RETENTION OF STAFF IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract
Retention of employees is arguably a widely discussed subject and an important dilemma many organizations and higher institutions of learning might face in the future, if not facing it already. Universities are institutions that develop the kind of expertise and human resource essential to develop the countries policies, governance structures, cultural and socio-economic aspects of development. Globalisation has brought on dynamic markets and competition, and with that it is not hard to picture that universities are likely to focus and should be focusing on long-term strategies and a greater focus on attracting, developing and retaining its employees, particularly the core workers both academic and non academic to guarantee sustainability of programs and personnel. The purpose of this paper is to reveal through review of literature, the identified causes or determinants of staff turnover that may assist university administration reduce staff turnover in public universities. By comparing local and international research findings the paper highlights existing research gaps and findings that can be evaluated and employed to hire, develop and retain a committed workforce in institutions of higher learning. The review focuses on research published in peer reviewed journals from the year 1990 to 2010. The review focused on articles that addressed these concerns and synthesized those with a defensible research design.

1.0 Introduction

University faculties are aging along with the rest of society. Low retirement rates and slow growth in total faculty size limit the number of new hiring opportunities. Institutions are also confronting significant financial difficulties that are the result of substantial reductions in the growth rate of state appropriations or the absolute reductions in annual budgets, declines in endowment, and the escalating costs of employing faculty (Clark and d'Ambrosio, 2005). Clark and d'Ambrosio (2005) continue to add that the importance of these issues varies by type of institution; however, all colleges and universities face a series of common challenges that will shape higher education in the 21st century. In order to maintain high quality faculties in the coming years, universities must develop compensation policies and employment practices that are appropriate for the new economic and demographic environment. A study of turnover by Boxall et al., (2003) in New Zealand confirmed the view that motivation for job change is multidimensional and that no one factor will explain it. A continuous, paramount, and important concern to organizations in the public and private sectors, particularly colleges and universities, is being able to retain qualified and competent employees (Allenand Meyer, 1990; Cohen, 2003; Mowday et al., 1982). Many colleges and universities are losing their intellectual capital as faculty migrate to other institutions and consultancy (Gillette, 2002).

According to Tetty (2006) Africa is losing, in significant numbers, a fundamental resource in socio-economic and political development – i.e., its intellectual capital. As the processes of globalization take shape, it is becoming abundantly clear that full, effective, and beneficial participation in the world that is emerging will depend, in no small measure, on the ability of societies to build and take advantage of their human resource capabilities. In the absence of such capabilities, African countries cannot expect to compete at any appreciable level with their counterparts, not only in the industrialized world, but also from other developing areas which have made the investment and developed the relevant capacities. She adds that a well-developed human capacity base is not only an asset that enables countries to promote forward-looking ideas, initiate and guide action, and build on successes; it also makes those countries attractive destinations for investment and intellectual collaboration, both of which, if managed appropriately, will lead to positive returns. A firm higher education base is key for such makeover to take place.

Kenyan universities, particularly public universities as centers of excellence which are responsible for the development of human resources required for national development. Over the last two decades, public universities have been facing a myriad of problems which have affected their ability to motivate and retain their employees (Kipkebut, 2010). Universities, especially public ones, have almost exclusively depended on the government for remunerating their staff. This has led to a situation where staff are not paid as well as their counterparts in the more developed societies. Many professors have therefore decamped to other countries in search of better pay, affecting the teaching needs of Kenyan universities. Demand for better pay has often led to standoffs between the government and the university academic staff union (UASU) (Chacha, 2004).

Retention in this article an awning term that is used to describe the efforts university management may utilize to reduce turnover of both academic and non-academic personnel. In promoting retention of staff, it is essential that the effectiveness of these processes leaves no gaps. However, what evidence do we have that the processes we are advocating are effective? An important observation is that universities must engage in more institutional research. Pooling of data from similar universities is necessary if we are to understand the complexities of employment and compensation policies (Baer, Freund, Kuhn, Schulenburger and Spies, in press).

This paper will attempt to shed light by revealing through review of literature, the identified causes or determinants of staff turnover that may assist university administration reduce staff turnover in public universities. By comparing local and international research findings the paper highlights existing research gaps and findings that can be evaluated and employed to hire, develop and retain a committed workforce in institutions of higher learning. The review focuses on research published in peer reviewed journals from the year 1990 to 2010. The review focused on articles that addressed these concerns and synthesized those with a defensible research design.

