



ISSN NO. 2320-5407

Journal homepage: <http://www.journalijar.com>

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL  
OF ADVANCED RESEARCH

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

## THE ROLE OF JOB CHARACTERISTICS ON THE RETENTION OF MILLENNIAL EMPLOYEES IN PRIVATE HOSPITALS IN THE COUNTIES OF KERICHO AND BOMET IN KENYA

<sup>1</sup>Ng'eno Williter Chepkemai Rop \*, <sup>2</sup>Dr. Mike Iravo Amuhaya, <sup>3</sup>Prof. Christopher Kanali and Prof. Ronald Chepkilot

1. Mosoriot Teachers College; P. O. Box 100-30307

2. School of Human Resource Development, Department of Entrepreneurship and Procurement, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, P.O. Box 62000-00200, Nairobi

3. Biomechanical and Environmental Engineering Department, College of Engineering and Technology Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, P.O. Box 62000-00200, Nairobi

4. Associate Professor of Human Resource Management, Kabarak University, Private Bag, kabarak, Nakuru. Kabarak University.

### Manuscript Info

#### Manuscript History:

Received: 13 January 2014

Final Accepted: 23 February 2014

Published Online: March 2014

#### Key words:

Job Characteristics, Retention, Millennial Employees, Private Hospitals, Counties, Kericho, Bomet, Kenya

#### \*Corresponding Author

Ng'eno Williter  
Chepkemai Rop

### Abstract

This paper examines the relationship between job characteristics and retention of millennial of employees in private hospitals in Kenya. The paper is based on a study designed to assess socio-technical factors that influence retention of millennial employees in private hospitals in Bomet and Kericho Counties. This study adopted descriptive research design. The target population comprised all employees of private hospitals in Bomet and Kericho Counties. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select the respondents of this study. The basis of stratification was age of employees. Questionnaire, interview schedule and content analysis were the main data collection tools. Qualitative data were analyzed in form of frequency counts and percentages. Karl Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient was computed using a two tailed test at 0.01 significance level to establish the level of correlation between job characteristics and retention of millennial employees. The r-values ranged from 0.651 to 0.868. All the r-values were therefore above 0.500 and that showed there is a strong correlation between job characteristics and retention of millennial employees in private hospitals in Bomet and Kericho Counties. Of greatest significance was the stressful nature of the jobs performed with r-value of 0.863 which made them desire to leave their employer to another and the importance of their job to the clients with r-value of 0.783 which made them desire to continue working. There was therefore a significant relationship between job characteristics and retention of millennial employees at their work places. The hospital management should strive to increase retention of millennial employees by transforming its typical environments through re-designing of jobs to enable them receive relevant feedback, credit for their work and reduce stress.

Copy Right, IJAR, 2013., All rights reserved.

### INTRODUCTION

Retention is about keeping members of staff that an organization wants, whilst accepting that some will leave. Retaining the best professional talent is of great practical significance to organizations as it eliminates the recruiting, selection, and on-boarding costs of their replacement, maintains continuity in their areas of expertise, and supports a

culture in which merit can be rewarded (Mobley *et al.*, 1979; Griffeth *et al.*, 2000). These writers also say that turnover of top talent has been an interest of management scholars for several decades, yet is still a costly problem. Organizations therefore need to come up with effective retention strategies. The factors that aided the retention and motivation of high performers included providing challenging and achievement opportunities, mentors, realistic self-assessment and feedback processes (Holbeche, 2003; Armstrong, 2009).

The Y'ers ranked several organizational support benefits, for example, health and dental care, and paid vacation, as important incentives when looking for, and staying at, a job (Deloitte, 2007). Even though money is not the only incentive for staying at a job (Taylor, 2000), a fair compensations package is a basic condition for employee satisfaction. Generation Y is expecting to receive both a competitive base salary, and monetary benefits such as health insurance or college tuition reimbursement. This shows how their organization values them and meets their welfare. Reasons for leaving could be amongst the following; better prospects through career move, more security, more opportunity to develop skills, unable to cope with job, better working conditions and poor relationships with manager or team leader and colleagues.

