

Influence of Leave Programs on Staff Retention in Public Level Five Hospitals in Kenya: Moderating Effect of Perceived Organizational Support

Susan Ndumba Nkanata¹, Dennis Muchangi², Grace Kiiru³

¹Kirinyaga University, School of Business and Education
P.O. Box 143-10300, Kerugoya

²Senior Lecturer, School of Business and Education, Kirinyaga University
P.O. Box 143-10300, Kerugoya

³Senior Lecturer, School of Business and Education, Kirinyaga University
P.O. Box 143-10300, Kerugoya
gkiiru@kyu.ac.ke

Abstract

A leave arrangement is a set of standard rules by the organization that administers the procedure and time to take a break /off from work. The specific objectives of the study were; to establish the influence of study leave, compassionate and Annual leave on staff retention. The study embraced descriptive and correlational research designs. The study target population was 472 doctors, 3318 nurses and 449 clinical officers from the 11 available public level five hospitals in Kenya. The study used proportionate stratified random sampling to select eight (8) public level five hospitals, and a total sample size of 40 doctors, 278 nurses, and 37 clinical officers. To select the study participants in each stratum, Simple random sampling was used. Data was collected using a semi-structured questionnaire through drop and pick approach. Cronbach alpha was used to test the reliability of the research instruments. Data was analyzed using SPSS, with descriptive and inferential statistics being used to discuss study findings based on the objectives. The study found out that the leave programs significantly influenced retention of health workers. Further, perceived organizational support significantly influenced leave programs hence affecting staff retention. The study concludes that leave programs significantly influenced employee retention in the public level five hospitals. The study recommends that management should invest in improving leave programs so as to attract and retain their talented workforce.

Keywords: leave programs, Employee Retention, compassionate leave, study leave, annual leave, Public Level Five Hospitals, perceived organizational support

Date of Submission: 01-10-2023

Date of Acceptance: 11-10-2023

I. Introduction

1.1 Background Information

Milman & Dickson (2014) indicates that paid family leave program influence employee salaries and organization costs. The investigation discovered that PFLP expanded the quantity of leaves particularly for ladies and enabled a work life balance as way to improve retention in the organization.

Doctor migration to UK from Africa for greener pastures stands at 51% and the financial expense of exit for medical professionals adds up to double their remuneration. Hospitals are considered to lose about \$300,000 every year for this turnover. (Oikelome & Healy, 2013).

A study done in Ethiopia by Assefa (2018) on selected public health sector indicated that despite the efforts by the Ethiopian government to train and employ health workers, the health system was still compromised considerably by the migration of the trained health workers to other countries. This ranges between fifteen (15) to thirty (30) percent for doctors and approximately twenty (20) percent for nurses. The health system has been affected greatly due to the heavy recruitment costs and ineffective service delivery.

According to Trossman (2015), many medical professionals in Kenya are required to work extensive hours and this brings about a struggle in their personal and professional roles. The nature of work at hospitals requires doctors, nurses and clinical staff to be at the workstation during odd hours. This takes a toll on their ability to take care of their personal health since they are continually juggling to maintain an equilibrium between the care they give to patients, to themselves and their families. Trying to attain this reasonable equilibrium between an individual and their professional obligations is demanding, mainly for those who have dependents and families to take care of and often leads to stress in the life of the employees. Amidst the change

in the management of hospitals today the importance of devoted medical professionals still remains and the stress of working long hours makes it a challenge to achieve retention of key employees.

Management Support on effective retention programs which prioritize leave programs will help in retaining at least 20% of the workers and this can go a long way in solving the dilemma of employee retention. Having the image of Level Five hospitals reliable and admirable to the public is more important especially when differentiating the public sector with the private sector. With today's on-demand economy in the health sector, employee retention is important, since retention of medical staff increases service delivery and improves the trust of the patients.

1.2 Problem Statement

Kenya has struggled with medical staff shortage due to the experienced and long serving healthcare workers leaving public hospitals in Kenya and to other countries such as United States, South Africa, Europe, Somalia, South Sudan and Namibia (Okeyo, 2018).

