University of Nairobi, University of Nairobi Library, Kenya

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1 Introduction

Employee turnover has become a significant topic of interest in diverse economic sectors around the world. As a result, employers pay close attention to their staff turnover rate because it is costly to their businesses. According to Abassi and Hollman (2000), employee turnover is the rotation of workers around the labour market; between firms, jobs and occupations; and between the states of employment and unemployment. In a world where most procedures and systems have been standardised among industry players, it is often claimed that an organisation is only as good as its people, and that knowledge workers are a primary source of competitive advantage (Templer & Cawsey, 1999). Attracting and keeping intellectual capital, or a group of highly competent, autonomous, globally accessible, and movable individuals, is a crucial aspect of globalisation. As a result, an organisation's capacity to retain knowledge employees is vital to its success and growth. According to Stam (2009), corporations, regardless of industry or size, are experiencing a knowledge management crisis, with the goal of ensuring that employees do not leave the company before passing on their knowledge. This suggests that organisations are in the midst of a knowledge preservation crisis, as their knowledge is at risk. Knowledge sustainability management is a crucial tool for limiting the risk of critical knowledge loss in this regard. As a result, organisational knowledge retention is required (Egeland, 2017).

The term turnover was defined by Price (1977) as the ratio of the number of organisational members that have left during the period under consideration divided by the average number of people in the organisation during that period. This term is often utilised in efforts to measure relationships of employees in an organisation as they leave, regardless of the reason. Organisations, both governmental and non-governmental, invest a significant amount of money in training and development programmes at all levels. According to Murthy (2003), companies send their personnel to various training programmes, courses, and seminars in order to develop their expertise and hence increase production. Employees who leave a company after developing their skills and expertise trigger knowledge loss within the company.

There are two basic methods through which knowledge can leave a company. The first, which is the primary threat to knowledge retention, according to Beazley (2003), is the aging workforce and the retirement of robust age groups. The second way that knowledge is lost is through labour turnover. According to Stam (2009), the ageing

population poses two fundamental threats to organisations: under-employment of older staff and knowledge erosion. Knowledge loss has a variety of detrimental consequences. Low organisational output and productivity, as well as a loss of institutional knowledge, are among them (Droege & Hoobler, 2003). Cascio (2000) investigated the economic and organisational effects of downsizing, or the deliberate loss of positions or employment, and discovered that it had a significant influence on organisational structure, personnel costs, effectiveness, and staff motivation and commitment.

The retention of institutional knowledge or institutional memory is a critical attribute in the recruitment and retention of personnel in any organisation. While many managers are concerned with employee turnover, the more essential statistic to consider is the level and capacity of knowledge held by those departing the organisation (Obwaka et al., 2019). Employees leave organisations on a regular basis. Organisations, on the other hand, suffer when those individuals are highly competent and possess information that is not easily replaceable. There are measures that businesses can take to limit the amount of institutional knowledge lost as a result of skilled staff turnover. Specialised training, process documentation, and work sharing are just a few of the methods for combating this loss. Having the older and more experienced personnel serve as mentors and trainers to the new or young staff is one of the more effective ways to reduce the loss of institutional knowledge. This allows them to share their expertise with others in the company (Kwanya & Wasinda, 2019).

2 Research Problem

Workers' departure can impact negatively on operations, teamwork relationships, and productivity of a company. Outgoing employee costs, replacement costs, new employee training costs, and the additional expenses of downtime required for new employees to establish competency are all costs associated with turnover (Obwaka et al., 2019). Many businesses are concerned about the recruitment and selection process, which are time-consuming and costly in terms of advertising, service fees, health checks, application testing, extensive background checks, interviews, transportation, and transfer (Frank, Finnegan & Taylor, 2004). Employee morale can also be affected by high turnover. It can also tarnish the company's image as a desirable place to work. This complicates and lengthens retention and recruitment efforts. Organisational human resource officers must therefore analyse the antecedents of organisational withdrawal decisions to better understand how to maximise the retention of effective personnel.

According to Ngome (2010), universities compete not just for clients (students), but also for personnel. To attract and retain workers, which is a crucial resource that can provide a competitive edge, Kenyan public institutions must offer a compelling employee value proposition. A people-centred strategy can help them to gain a competitive advantage. People are difficult to imitate, unlike technology, cost, or fresh product development (Dockel, 2003; Kabita et al., 2021). It is incumbent upon the public universities to establish the factors which are significant in the retention of core staff. Other competing universities are one of the risks facing the University of Nairobi. Experienced staff from the university are being targeted by these universities. This is costly to the university, necessitating retention tactics for university librarians.

Various issues that contribute to worker turnover in different organisations have been discussed in research. These include teaching staff retention in various African universities. Only a few studies on non-teaching staff turnover and its impact on institutional knowledge capital have been found. As a result, the goal of this study is to determine the impact of employee turnover on the knowledge base of the University of Nairobi Library. The study's specific objectives were to investigate the factors influencing employee turnover at the University of Nairobi Library, determine the most common types of turnover among University of Nairobi Library staff, determine the effects of staff turnover on institutional knowledge at the University of Nairobi Library, and develop appropriate strategies to reduce employee turnover at the University of Nairobi Library.

3 Theoretical Framework

Various theories address employee needs and have been advanced by a number of authors as basis of staff turnover in organizations. This study relied on expectancy theory, the human capital theory and the intellectual capital theory.