2.0 Materials and Methods

The aim of the review was to identify and analyze the main factors affecting retention of staff in public universities. Studies published between 1990 and 2010 in English were searched using the electronic databases: Emerald, Springer, JSTOR, Wiley inter-science, Project MUSE. Key words used in the search are

shown in table 1. Of the 3986 research papers initially identified using the search criteria, 3576 proved irrelevant when titles were examined and 130 were duplicates. The abstracts of these 280 papers were examined, 84 had relevant content the full text was not available to 5 of these. Of the 79 accessed 66 were excluded after reading the full text resulting in 13 being examined in full. A systematic review was carried out and both quantitative and qualitative studies were included.

Table 1: Search key words

Staff retention/	or employee retention/	or worker retention/	or knowledge worker retention
Staff turnover/	or employee turnover/	or worker turnover/	or knowledge worker turnover
Developing countries/	or middle income countries/	or low income countries/	or poor countries
Public universities/	or higher education/	or higher learning institutions/	or campuses

There is no single agreed framework for synthesizing the extensive range of evidence available. Indeed, integrating different types of data within one review is one of the key challenges facing systematic reviewers (Thomas *et al.*, 2004). Relationships between the different areas were thus identified and grouped into the sections discussed below.

3.0   Results and Discussions
This review has evaluated a limited number of studies published in English in peer-reviewed journals during 1990–2006. Book chapters and grey literature are not included because of space constraints. Although the review has identified several important factors, they should be seen as context - or country-specific. The choice to exclude non-English language studies and the grey literature was made for practical reasons based on the increased time, expense and complexity of translating and synthesizing these studies. However, it is worth noting that much research in developing countries may not be published in peer-reviewed journals, but might be available as grey literature in local dialects.

4.0   Results
The 13 studies identified factors affecting staff sustainability which were categorized into 10 themes (see table 2): career, job context, empowerment, group influence, expectancy, leadership, individualism and collectivism, masculinity and femininity, balance between the private and personal life, and rewards.

Table 2: Summary of significant factors in the retention of staff

Major factors	Significant factors	Total number of studies	References
Career	Job content	1	Naris & Ukpere (2010)
	Job satisfaction	2	Vicki & Barbara (2006), Manger & Eikeland (1990)
	Role conflict	1	Daly and Dee (2006)
Masculinity and femininity	Having more women	1	Tolbert et al (1995)
	Female incumbents	1	Pfeffer & Davis-Blake (1992)
Expectancy	Lack of commitment	1	Mallam (1994)
	Morale	1	Johnsrud & Rosser (2002)
	Perceptions of work life	1	Johnsrud & Rosser (2002)
	Review and promotion process	1	Jayakumar et al (2009)

	Satisfaction with job security	1	Ying & Volkwein (2004)
	Perceived plentiful job opportunities	1	Daly& Dee (2006)
	Work less intrinsically satisfying	1	Manger & Eikeland (1990)
Group influence	Collegial relations	1	Manger & Eikeland 1990)
	Minority status	1	Ying & Volkwein (2004) Jayakumar
	Negative racial climate	1	et al (2009)
Empowerment	Autonomy and independence	2	Jayakumar et al (2009), Daly & Dee (2006)
	Growth opportunities	3	Mallam (1994) ,Victoria (2008), Naris & Ukpere (2010)
Leadership	Communication openness	1	Daly & Dee (2006)
	Distributive justice	1	Daly & Dee (2006)
	Position level of supervisors	1	Ashley (2006)
	Supervisory skills	2	Victoria (2008), Ashley (2006)
Individualism and collectivism	Doctoral degree	1	Ying & Volkwein (2004) Jayakumar
	Colleague research value	1	et al (2009)
Private and personal life.	Proximity of family	1	Daly & Dee (2006)
Rewards	External extrinsic reward	1	Ying & Volkwein (2004)
	Pay	3	Ying & Volkwein (2004), Mallam (1994), Naris and Ukpere (2010)
	Position in the salary structure	1	Pfeffer & Davis-Blake (1992) Ying & Volkwein (2004)
	Satisfaction with compensation	1	

4.1 Career

Career factors include the job content, job satisfaction and role conflict. One study found that Job content was a good predictor of staff turnover. The indications are that administrative staff felt that they were not given opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills, which they gained at development programs, to the job (Naris and Ukpere, 2010). In contrast Vicki & Barbara (2006) found that work-life had a significant and positive impact on satisfaction but no direct effect on intent to leave.

Two studies indicated that job satisfaction was a good predictor of staff turnover. In both studies job satisfaction had a significant and negative impact on intent to leave (Vicki and Barbara, 2006; Manger and Eikeland, 1990).

One study associated Role conflict with intentions for turnover. Role conflict revealed a detrimental effect on job satisfaction and organizational commitment, which in turn diminished intent to stay (Daly and Dee, 2006).