The Kenyan health sector has for many years has been characterized by frequent battles between the employer and the employees which brought about the ever longest strike in the country which lasted for over one hundred days. This has resulted to most health sector employees resolving into private practice due to inflexible work schedules that do not allow time for rest in the public sector (Okeyo, 2017). According to the WHO recommendation, the ratio of doctor to population should be 1: 1000 while that of nurses to population should be 1:40 but with the country's estimated population of 47 million people, the ratio of doctor to population stands at 1:4272 while that for nurses is 1:618. The excessive work in the Kenyan hospitals poses a challenge on retention.

Although numerous studies have been done on the influence of leave programs and employee retention in various organizations, none of the research has been done in the healthcare Sector in Level Five Hospitals in Kenya. It is therefore on the basis of this perspective that the researcher found the necessity for this study. The study was carried out to investigate the Influence of leave programs on staff retention in Level Five Hospitals in Kenya with the moderating variable of perceived organization support to offer an enhanced understanding into the correlation amongst the variables of the study.

1.3 Objective of the Study

The study was guided by the following objectives.

1.3.1 General Objective

The general objective of this study was to investigate the influence of Leave Programs on staff retention in PLFH in Kenya.

1.3.2 Specific Objective

The following are specific objectives of the study:

- i. To establish the influence of study leave on staff retention in PLFH in Kenya.
- ii. To find out the influence of compassionate leave on staff retention in PLFH in Kenya
- iii. To determine the influence of Annual Leave on staff retention in PLFH in Kenya

II. Literature Review

Border Theory

The border theory invented by Sue Campbell Clark (2002), describes work and family environments as diverse spheres which have a synergistic relationship. This theory argues that the rationale behind work life conflict is to provide a structure that provides amicable solutions to the conflicts arising from work and family domains. According to this postulate people cross border against work and family domain. It addresses the relationship between the two domains and how they assume a key role on work life balance. The principle focus of this conjecture is to create an equilibrium amongst work and life through minimization of border and bridges that may occur within these domains.

Border strength is defined by how border prohibit flow from one domain to another and how the other domain can accommodate demand of the other. Border crossers deal with integration and segmentation of work life balance where if the border is weak (permeable and flexible) and the employee cannot see the difference of what happens in work and family responsibilities conflicts may arise. A strong border (impermeable and inflexible) enhances segmentation of the role in two domains which tend to maintain work life balance (Guest, 2002). The border theory draws attention to the nature of work and family domains, border between these two domains and how this border can be moved or managed through integration and segmentation to achieve a work-family balance (WFB).

The relevance of border theory is to show the importance of work life balance by a sound drawn border that separates both work and family. Shortage of stability between life and work domain may reduce retention of

employees especially when they feel that a lot of time is spent in job compromising their family life roles and obligations. Further, the researcher uses this theory to show how family friendly policies which include work schedules enhance retention. If there is too much integration between these policies and family, it can lead to blurring boundaries which may lead to family and work conflict affecting the level of retention in the organization.

Leave Programs and Employee Retention

Darko-Asumadu (2018) conducted a study on the effect of work life programs and employee's commitment in the banking sector in Ghana. The study findings revealed that unmarried employees balanced their work and family commitment better and adequately than their married counterparts. The work life stability of unmarried couples led to improved productivity, increased task expertise, better employer-employee relations and fulfillment of their psychological needs thus boosting performance and retention. Additionally, the researcher established a weak relationship among the WLB programs in the sector which influenced commitment as the vast employee group felt that paternity leave, study leave and part time work were less satisfying as they were not provided for in this sector resulting to low employee commitment and poor retention.

Chandra (2012) found out that leave is rarely given in Indian organizations. Female employees are given paid leave of twelve weeks. Failure to give leave resulted to a conflict between work and family responsibilities affecting responsibilities. According to Judith Warner, the cost of not offering paid leave is costly than paid leave and big costs are incurred by organization not offering paid leave programs. Leave program helps an employee in balancing work and personal work. Having paid leave attract top talent into an organization more so in health sector since employees are guaranteed of secure policies that enhances their work life balance and this helps in retaining most of it valuable employees.

According to Baral and Bhargava (2011), different types of leaves are given under the employment act. They include annual leave which is earned every calendar year, sick leave granted if the employee presents a certificate from the medical practitioner, maternity leave – for female employees and paternity leave – for male employees. He also found out that if there are more than thirty women employees in a work unit the employer should make arrangements of how the female employees will take care of their children and this may be difficult for an employer which may eventually lead to exit of the female employees.