3.1 Expectancy Theory

The principle behind expectancy theory proposes that people join organisations with certain expectations in mind. They will stay as members of the organisation if these expectations are realised (Daly, 2006). Decision to remain or leave the organisation can be justified by studying correlations between structural, psychological, and environmental elements, according to turnover and retention frameworks created from this theory. The model of employee intention to stay, which is based on expectancy theory and contains structural, psychological, and environmental variables, has been used in a number of

empirical research (Zhou & Volkwein, 2004; Daly & Dee, 2006). Psychological variables include job satisfaction and organisational commitment and the environmental variables include availability of job opportunities. Most of the employees from different organisations, including university of Nairobi Library, join the organisation with lots of expectations. Some of these expectations are sponsorship to attend conferences, promotions, better working environment and so on. Unfortunately, their expectations are mostly not met. Instead they face lack of support to attend conferences as well as discrimination when it comes to attending trainings, conferences and workshops.

3.2 The Human Capital Theory

Despite the fact that intangible assets cannot be touched, they can be recognised and categorised fairly well (Marti, 2007). Therefore, Sveiby (2001) identified three intangible assets in an organisation: individual competence assets, internal structure assets, and external structure assets. Education, experience, know-how, knowledge, skills, beliefs, and attitudes are all examples of individual competency assets. Human capital is another name for this asset (Marti, 2007). Human capital theory has been proven to be useful in analysing the effects of voluntary staff turnover at the organisational level (Dess & Shaw, 2001). Human capital is most commonly defined as the knowledge held by employees in the organisation, which is accumulated at the organisational level based on their combined ability and experience (Massingham, 2008). In other words, according to the hypothesis, when an employee quits, he or she leaves with unique functional knowledge, experience, skills, and contacts. A situation like this has two direct consequences: a drop in organisational output and a decline in organisational productivity (Droeg & Hoobler, 2003). The services at the University of Nairobi Library might be affected by the voluntary staff turnover at library department. When library staff leave the department, they leave with accumulated experiences, skills, know-how, knowledge, values and expertise. This exposes the library in terms of social, structural and psychological gaps. When knowledge leaves the library through staff turnover, the library services are affected negatively. Staff exiting from library create gaps in the service delivery which need to be covered. This process of covering the gaps might be an expensive exercise of training and on-boarding.

3.3 Intellectual Capital Theory

The intellectual capital theory identifies the types of losses that organisations face as a result of voluntary exits. Human capital, social capital, structural capital, and relational capital are all examples of lost capital. Employees form the intellectual capital of an

organisation. When employees leave organisations, the social capital that has been built over a period of time is highly affected as much as the structural and relational capital. When these losses occur, the work flow in the library is highly affected. This might have a direct or indirect effect on the department or the parent organisational performance.

4 Literature review

This section presents a review of empirical literature on staff turnover and knowledge loss. The issues under discussion include the causes of employee turnover, the different types of staff turnover, the impact of staff turnover on institutional knowledge, and potential techniques for reducing staff turnover.

Many employees in different sectors of the economy leave their jobs because of multiple internal and external factors and causes. One of these is the inadequate training and development programmes for staff. Employee turnover is higher among blue-collar workers, those with lower skill levels, and those in non-managerial roles (Price, 1977). Companies do not spend a lot of money training employees for these jobs. The lesser an employee's turnover is, the higher up the organisation's hierarchy he or she climbs. As a result, management should identify and develop important individuals to boost dedication and performance. Work satisfaction is another factor that has prompted a lot of debate in turnover research (Felps et al., 2009). It is the workers' mental impression of the task they are doing; it could be positive or negative (Jex & Britt, 2008). Another cause is bad pay and lack of benefit circumstances for employees. These motivate employees to switch jobs in order to improve their working conditions. According to Kaufman (2002), a firm's pay structure has a direct impact on voluntary turnover. During this knowledge era, where salary is one of the determining variables, employees abandon low-paying occupations in favour of higher-paying alternatives. Work environment and leadership style also affect staff turnover (Ng'ethe et al., 2012). Unfavourable leadership practices are one of the main reasons for staff leaving employment. Staff demographics also play an important role in staff turnover. Staff turnover is also directly related to age and tenure. Young employees, according to Muchinsky and Morrow (1980), are more likely to switch occupation than older employees. Because of the loss of knowledge, skills, expertise, experiences, and know-how, organisations are shaken and compromised in terms of productivity when employees leave. According to Ongori (2007), other impacts of knowledge loss due to staff turnover include poor levels of commitment as a result of

social impact, expensive training and recruitment costs incurred by hiring new employees, loss of trust and low organisational integrity and culture (Felps et al., 2009).

As discussed previously, turnover is the movement of employees out of the organisation or any permanent departure beyond the organisational boundaries (Croasmum et al., 2002). Explaining the difference between push and pull factors is one method to explain turnover. Dissatisfaction with working conditions, for example, is a push factor that causes people to hunt for new jobs. Pull factors, on the other hand, attract personnel to a different company. Higher salaries or greater perks are examples of pull factors.