4.2 Job Context

Job context factors include the employee's academic rank, their being a full professor, length of tenure in the organization, type of tenure with the organization and how flexible work/life policies are.

A study on tenured and non-tenured faculty reveals that academic rank is a determinant to turnover intentions. For both groups of faculty, seniority has the strongest direct effect on departure intention. Senior faculty, those who are advanced in age, career age, and who have served their institutions for a longer period of time, are less likely to leave (Ying & Volkwein, 2004). However academic rank has different impacts on tenured vs. non-tenured faculty. For the tenured group, academic rank increases faculty's job security and indirectly reduces their departure intention. For the non-tenured group, although it increases one's satisfaction with job security, more important, it directly strengthens one's departure intention. With college administrators, tenure in the job was negatively related to turnover; however organizational size and heterogeneity in the tenure distribution had significant positive effects on turnover (Pfeffer and Davis-Blake, 1992).

Being a full professor was also significantly associated with negative intentions to leave. Findings reveal that at the individual-level (within groups), being a full professor had a negative and significant impact on intent to leave. Being an instructor on the other hand had no effect intent (Johnsrud and Rosser, 2002).

Length of tenure as a job context factor was also an indicator of retention. It was found to have a significant and negative impact on their work life and intent to leave (Vicki and Barbara, 2006).

Vicki and Barbara (2006) also identified type of tenure as a factor influencing staff turnover. They report that being a full-time faculty member had a significant and negative impact on intention to leave.

One study did reveal that flexible work/life policies have a significant relationship with intentions to leave. The study found that turnover among women administrators was influenced by an inability to negotiate a flexible work schedule (Victoria, 2008).

4.3   Empowerment
Five studies found empowerment factors as indicators of intentions for turnover. The empowerment factors include autonomy and independence, presence of growth opportunities and the lack of career opportunities. One research indicates that a positive factor in retention can be explained by the autonomy and independence an individual enjoys. This factor demonstrated a positive correlation with intent to stay (Jayakumar *et al.*, 2009; Daly and Dee, 2006).

Growth opportunities were moreover identified as significant factors affecting job turnover. A number of studies report that the availability of promotion opportunities appear to be perceived as an influential factor among faculty members to voluntarily relinquish their jobs or quit their institutions (Mallam, 1994; Victoria, 2008; Naris and Ukpere, 2010).

4.4   Group Influence
Group influence factors include collegial relations between faculty members, the minority status particular group may face and a perceived negative racial climate. One study identifies collegial relations as a significant factor in retention of staff. The study results show that collegial relations had the largest contribution on the dependent variable intention to leave the university (Manger and Eikeland, 1990).

Two of studies concurred that minority status is a significant variable in the prediction of intentions for turnover. They report that minority faculty, tenured or non-tenured, are more likely to leave. (Yingand Volkwein, 2004; Pfefferand Davis-Blake, 1992).

A negative racial climate is also identified as a factor that could determine turnover intentions. For the minority groups cross tabulations revealed that more faculty who perceived a hostile racial climate indicated a desire to leave compared to those who perceived a moderate/mild or a benign racial climate (Jayakumar *et al.*, 2009).

4.5   Expectancy
Expectancy factors included the lack of commitment, issues regarding morale with work, the perceptions of work life by employees, the review and promotion process, satisfaction with job security, perceived plentiful job opportunities and work being less intrinsically satisfying.
Lack of commitment is a factor identified as predicting intentions for turnover. Male faculty members reported that their former colleagues were more likely to leave voluntarily due to lack of commitment to their institutions (Mallam, 1994).

Faculty morale also had a significant direct and negative effect on intent to leave (Johnsrud and Rosser, 2002). Johnsrud and Rosser (2002) reveal that the relationship between morale and intent to leave is considerable at the individual level. Both perceptions of work life and morale have significant direct impact on the intent to leave, with perceptions of work life having a positive, modest impact (and substantive negative indirect effect) and morale having a negative and substantial effect.

Review and promotion process is identified as a factor that additionally determines staff turnover intentions. Jayakumar *et al.*, (2009) discuss in their findings that stress from the promotion process consistently has a negative association with retention. Satisfaction with job security determines intention for retention. Faculty members who are satisfied with their job security on campus are more likely to stay (Ying and Volkwein, 2004).

One study by Daly and Dee (2006) as well shows that perceived plentiful job opportunities increases the turnover intentions. Their research documents those respondents who perceived plentiful job opportunities reported lower levels of intent to stay. A different study traces the fact that workers who find work less intrinsically satisfying can be used as a predictor of turnover. The data from the study showed that staff having the intention to leave the university find their work less intrinsically satisfying as compared to staff choosing to stay (Manger and Eikeland, 1990).