Organization with flexible leave schedules provide a signal that they care about the wellbeing of an employee hence promoting emotional assurance and lesser predisposition to quit. While studying the outcomes of WLB practices on employee job productivity within the Kenyan bank sector, Kamau et al. (2013) found that leave program policies impacted on performance by reducing on work related stress and life in general.

Ibrahim (2019) examined work life balance's effect in scaling up employee productivity in the Kenyan healthcare sector. The author found that employees were entitled to maternity, paternity, sick, study as well as annual leave. Further, the findings revealed that leave programs significantly influenced productivity and left employees feeling motivated after going on leave. Ooko (2020) also examined leave programs in his study that investigated employee retention practices in Western Kenya County governments. The findings indicated that though there are leave programs for employees, these are provided due to their being a constitutional right as opposed to being an employee retention practice.

Perceived Organizational Support and Employee retention

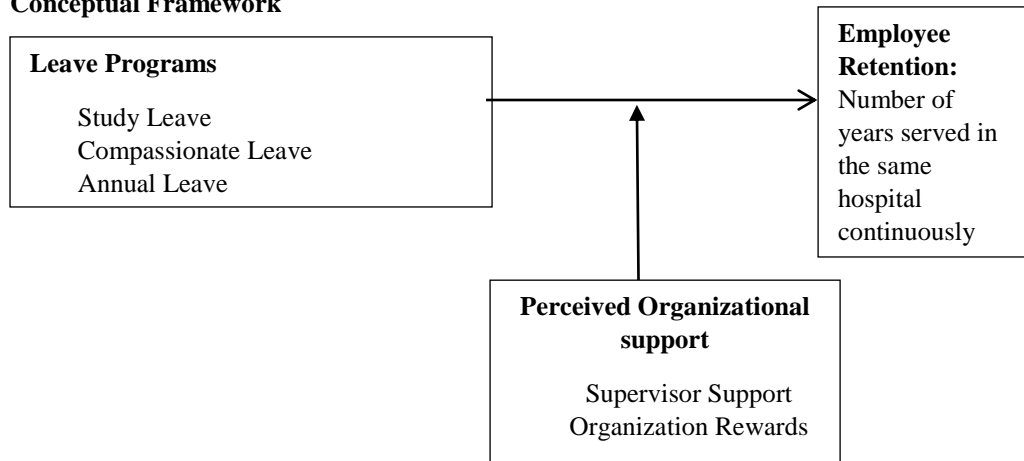
Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) holds that employees within an organization cultivate POS so as to meet the need for support, appreciation and association. Increase in POS make employees feel obliged to help organization meet its objective and improve on their commitment to organization performance and in return feel rewarded. POS help in reducing absenteeism and improving retention.

According to Eisenberger *et al.* (1999), organizations should appreciate and reward their employees through; fair payment, recognition of ideas, promotion and exceptional work. Moreover, they should encourage autonomy to increase production and morale. The organization should have a major part in managing pressure resulting to work overload and poor supervisor support. This enhances the desire to stay since employees feel competent and confident in their work and remain loyal to the organization.

Studies indicate that supervisors play a key part in inspiring workers to accomplish their work and life undertakings. According to Ajmal *et al.* (2015), a Strong correlation occurs amongst work life balance and satisfaction of employees, therefore firms ought to make strategies for employees. Supervisors can apply different measures to manage and support their workers and enhance retention in the firm. When workers do not understand the roles to be performed, they fail to meet organizational objectives. This exerts a negative impact on both an employee's family life and their job productivity and satisfaction. A discontented workforce lacks effectiveness, thereby resulting in poor employee retention (Rani, 2014).

An integration of the key reward factors attracts, motivate, and hold talent to be able to gain a competitive advantage, understand employee job satisfaction and engagement. The level of fulfillment, motivation, and retention is influenced by total rewards and the suitability of the rewards for employees. A high level of supervisor support has also been proved to improve worker motivation (Khalid *et al.*, 2017). The commitment exhibited by employees of a certain firm mirrors the quality of supervision and leadership in the firm. Notwithstanding organizational support, it has been established that several studies indicate that the supervisor support exerts more desirable influence over employees, and therefore, essential for employee retention (Paillé, 2013).