There are different types of staff turnover ranging from voluntary or involuntary. Voluntary turnover occurs when an employee chooses to leave an organisation. However, it is involuntary when an employee has no say in the leaving process. Involuntary turnover include dismissal, retirement, physical or mental disability, as well as moving or relocation. Functional, avoidable, and internal turnover are examples of voluntary turnover, whereas dysfunctional, unavoidable, and external turnover are examples of involuntary turnover. Allen (2008) argued that staff turnover needs different managerial handling techniques. These include offering rewards to best performing employees, making sure the right employees are hired, giving competitive remuneration, offering work-life balance to employees, developing supportive organisational culture and building staff capacity.

In order to retain employees, there ought to be employee retention strategies in place (Obwaka et al., 2019). These are ways through which organisations retain their employees. Johnson et al. (2008) defined strategy as an organisation's long-term direction and scope for achieving competitive advantage in a dynamic world by adjusting resource configuration competencies in conjunction with the goal of meeting stakeholders' expectations. Thompson et al. (2004), on the other hand, defined a strategy as a game plan used by an organisation's management to establish a market position, attract skilled employees, satisfy consumers, compete successfully, conduct operations, and achieve organisational goals. Staff retention strategies, in the context of this paper, include motivational variables that combine and interact to attract and motivate an employee to remain and consider his/her organisation as an employer of choice. Apart from the mentioned motivational factors, there are other factors that enhance retention practice. The strategies are remuneration, rewards and recognition of employee value by offering cash bonuses, compensation, appreciation awards and free commodities (Willis, 2000).

The compensation system of any organisation affects the employee performance and their aspiration to stay employed. Shoaib et al. (2009) opined that manager or supervisor relationship and support also affects a worker's view of the organisation and strongly influences whether they stay in the organisation or not. Other factors which influence staff turnover include positive work climate or work environment which include the organisation's culture and practices of valuing employees as an asset, not a cost (Hom & Kinicki, 2001); the level to which a job is challenging and non-routine (Accenture, 2001); staff performance appraisal and periodical evaluation of employees' performance which set standards and normalises expectations (Mondy & Noe, 2005); as well as training and offering career development opportunities to staff (Hall, 2002).

5 Research Methodology

This study was conducted using a quantitative research approach which focused on collecting numerical evidence on the issues under study (Kwanya, 2022). A case study research design was specifically used to collect and analyse the data. The target population consisted of all the employees of the University of Nairobi Library totalling 160 people. A simple random sampling was employed to select the actual respondents. All the staff (30 in total) who were working at the main library (in the main campus) time the data was being collected were given the questionnaires. This is supported by Mugenda and Mugenda (2008) who indicated that a sample is a smaller group or sub-group obtained from the accessible population.

Whereas primary data was collected using questionnaires, secondary data was collected from library records. The data collected was recorded, tabulated and analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 based on the study objectives. The respondents were treated with great respect and courtesy in order to avoid misunderstanding between the researcher and respondents. They were informed of the purpose of the study. Each respondent was requested to fill the questionnaire and assured of confidentiality with regard to any information they provided.

6 Findings of the Study

The demographics of the respondents reveal that the majority of respondents (43.30%) were between the ages of 31 and 40 years. Another 20 percent were aged 21 to 30 years old. Those aged 51 to 60 years old were also 20 percent. Respondents under the age of 20 accounted for 3.3 percent of the total population while those aged 41 to 50 accounted for 13.3 percent. These findings demonstrate that most of the staff of the University of

Nairobi Library are between the range of 21 and 50 years old. As a result, they possess a wealth of expertise that made them indispensable to the delivery of library services while also having an impact on the library's performance. The majority of responders (63.3 percent) were male while 37.3 percent were female, according to the findings.

In terms of length of service, the majority of respondents (28%) had worked at the University of Nairobi Library for 16 to 20 years while 20 percent had served for 6 to 10 years and 11 to 15 years, respectively. 13.3% of the respondents had worked for 21 to 25 years while 10% had worked for more than 25 years. Thus, the bulk of the respondents had served the University of Nairobi Library for long enough to have become essential information sources about knowledge loss at the library.

6.1 Types and causes of staff turnover

Internal and external turnover accounted for 43.3 percent of all turnovers while functional and dysfunctional turnover contributed for 40% of all turnovers. Voluntary and involuntary turnover each amounted to 10 percent of the total turnover while preventable and unavoidable turnover accounted for 6.7 percent.

6.1.2 Staff intentions of turnover

With mean scores of 2.73 and 2.47, the majority of respondents had moderate opinions on whether they frequently consider leaving the University of Nairobi and whether they are looking for new opportunities. When prompted to indicate if they would resign voluntarily, the average response was 2.7. Thus, the majority of the staff at the University of Nairobi had a modest desire to stay in their current positions. The interviewees' incapacity to decide whether to keep their jobs or hunt for new ones exemplified this. Figure 1 presents these findings.