4.6 Leadership

Leadership factors include organizational communication openness, the perceived distributive justice, the position level of supervisors and the supervisory skills of the employee's supervisors.

The communication openness in an organisation demonstrated a positive correlation with intent to stay. Daly and Dee (2006) indicate that higher levels of open communication were associated with higher levels of satisfaction and commitment, which in turn yielded higher levels of intent to stay. They continue to add that distributive justice had a positive indirect effect through organizational commitment. Higher levels of distributive justice were associated with higher levels of commitment, which in turn strengthened intent to stay.

Ashley (2006) points out an additional factor, the position level of supervisors was found to be correlated to supervisees' intention to turnover. This is in the findings coupled to lack of experience of middle level and entry level supervisors and the association with new professionals' intention to turn over.

Supervisory skills are also identified as an auxiliary factor determining departure intentions. The results indicate that because of the immediate supervisor most left, and the most common response to the interview question, ''what might have prevented the departure?'' was ''better supervisor treatment'' (Victoria 2008; Ashley 2006).

4.7 Individualism and Collectivism

Individualism and collectivism factors include having a doctoral degree and having one's research valued by colleagues in the department. The faculty members who have a doctoral degree, because of their lower satisfaction with compensation, are more likely to leave (Ying and Volkwein, 2004). Having one's research valued by colleagues in the department is also recognized a having a strong association with retention (Jayakumar *et al.*, 2009).

4.8 Masculinity and Femininity

Masculinity and femininity factors include the proportion of women in the organization and the effect of number of women in the institution on men. Pfeffer and Davis-Blake (1992) indicate that female incumbents were marginally more likely to leave their positions. Tolbert et al (1995) interestingly found that having more women decreases the likelihood of turnover among male faculty.

4.9 Balance between the Private and Personal Life

Faculty with one or more immediate family members living in the area had higher levels of intent to stay than faculty with no immediate family living within 50 miles (Daly and Dee, 2006).

4.10 Rewards

Employees whose salaries were high compared to the salaries of persons performing the same jobs in other institutions were less likely to leave their positions (Pfeffer and Davis-Blake, 1992).

Pfeffer and Davis-Blake (1992), however, demonstrate that internal salary distributions significantly affect turnover, even when external comparisons are controlled, the low earners in a salary distribution appear to react negatively to high salary dispersion, regardless of whether their lower salaries are equitably related to

differences in skill, experience, or the nature of their positions. Conversely the same study finds that if workers conclude that good performance is rewarded, they may be likely to remain with the organization.

External extrinsic reward is also identified as a predictor of turnover. The faculty members that regard external extrinsic rewards as highly important are less likely to leave (Ying and Volkwein, 2004).

With regard to pay as a predictor of turnover, faculty members under 25 years regarded pay as a factor influencing voluntary turnover as opposed to their colleagues within the age ranges (a) 31 to 35; (b) 36 to 40; and (c) 46 or above (Mallam, 1994), in addition, the level of education with respect to pay, faculty members with Bachelor's degrees perceived their colleagues to be more inclined to leave voluntarily than faculty members with Master's degrees. However, Naris and Ukpere (2010) find that the notch increase, which is the financial reward that they received after obtaining their qualification, was not sufficient and was reason enough for ex-employees interviewed to leave the institution.

Satisfaction with compensation is the second strongest predictor of tenured faculty's departure intention in a study by Ying and Volkwein (2004), but its influence on non-tenured faculty is much weaker. They find those tenured faculties who feel they are underpaid are more likely to consider another position.

5.0   Conclusion

This review of turnover literature identifies an array of factors that have been shown to be consistently linked to turnover. These however do not include percentage of women in organisations and perceived racial climate, their role is still somewhat inconclusive and should be able, with further analysis, to generate new information that could help us in our goals towards attaining gender mainstreaming and racial/ethnic tolerance. Echoing Clark and d'Ambrosio (2005) the importance of these issues varies by type of institution; In order to maintain high quality faculties in the coming years, universities must develop compensation policies and employment practices that are appropriate for the new economic and demographic environment. This would necessitate the need for additional research in local Kenyan universities comparing the identified causes with research in these international findings and as a result deliver sustainable methods of retaining staff. This additional research on turnover in the public universities could include an examination of turnover data to establish whether turnover is uniformly high across the higher education sector or whether there are differences. The collation of qualitative data through employee surveys at the university level may be useful for identifying sources of dissatisfaction, intentions to leave, and any underlying causes of turnover.

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