Conceptual Framework



III. Methodology

Research Design.

Descriptive and correlational research designs were adopted for this study. The research designs assisted in establishing the impact of Leave Programs on employee retention in PLFH in Kenya with the moderating effect of perceived organizational support. The descriptive research design was used to provide a relatively complete picture of what was occurring at the hospitals and allow the development of questions for further study without manipulation of study variables. A correlational research design was used to establish the relationship between Leave programs and employee retention in PLFH in Kenya with the moderating effect of perceived organizational support (Kazdin, 2016).

Target Population

The populace of concern in this study was the Medical staff (Doctors, Nurses and Clinical Officers) in PLFH in Kenya. In Kenya there is a total of eleven (11) Level five hospitals with total medics of approximately four thousand two hundred and thirty-nine (4,239).

The PLFH include Coast General, Embu Level Five, Kisii Teaching referral, Garrisa County Referral, Kakamega Teaching & Referral, Jaramogi Oginga Odinga Teaching & Referral, Machakos Level Five, Meru Teaching & Referral, Rift Valley General (Level), Mama Lucy Kibaki, Nyeri PGH (Level Five) which serve the national population of the country. They play a key role in the health sector by acting as referral points for critical illnesses.

Sample Size

Sampling from the populace is a vital procedure in research because it can be unrealistic to study the whole population of employees in the Public Hospitals (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). The researcher used stratified random sampling and considered the provincial regions in selecting the sample of hospitals to be studied.

The sample size was calculated using Yamane formulae to find out the sample from the eight (8) hospitals. The formula was preferred as it is not complicated and has a higher power of accuracy. The formulae assumes a confidence level of 95% and this assisted the researcher to have a decision which was representative of the total population (Barlett, J.E., Kotrlik, J., & Higgins, C., 2001). The eight (8) sampled hospitals were estimated to have three thousand one hundred and forty-three (3143) employees out of which three hundred and fifty-five (355) respondents were used in the study as calculated using Yamane formulae. Proportional allocation under stratified random sampling was done per each category of employees to identify the total number of doctors, nurses and clinicians in all the hospitals. The allocation was done as follows: Doctors (40),

Nurses (278) and clinical officers (37). Further, proportional allocation was done again to get the specific number of doctors, nurses and clinicians per sampled hospitals that was studied as per Table 3.3

Table 3.1. Sample Size of Medics

Hospital	Number of Doctors	Number of Nurses	Number of Clinicians
Coast	$n_d = \frac{36}{352} \times 40 = 4$	$n_n = \frac{260}{2462} \times 278 = 29$	$n_c = \frac{30}{329} \times 37 = 3$
Machakos	$n_d = \frac{60}{352} \times 40 = 7$	$n_n = \frac{390}{2462} \times 278 = 44$	$n_c = \frac{32}{329} \times 37 = 4$
Kakamega	$n_d = \frac{46}{352} \times 40 = 5$	$n_n = \frac{262}{2462} \times 278 = 30$	$n_c = \frac{32}{329} \times 37 = 4$
Jaramogi	$n_d = \frac{50}{352} \times 40 = 6$	$n_n = \frac{300}{2462} \times 278 = 34$	$n_c = \frac{40}{329} \times 37 = 4$
Mama Lucy	$n_d = \frac{40}{352} \times 40 = 5$	$n_n = \frac{350}{2462} \times 278 = 40$	$n_c = \frac{50}{329} \times 37 = 6$
Rift Valley	$n_d = \frac{50}{352} \times 40 = 6$	$n_n = \frac{400}{2462} \times 278 = 45$	$n_c = \frac{66}{329} \times 37 = 7$
Nyeri	$n_d = \frac{40}{352} \times 40 = 5$	$n_n = \frac{250}{2462} \times 278 = 28$	$n_c = \frac{44}{329} \times 37 = 5$
Garissa	$n_d = \frac{30}{352} \times 40 = 3$	$n_n = \frac{200}{2462} \times 278 = 23$	$n_c = \frac{35}{329} \times 37 = 3$