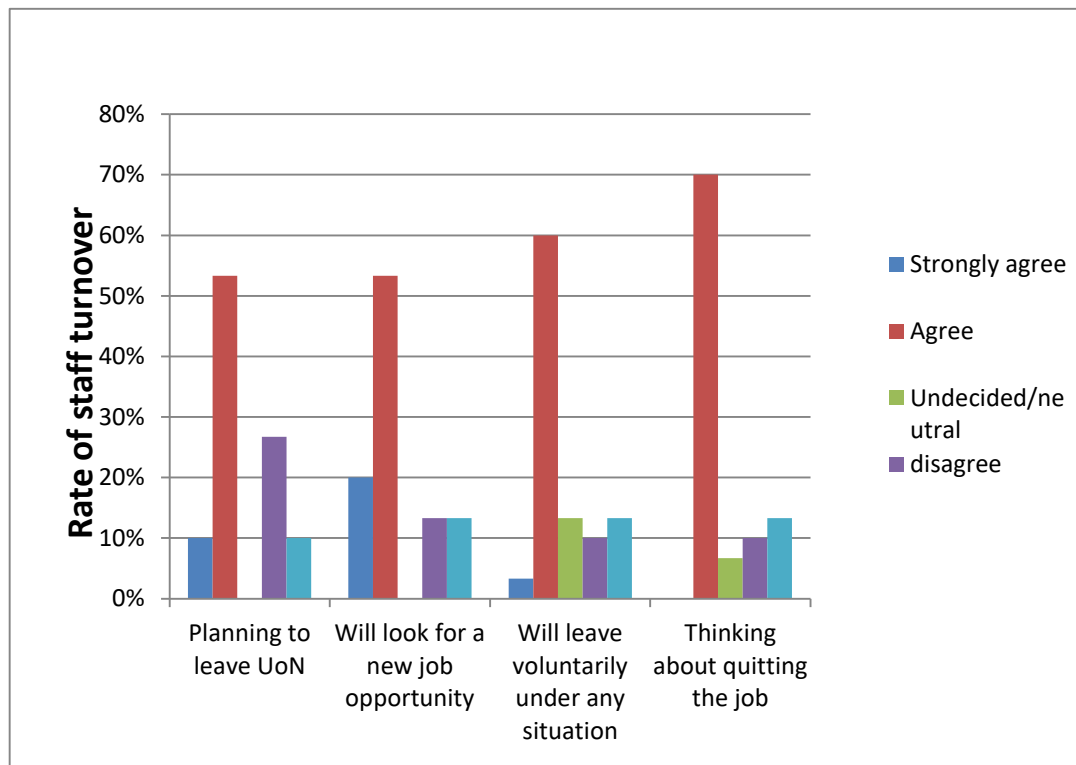


Figure 1: Intention of turnover

6.1.2 Work station and leadership

The findings on aspects of leadership in the workplace are summarised in Figure 2. According to the data, 3.3 percent were extremely satisfied, 43.3 percent were satisfied, 30 percent were dissatisfied, and 7 percent were extremely dissatisfied with the workplace management style. In terms of administrative support, none was extremely satisfied, with 36.7 percent being satisfied, 13.3 percent staying neutral, 30 percent being dissatisfied, and 20 percent being extremely dissatisfied. When it came to commuting to work, 23.3 percent of employees were extremely satisfied, 63.3 percent were satisfied, 6.7 percent were neutral, 6.7 percent were dissatisfied, and none were extremely dissatisfied. In terms of library facilities, 10 percent of employees were extremely satisfied, 43.3 percent were satisfied, 23.3 percent were neutral, 6.7 percent were dissatisfied, and 6.7 percent were extremely dissatisfied. 46.7 percent were satisfied with their co-workers' cooperation, 10 percent were extremely satisfied, 13.3 percent were dissatisfied, and 16.7 percent were dissatisfied.

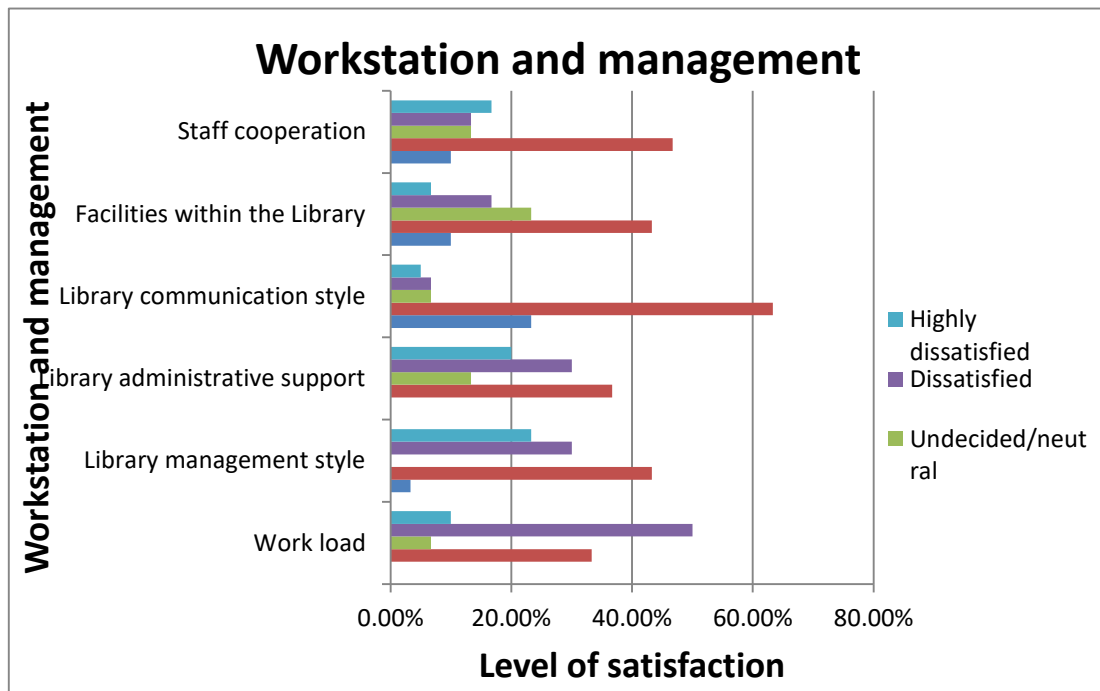


Figure 2: Condition and leadership at work place

6.1.3 Career Development

According to the results in Figure 3, none of the workers believed that there was a clear framework for professional growth and development in the library. Nonetheless, 53.3 percent were satisfied, 13.53 percent unsure, 16.7 percent dissatisfied, and the remaining 16.7 percent were severely dissatisfied. In terms of training and development, 10 percent were extremely satisfied, 36.7 percent were satisfied, 10 percent were neutral, 26.7 percent were dissatisfied, and 16.7 percent were extremely dissatisfied.

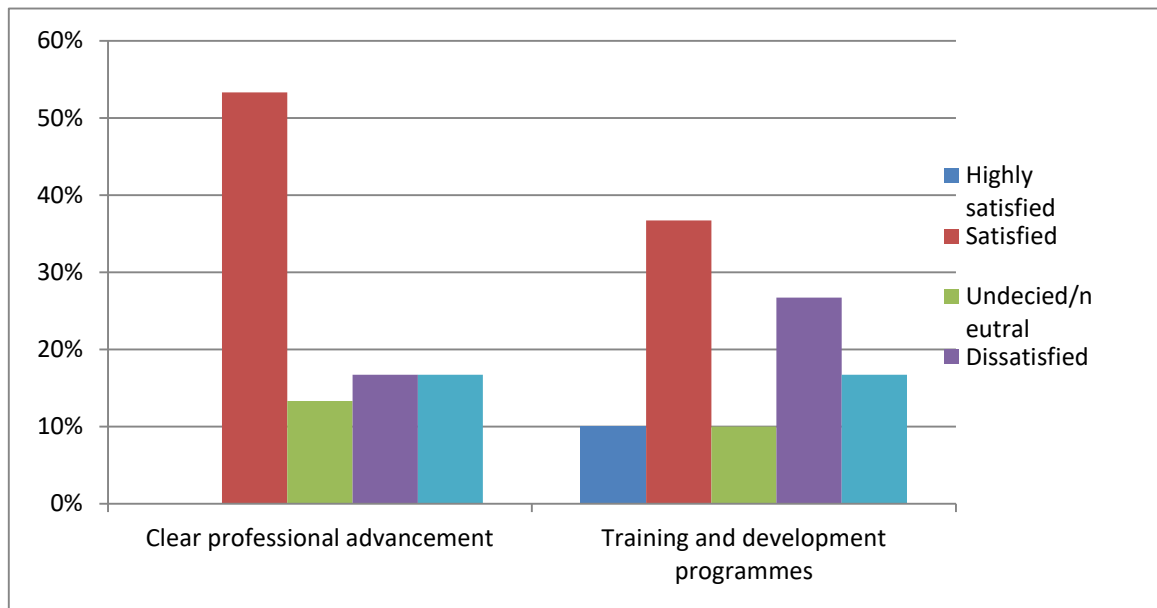


Figure 3: Career Development

6.1.4 Compensation

Figure 4 shows the findings on compensation. It is evident that none of the workers was extremely satisfied with their pay. However, 10 percent were satisfied, 16.7 percent were indifferent or uncertain, 56.7 percent were dissatisfied while 16.7 percent were extremely dissatisfied. In terms of the pay provided being equal to the job, none of the respondents was extremely satisfied, 23.3 percent were content, 10 percent were neutral, 50 percent were dissatisfied, and 16.7 percent were extremely dissatisfied. The findings show that no employee was highly satisfied, 13.3 percent were satisfied, 16.7 percent were neutral, 43.3 percent were dissatisfied, and 26.7 percent were highly dissatisfied when compared to other professions.



Figure 4: Compensation satisfaction

6.1.5 Job Satisfaction

According to the findings, 3.3 percent of the workers were extremely happy with their library jobs, 16.7 percent were content, 13.3 percent were neutral, 50 percent were dissatisfied, and 13.3 percent were extremely dissatisfied. In terms of instant supervisor recognition, 3.3 percent were extremely satisfied, 43.3 percent were satisfied, 3.3 percent were neutral or unsure, 40 percent were dissatisfied, and 10 percent were extremely dissatisfied. In terms of their involvement in decision making, 3.3 percent of employees were extremely satisfied, 40 percent were content, 3.3 percent were neutral, 40 percent were dissatisfied, and 13.3 percent were extremely dissatisfied. No university employee was extremely satisfied with the approach and process of promotion. However, 20 percent were satisfied, 6.7 percent were neutral, 36.7 percent were dissatisfied, and 36.7 percent were extremely dissatisfied.