Data Collection Instruments

Primary data was collected using questionnaires which had both open and closed ended questions. The questionnaire was designed to address research hypothesis and specific objectives. Open-ended questions were not prohibitive to the respondents as they had a chance to disclose information in a realistic way while the close-ended items gave precise information which minimized information bias and facilitated data analysis. Opinion data was collected using a Likert scale as it is the most frequently used. Respondents were asked to rate statements pertaining to the variables under study where each response was given a numerical score to reflect its degree of favorableness. The basis for using questionnaires was because it is free from bias of the interviewee and respondents have an ample time to give well thought out answers. The questionnaires were administered by the researcher in person through drop and pick later method to the sampled respondents (Delpont & Roestenburg, 2011). For secondary data, online books, journals and articles were used for purposes of literature review.

Validity and Reliability

Validity and reliability of the research instruments was done through a pilot study which was undertaken for pretesting the questionnaire. According to Saunders *et al.* (2009) a pilot study is a pretest study carried out to refine the questionnaire so that the respondents have no problems in answering the questions and to avoid problems in recording of data. For this study, thirty-six (36) questionnaires which is ten percent of study population were issued to hospitals not included in the sample for the main study and mistakes on the questionnaires were corrected before embarking on the main study. The Cronbach alpha which is a measure of internal consistency was used to test the reliability of the research instruments. The Cronbach coefficient was used to calculate the internal consistency coefficient of the items included in the questionnaire through a pilot study of thirty-six (36) medical professionals. The acceptable alpha levels for the study was between 0.70 to 0.90 which indicate that the instrument has an acceptable level of self-consistency. Constant consultations with the university supervisors and other experts was done to ensure validity of the research instrument. Modifications to the structure of research tools was done as advised by the supervisors.

Data Analysis, Processing and Presentation

Primary data was sorted, edited, coded and analyzed to eliminate inaccuracies and inconsistencies. For reliable analysis, SPSS generated Cronbach's alpha was used to form the basis of determining reliability. Hypotheses of the study, was tested using Wald-Test and fitness of the model was checked using Hosmer and Lemeshow test. The findings of the analysis results were presented using tables as they are easy to comprehend and deduce. (Mertler and Reinhert (2016)

IV. Research Findings

To determine the influence of Leave programs on employee retention, the researcher investigated study leave, compassionate and annual leave programs. The commonly available leave programs within the public level five hospitals were study leave (74.0%), compassionate leave (68.6%), and annual leave (91.3%). Unpaid leaves were unpopular as only 10.8% of the health workers cited their availability. These findings are similar to those of Ibrahim (2019) who noted that employees in Mandera County’s public hospitals were entitled to various leave programs such as maternity and paternity leave, sick leave, study leave and annual leave.

Compassionate was readily available for the health workers. At least 74.6% of them stated that the hospital management allowed for this type of leave, whenever one was faced with the demise of a family member (both nuclear and extended) or was required to take care of ill dependents. Availability of compassionate programs have been associated with improved employee morale and overall commitment to an organization (Agufuna, 2015). Granting an employee leave to take care of unprecedented misfortunes shows that an employer is mindful of his/her employees’ welfare. Annual leave programs were generously granted to the employees despite the prevailing work demands. More than half of the health workers (52.6%) were in agreement that they are neither denied nor delayed their annual leave day. Furthermore, 68% of these respondents confirmed that during their annual leave, their employer rarely interrupts or calls them back. However, it was reported that most of the employers lacked provisions such as extension of annual leave days for employees with unfinished business (62%). Study leave was readily available for the health workers (83.7%). Generally, most of these health workers (73.2%) were paid their full salary while on study leave. However, in this study it was also established that employers were reluctant to allow for the extension of a study leave in the event that the program was not finished (61.5%). Based on the present study findings and those documented by Agufana (2015), it is commendable that public level five hospitals have study leave programs that allow health workers to advance their career. However, these programs would be more effective if additional provisions such as extension of leave due to reasons such incomplete study program were incorporated. In summary, leave programs were found to exert considerably influence on the health workers’ decision to continue working in their current work place or look for alternative jobs. Specifically, denial/delay of a compassionate leave would influence 56.6% of the respondents to seek for jobs elsewhere, annual leave would influence 52.6% of the health workers and denial/delay of study leave would force 56.9% of the health workers to leave their current work place.