6.1.6 Management Style

According to the findings, the majority of respondents (64%) felt that the management style has a favourable impact on the overall effectiveness of the library. This entails, among other things, improving employee retention. The majority of respondents (43.3%) disagreed that supervisors are always willing to help, while 33.3 percent agreed. Only 16.7 percent were satisfied, while 63 percent disagreed that the leaders were providing appropriate monitoring. Ten percent were extremely dissatisfied. Only 3 percent agreed

that their supervisors were powerful enough to mould them, 13.3 percent were extremely dissatisfied with their supervisors' influence and only 3.3 percent were really satisfied. The extent to which supervisors sought staff input was satisfactory for 43.3 percent of respondents but highly dissatisfactory for 20 percent. Thus, the majority of the respondents said they were dissatisfied with the leadership style.

6.2 Impact of Turnover

The findings show that personnel turnover wastes a lot of resources. This was endorsed by 53 percent of the respondents who agreed and 26 percent who strongly agreed. Only 10 percent of the respondents disagreed. 43.3 percent agreed, 26.7 percent strongly agreed, and 6.7 percent disagreed that turnover affects productivity. Half (50%) of the respondents agreed that turnover had an impact on product and service quality while 20 percent strongly agreed. However, 23.3 percent disagreed. Only 20 percent of respondents disagreed with the statement that turnover impairs service delivery while 50 percent agreed and 23.3 percent strongly agreed with it. In response to the claim that turnover leads to a loss of library users, 10 percent disagreed and 66 percent agreed. The majority (70%) of the respondents agreed that turnover increases each employee's burden, 10 percent strongly agreed, and 20 percent disagreed. The findings revealed that staff teamwork is also affected by turnover. This was supported by 76.7 percent of the respondents who agreed that turnover undermines teamwork. However, 16.7 percent disagreed. The majority (66.7%) of the respondents agreed that turnover wastes time due to the need for new employee training, 16.7 percent strongly agreed, and ten percent disagreed. The majority (73.3%) of the respondents agreed that staff turnover resulted in the loss of institutional expertise. Another 13.3 percent strongly agreed but 6.7 percent disagreed on this.

6.3 Staff Retention Strategies

The following strategies were used to curb staff turnover at the University of Nairobi library:

6.3.1 Training and development

The majority of participants (56.7%) agreed that staff can be retained through training and development. At the University library, 7 percent agreed that providing appropriate professional development to workers positively impacts staff retention. However, 43.3 percent of the respondents disagreed with this view. The majority (43.3%) of respondents disagreed with the suggestion that training programmes were disbursed fairly with 3.3 percent strongly disagreeing. Another 40 percent of the respondents

disagreed with the view that training and development-based promotion increases retention with 20 percent definitely disagreeing as 20 percent agreed.

6.3.2 Career growth

The majority (46.7%) of the respondents disagreed with the assertion that the university's support for staff career progression affects their employment retention at the University of Nairobi library; 16.7 percent strongly disagreed, and 20 percent agreed. A well-defined professional growth path is a retention strategy according to 46 percent of the respondents. However, 10 percent strongly disagreed, 30 percent agreed, and 3.3 percent extremely agreed. The statement that promotions are merit-based received 50 percent disagreement, 10 percent strong disagreement, and 30 percent agreement. Figure 5 presents these results.

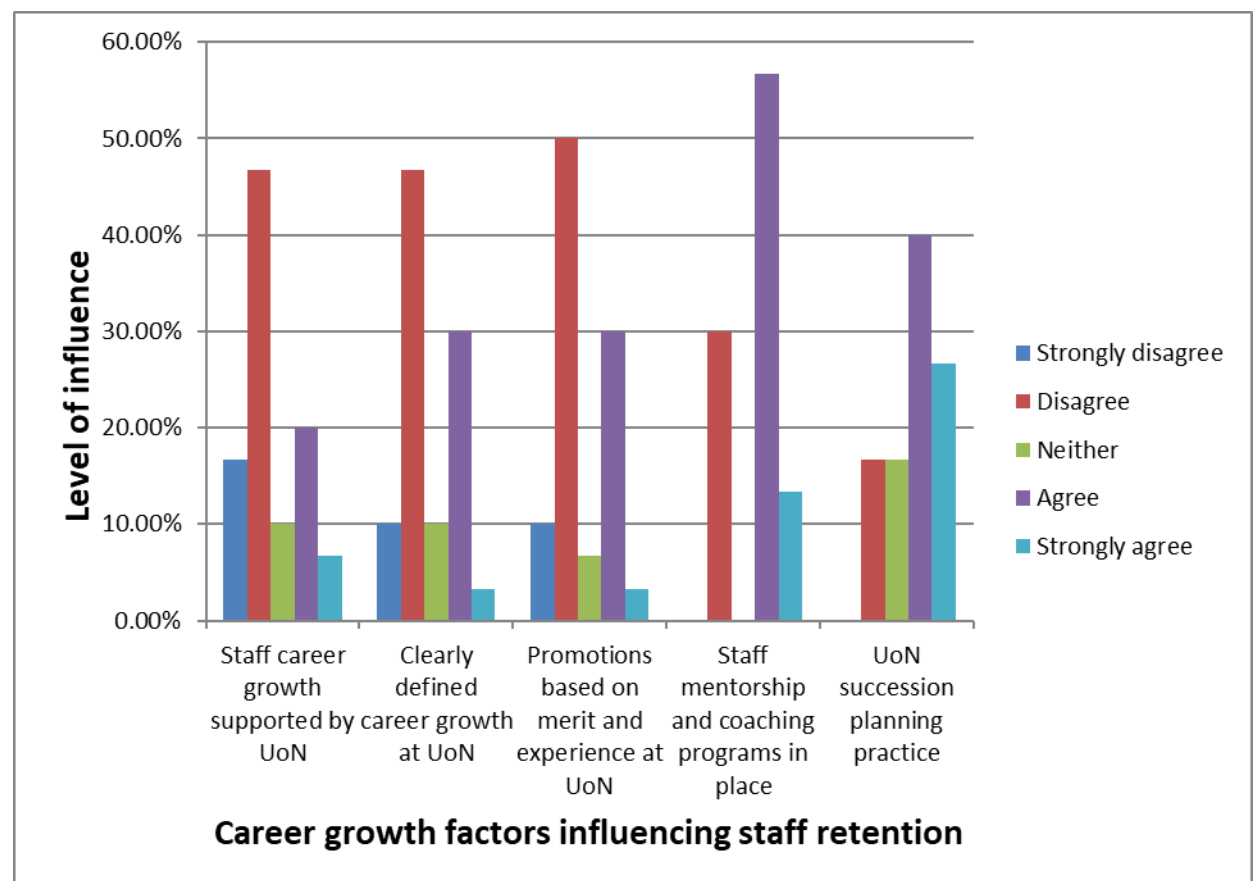


Figure 5: Career growth as a retention strategy

Employees see the University of Nairobi's assistance for staff career progression as a factor that leads to retention. Employee retention is attributed to elements such as institutional support for staff career progression, merit-based promotions, a clear

definition of an employee's career path, staff mentorship and coaching, and succession planning.

6.3.3 Performance appraisal

The majority (43.3%) of the respondents believe that the clarity of performance targets influences employee retention with 10 percent strongly agreeing and 36.7 percent disagreeing. However, the majority (46.7%) of the respondents said that staff were not consulted about performance goals and that the performance review timeframe was insufficient. In addition, 40 percent of the respondents disagreed with the notion that evaluation results are employed in career advancement, with 16.7 percent strongly disagreeing. On the other hand, 33.3 percent of the respondents agreed with this assertion.

6.3.4 Remuneration

The majority (50%) of the respondents agreed that paying employees a fair wage for their labour is a smart retention technique, 20 percent strongly agreed and 13.3 percent disagreed. When compared to employees at other organisations with similar qualifications, a large percentage (40%) said they were dissatisfied with their pay. However, 8 percent strongly disagreed, 42 percent agreed, and 7 percent extremely agreed that their compensation was reasonable in comparison to comparable organisations.

6.3.5 Job satisfaction

On the question of whether job fulfilment is a factor in retention, 53.3 percent disagreed, 16.7 percent agreed, and 13.3 percent strongly agreed. 30 percent agreed that being involved in decision-making was a retention factor, with 10 percent strongly agreeing. 33.3 percent, on the other hand, disagreed, with 23.3 percent strongly disagreeing. When asked if procedures and processes play a role in retention, 20 percent strongly disagreed, 36.7 percent disagreed, and 23.3 percent agreed. Thus, job satisfaction emerged as an average determinant of staff retention at the University of Nairobi Library.

7 Discussions of the findings

From the findings presented above, it is evident that the most common types of staff turnover at the University of Nairobi Library are the functional/dysfunctional and internal/external turnover. Some of the determinants factors affecting staff turnover were condition and leadership style at workplace, the work load, management style, administrative support, library communication style, facilities in the library and library

staff cooperation. Therefore, the findings show that the library administrative support, library management style and the work load are the main factors which make the staff dissatisfied hence leading to turnover. These findings agreed with those of a study conducted by Ng'ethe et al. (2012) which revealed that the work environment and leadership style affects staff turnover both directly and indirectly.

Employees were most satisfied with the department's professional progression prospects as well as its training and development programmes when it came to career development. The majority of the librarians were dissatisfied with the library's career development policies. Therefore, it became a trigger of staff turnover. The majority of library staff members were unsatisfied with the pay level in terms of the wages being paid, while the balance of the workforce was either dissatisfied or uncertain. This shows that the staff agree that remuneration is a major factor in staff turnover. This is in line with Muindi's (2011) findings which found that non-academic personnel at the University of Nairobi were dissatisfied with their pay. These findings are in line with the findings of the Public Universities Inspection Committee Report (GOK, 2006) which stated that one of the key causes of internal brain drain in Kenyan public universities was unhappiness with salary. This view was further supported by Morice and Murray (2003) who found that employee earnings and other monetary incentives play a significant influence in minimising turnover.

On job satisfaction, it was found that staff were not satisfied with promotion procedures. They said there was bias in this regard leading to staff turnover. This is consistent to the findings of Waswa et al. (2008) who established that the link of promotion to establishment was denying deserving non-academic staff upward mobility. According to Weisberg and Kirschenbaum (1991), high and moderate levels of job satisfaction are similar in their impact upon turnover intent. The management and leadership style in the library was not encouraging enough to the staff and hence made the staff to think of leaving the organisation. This is consistent with Tettey (2006) who reported that non-academic staff were dissatisfied with the way their institutions were managed as some of the managers were dictatorial, insensitive and unresponsive to the needs of the staff. The study also established that consultation in decision making was not adequate. These findings on the management style are consistent with the findings of Muindi (2011) who established that lack of participatory decision making and failure to communicate to staff regularly, especially on matters affecting them, caused dissatisfaction among non-academic staff in the University of Nairobi. The highest turnover in the library takes

place amongst the young people as compared to the elderly staff. The young employees left to search for better paying jobs and better working environment, among other quests. This complimented the sentiments made by Price (1977) that lower-skilled employees are the most vulnerable when it comes to staff turnover. It was also noted that the elderly and long serving staff do leave their work leading to loss of institutional knowledge. This deprives the library of its highly experienced, learned, skilled personnel. Losing them deprives the library and the institution of this important asset and competitive advantage.