Hypothesis testing to show the relationship

The study envisaged to establish whether there is a relationship between work schedule and employee retention by testing the following null hypothesis

H₀₃: There is no statistical significant Influence of leave programs on Employee Retention in PLFH in Kenya at 5% significance level.

H₁₃: There is a statistical significant Influence of Leave programs on Employee Retention in PLFH in Kenya at 5% significance level.

The study also envisaged to establish the moderating effect of perceived organizational support on the relationship between leave programs and employee retention. This was achieved by testing the following null hypothesis:

H_{A3}: Perceived Organizational Support has no statistical significant moderating effect on the Influence of Leave programs on Employee Retention in PLFH in Kenya at 5% significance level.

H_{B3}: Perceived Organizational Support has statistical significant moderating effect on the Influence of leave programs on Employee Retention in PLFH in Kenya at 5% significance level.

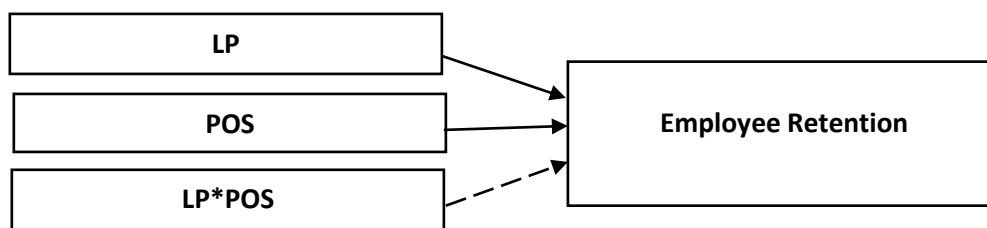


Figure 4.1: Moderation Effect of Perceived Organizational Support on Relationship between Leave Programs and Employee Retention

In testing for the moderation effect, a third variable, LP* POS (product of leave programs and Perceived Organizational Support) is introduced to show the interaction effect of these two multiplied variables. The sequential procedure involves performing a binary logistic regression of Employee retention against leave programs and Perceived Organizational Support without their interaction (Model D2 in Table 4.34). This will

show their main effects while controlling for each other's effect. In testing for the moderation effect, a third variable, LP* POS (product of leave programs and Perceived Organizational Support) is introduced to show the interaction effect of these two multiplied variables. The sequential procedure involves performing a binary logistic regression of Employee retention against leave programs and Perceived Organizational Support without their interaction (Model D2 in Table 4.34). This will show their main effects while controlling for each other's effect

Table 4.34. Binary Logistic Regression Results for Leave Programs and Employee Retention moderated by Perceived Organizational Support

Predictor	MODEL D1 LP vs ER				MODEL D2 LP, POS vs ER				MODEL D3 LP, POS, LP*POS vs ER			
	B	Wald	P	Odd	B	Wald	P	Odd	B	Wald	P	Odd
Constant	-5.74	29.16	0.00	0.003	-8.06	39.57	0.00	1.259	-8.036	42.070	0.00	0.00
LP	0.25	24.85	0.00	1.285	0.23	20.22	0.00	1.087	0.230	19.770	0.00	1.259
POS					0.08	13.82	0.00	1.135	0.082	12.920	0.00	1.086
LP* POS									0.016	4.445	0.035	1.016
Nagelkerke		0.124				0.179				0.193		
R Square												
Hosmer & Lemeshow Test		$\chi^2 (6) = 4.992;$ p-value = 0.545				$\chi^2 (8) = 4.762;$ p-value = 0.783				$\chi^2 (8) = 7.613;$ p-value = 0.472		
Change in R square						ΔR Square = 0.055				ΔR Square = 0.014		

Dependent variable – Employee Retention

LP – Leave Programs

POS - Perceived Organizational Support

ER – Employee Retention

B – Binary Regression Coefficient (Natural Log of Odds)

P – P-value (Computed significance value of the Wald Statistic)