It was also found that staff turnover in the library leads to wastage of resources in settling the new staff in terms of training and induction, reduction in the quality of service delivery, service delivery disruptions, loss of library users, increased work load, broken team work, huge investment in training new staff members, as well as loss of skills and knowledge. It can, therefore, be concluded that the staff turnover in the library impacts the remaining staff members, the department and the parent organisation either directly or indirectly. This view agreed with studies done by Cascio (2000) and Droege and Hoobler (2003) which concluded that staff turnover affects organisations' productivity and viability through loss of institutional knowledge.

From the findings, some of the employee retention strategies that are employed by the University of Nairobi Library include support for staff training and development. Therefore, the university should ensure equity in the implementation of the training policy; provide adequate support to attend conferences and workshops to enhance professional development; and conduct staff appraisal linked to training so that gaps can easily be filled as opined by Hall (2002). Career development factors like institutional support for staff career growth, employee promotions by merit, clear definition of employee career path, staff mentorship and coaching programmes and succession practices should be entrenched as a way of retaining staff in the library. It was also found that employees at the University of Nairobi librarians attribute retention of employment to performance appraisal at the institution. It also depended on the clarity of the performance targets, fairness in the ratings of performance and the use of performance results for career growth. The majority of the employees were of the view that they were not consulted when performance targets were set and that the performance review period was insufficient. This was supported by the study by Mondy and Noe (2005) which suggested that staff performance appraisal and periodical evaluation of employees'

performance help to set standards in organisations and normalise employees' expectations.

The majority of the respondents agreed that when the salary is equitable to the work done, it is a good retention strategy. This explains why dissatisfaction with the pay was one of the major causes of internal brain drain in the library. Therefore, employee earnings and other monetary incentives play a major role in reducing turnover. This is in agreement with Willis (2000) in his study which indicated that remuneration, reward, better pay and compensations are some of the methods that can be used to retain staff in organisations. The findings also brought it out clearly that job satisfaction is average in determining retention at the University of Nairobi Library. It can be concluded that enhancing job satisfaction is one of the ways that can be used to retain employees at the University of Nairobi Library. This can be done by employing better working relationship between employees and supervisors as this can directly affect the retention of staff as suggested by Madihsa et al. (2009).

8 Conclusion

From the study, it was found out that the main determinants of staff turnover are inadequate training and development programmes for staff; job satisfaction depending on the favourability of the job; poor pay and lack of benefit conditions; as well as work climate or environment and leadership style. It was also revealed that voluntary/involuntary staff turnover were experienced at the University of Nairobi Library. The aforementioned types of staff turnover either directly or indirectly affected the library negatively or positively. The impacts included reduced organisational output and productivity; loss of organisational or institutional memory; creation of gaps in service delivery and organisational structure; high cost of training and recruitment of new staff; low level of commitment since the teams are shaken by the loss of a team member; low organisational integration resulting from broken team; loss of library users; and increased work load amongst the remaining staff. In order to counter these effects, strategies need to be employed by organisations. Some of the key strategies were staff training and career development, better remuneration, favourable organisational leadership style, competitive compensation, management or supervisor support to the staff, good and strong working environment and culture, fair use of the performance appraisal of staff and reward and recognition programmes. Therefore, in conclusion,

staff turnover in the University of Nairobi Library is seriously affecting the its performance and viability.

9 Recommendations

Based on the findings, this study recommends the following ways of enhancing staff retention as a means of retaining organisational knowledge:

- i) There should be a clear career path that is not biased for every employee as well as opportunities for sharing best practises with rewards for participation and supporting communities of practise where employees can safely share ideas. This recommendation is also supported by Kwanya et al. (2015b) who posit that effective knowledge creation and sharing depends on the environment in which employees work. A safe and supportive work environment reduces staff turnover and thereby enhances knowledge retention.
- ii) In order to reduce staff turnover, the University of Nairobi library should compensate its employees appropriately. This recommendation is also supported by other studies (Kwanya et al., 2015a) which identify comparative remuneration as a critical factor in staff retention and an incentive for knowledge sharing.
- iii) A clear system for staff promotion should be put in place to ensure proper and well deserved promotion of staff. Staff performance appraisal should be employed as a tool for staff promotion by merit to avoid biasness. In order for this to be successful, a proper and transparent staff performance appraisal should be in place.
- iv) The library management should institute comprehensive knowledge sharing and retention strategies. These may include practices such as documentation of tacit knowledge (Murumba et al., 2020); offering trainings and workshops, encouraging knowledge café and communities of practice where staff are able to share freely their skills before leaving the library; offering mentorship and coaching programmes and succession planning practices to avoid knowledge loss while retaining the same (Kwanya & Wasinda, 2019).
- v) The professional gap created by staff turnover should be filled up by recruiting the qualified staff with reference to the qualifications for the job.

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