Results for Model D1 (LP vs ER) in Table 4.34 and equation (x) shows that there is a significant statistical relationship between leave programs and employee retention ($p=0.000$; $p<0.05$). Therefore, the study rejects the null hypothesis, H_{04} , hence concluding that leave programs in Public Level Five Hospitals in Kenya have contributed significantly to the retention of employees in these hospitals while holding other factors constant. Further observations show that $B = 0.251$, which is more than 0.00 implying that the probability of retaining an employee increases as the leave programs increase. By looking at the odds ($e^{0.251} = 1.285$), it shows that odds (likelihood) of employee retention increases by a factor of 1.285 (28.5%) with marginal increment in leave programs. The study findings also indicated that POS significantly and positively impacted the relationship between leave programs and employee retention ($\beta = 0.016$, $P=0.035$). This suggests that employees were 1.0 times more likely to remain in the same organization with improved policies on leave programs when they perceived that organizational support – such as supervisor support and organizational rewards – was provided. Similar findings have been reported by Kar and Misra (2013), who established that an institution with sound work-life balance practices such as improved leave programs, attracts more employees to continue working there, once the institution ensures maximal supervisor and organizational support.

V. Discussion

Work environment demands, especially in public hospitals, are usually high and significantly affect the work-life balance. This study's findings established a significant favorable influence of leave programs on employee retention ($\beta = 0.251$, $P<0.001$). Doctors, nurses, and clinical officers working in hospitals with improved policies on leave programs were 1.3 times more likely to continue working in the same hospital. These findings support the spillover theory concept, wherein positive spillover, employees can operate with a more satisfactory attitude on the job, hence not seeking alternative workplaces. These findings agree with Wambui *et al.* (2017), who observed that the availability of leave programs not only ensures that employees are reenergized but is also essential in providing an ideal work-life balance in the institution. Moreover, Ibrahim (2019) argues that annual leaves and other paid and unpaid leaves, such as study and compassionate leaves, contribute significantly to building confidence and trust between employees and employers, which translates to increased retention.

Whereas an employee's primary goal is to ensure the institution meets its objectives, every individual has secondary demands dictated by desires, emotions, and behavior. For example, a clinical officer may wish to further his/her studies to become a specialist in a particular field. To address this, the individual must take some

time off (study leave) and focus on secondary demands. Hospitals with ideal leave programs improve their employees' overall productivity and retention due to skills improvement, emotional and physical well-being (Ibrahim, 2019).

A study conducted on employee retention among the County governments in Western Kenya (Ooko, 2020), revealed that 62.5% of the respondents were frequently granted different leave types like maternity, paternity, sick, and education leave. However, this was attributed to the constitutional rights that dictate every employee of the Kenyan government to take a break, especially the annual leave. Therefore, most institutions offer leave programs due to the legal aspect rather than an employee retention strategy.

Contrary to this finding, Kiplagat (2017) argues that the provision of study leaves encourages employees to acquire specialized skills and professional growth. This may heighten the employees' sense of loyalty to the institution. Furthermore, a study conducted in public level 4 sub-county hospitals of Nairobi County identified that leave programs such as compassionate leave had a positive and significant influence on employee turnover. Additionally, it was also established that women with paid leave are more likely to return to the same employer than those with unpaid leave (Kiplagat, 2017). Opar (2014) observed that workers with access to work-life practices such as compassionate leave programs, exhibited eminent institutional commitment and significantly lower turnover rates.

VI. Conclusion

Leave programs such as annual, study and compassionate leaves had strong role in enhancing employee retention. The demands within the work environment were exhausting and employees needed time off to rest. Other employees needed a study break for continuous career growth and advancement, whereas others required time to mourn their loss. Institutions that go an extra mile to improve their leave program policies beyond the legal provision, attract a pool of talented employees who feel that the employer values their well-being.

Perceived organizational support especially within the context of leave programs was found to exert considerable influence in promoting employee retention. Therefore, institutions seeking to reduce employee turnover may need to focus their attention to their rewards structure and in capacity building competent supervisors who are willing and ready to offer support to the employees.

VII. Recommendations

The management should strive to ensure they implement improved policies on leave programs. It is imperative for institutions to go beyond implementing leave programs just within the set legal structure. Any extra effort in improving leave programs in terms of timeliness and paying employees while on study leave, translates into increased productivity, commitment and employee retention. The management should also incorporate provisions for leave extensions in case of emergencies in the currently available leave programs.

References

- [1]. Agufana, J. M. (2015). Effect of work life balance programs on job satisfaction of nurses in public hospitals in Kenya: a case of selected hospitals in Nakuru town, Kenya (Doctoral dissertation, Egerton University).
- [2]. Baral, R., & Bhargava, S. (2011). HR interventions for work-life balance: evidences from organisations in India. *International journal of business, management and social sciences*, 2(1), 33–42.
- [3]. Chandra, V. (2012). Work–life balance: eastern and western perspectives. *The international journal of human resource management*, 23(5), 1040-1056.
- [4]. Darko-Asumadu, A., Sika-Bright, S., & Osei-Tutu, B. (2018). The influence of work-life balance on employees' commitment among bankers in Accra, Ghana. *African journal of social work*, 8(1), 47-55.
- [5]. Eisenberger, R., Rhoades, L., & Cameron, J. (1999). Does pay for performance increase or decrease perceived self-determination and intrinsic motivation?. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 77(5), 1026.
- [6]. Hartel, C., Fujimoto, Y., Strybosch, V., & Fitzpatrick, K. (2007). *Human resource management: transferring theory into innovative practice*. Pearson Education Australia.
- [7]. Ibrahim, A. K. (2019). Work-life balance practices for scaling up health workers `in public hospitals in Kenya: a case of Mandera County [Doctoral thesis, KeMU].
- [8]. Kar, S. & Misra, K. (2013). Nexus between work life balance practices and employee retention; the mediating effect of a supportive culture. *Asian social science*, 9(11).
- [9]. Kazdin, A. E. (2016). *Methodological issues and strategies in clinical research*. American Psychological Association.
- [10]. Kiplagat, C.J. (2017). Effect of work life balance on employee turnover in public level 4 hospitals of Nairobi City County, Kenya [Master's Thesis, Kenyatta University].
- [11]. Mansour, S. and Tremblay, D.G. (2016). Work family conflict/family-work conflict, job stress, burnout and intention to leave in the hotel industry in Quebec (Canada): moderating role of need for family friendly practices as "resource passageways". *The international journal of human resource management*, 29(16), 2399-2430.
- [12]. Mertler, C. A., & Reinhart, R. V. (2016). *Advanced and multivariate statistical methods: Practical application and interpretation*. Taylor & Francis.
- [13]. Meyer M. (2011). The dynamics of learning with team production: implications for task assignment. *The quarterly journal of economics*, 109, 1157-1184.
- [14]. Okeyo, V. (2017). A Kenyan nurse does the work of three in Cuba or America. *Daily Nation*, July 10.

- [15]. Okeyo, V. (2018). Patients in agony as many public health facilities grapple with staff shortage. *The standard*, February 18
- [16]. Ooko, G. O. (2020). Employee retention practices and organization performance in county governments of western Kenya [Doctoral thesis, MMUST
- [17]. Opar, D. (2014). Strategies used in employee retention by nongovernmental organizations in Kisumu County, Kenya [Doctoral thesis, University of Nairobi].
- [18]. Pahl, S., Ramer, A., & Aiken, J. (2017). *Organizational change from the inside. Cultural change from a business anthropology perspective*. Lexington Books.
- [19]. Rhoades, L., & Eisenberger, R. (2002). Perceived organizational support: a review of the literature. *Journal of applied psychology*, 87(4), 698.
- [20]. Vishwa, M., Chandra, K., & Jaggi, S., Charanjeet, S., Avadhesh, M. & Diwinder. K., (2015) Empirical analysis of work life balance policies and its impact on employee's job satisfaction and performance: Descriptive statistical approach. *American journal of theoretical and applied statistics*, 4(2), 33-43.
- [21]. Wakio, R. (2019). Influence of work environment on employee retention in level four and five hospitals in Machakos county (Master's thesis, South Eastern Kenya University).
- [22]. Wambui, G., Okech, T. C., & Olweny, T. (2020). Determinants of policy making in the Kenya's public health sector. *International Academic Journal of Economics and Finance*, 3(5), 204-219.

Susan Ndumba Nkanata, et. al. "Influence of Leave Programs on Staff Retention in Public Level Five Hospitals in Kenya: Moderating Effect of Perceived Organizational Support." *International Journal of Business and Management Invention (IJBMI)*, vol. 12(10), 2023, pp. 60-68. Journal DOI- 10.35629/8028