Bhatnagar (2007) notes that employee engagement involves giving your workforce a sense of participation, freedom and trust. It is felt at three levels: the emotional, the cognitive and the physical. If an employee feels engaged on all of these levels, enjoying meaningful relationships with peers and co-workers and are aware of their specific mission and role, they are more likely to produce good work and stay with the company. This is because perceptions of the workplace have been shown to directly influence both the quality of work output and retention. Organizations therefore must seek to create a work experience that is difficult for competitors to imitate (Bevan, Barber & Robinson, 1997). A good and attractive work environment which appeals to millennial employees makes them establish institutional loyalty hence their retention.

### **Job Characteristics**

Hackman and Oldham' (1976) job characteristics model identifies four core job characteristics skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback. These impact three critical psychological states of experienced meaningfulness, experienced responsibility for outcomes, and knowledge of the actual results which influence work outcomes. The organizational outcome of satisfied, motivated, involved and retained employees shows that job characteristics influence retention of millennial workers (job satisfaction, absenteeism and work motivation). The Job Characteristics model is modified by redefining job dimensions as growth prospects, accountability, sense of accomplishment, self-esteem, job security, interpersonal relationships, working conditions, by extending organizational outcomes as satisfied, motivated, involved and retained employees. Hackman's model is relevant to the study in that the technical factors studied captured the core job dimensions which determine the critical psychological states that impact on the personal and work outcomes which finally influence organizational outcomes.

This is as shown by Figure 1. *Source: Santoshi Sen Gupta, 2012*

### **Basic Model Employee Retention**

The basic Model Employee Retention by Santoshi Sen Gupta (2012) describes the personal characteristics, intrinsic job dimensions and the resulting level of satisfaction, motivation and involvement (work outcomes) and the final result is retained employees (organizational outcomes). This is shown in Figure 2.

*Source: Santoshi Sen Gupta, 2012*

Price (1997) identifies four types of stresses as: Lack of means to perform a job, role ambiguity (unclear job obligations), role conflict (inconsistent job obligation) and workload (amount of effort required by a job). Workload has often been termed as role overload. Job stress has negative influence on job satisfaction thus determine turnover. The lesser the job stress the higher the possibility of millennial employees not to quit (Price, 2001). Routinization is another job characteristic which can also cause stress due to jobs being repetitive and lack of variety. Of all technological variables standardization, mechanization, continuous process and routinization, routinization stands out as a factor which contributes to retention of employees (Price, 1997). The main belief among many employees is that routinization increases turnover by its negative effect on job satisfaction. The job schedules in the hospitals could cause discontent and desire to quit. Thomas and Tymon (2009) discuss four components of intrinsic motivation; meaningfulness, progress, choice, and competence. The feeling of meaningfulness occur when a person believes their work is worth their time and energy; the purpose they are pursuing matters to them. Progress involves a person's sense that a task is moving forward and that their activities are accomplishing it. A sense of choice occurs when a person feels free to choose activities and perform them in ways that seem appropriate – they are able to use their judgment and act on their understanding of the job. Competence involves feeling skilful in performing one's job. This shows that autonomy, skills variety, tasks significance and task identity are important job characteristics which influence retention of millennial employees.

This research examined the extent to which job characteristics influence retention of millennial employees in private hospitals in Bomet and Kericho Counties. Job characteristics such as those that maximize skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback were examined. Some roles can be 'customized' to meet the needs of particular individuals. Thuo (2006) asserts that if work environment does not motivate and create conditions for job satisfaction many millennial employees prefer to leave their current employer for another one which they perceive as better. Appropriate job characteristics which enhance retention of millennial employees were studied.

NTV reporter James Smart (2012, September 11, 4:00PM Breaking News) reports that over 350 nurses of Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital demanded improvement of their work environment. Their job characteristics created dissatisfaction. This destabilized the hospital employees and made them loose their loyalty to their employer. The *Daily Nation* (2012, September 10) reports that the Medics Union (doctors' union) demanded implementation of the Musyimi Task Force report that recommended improved working conditions and facilities for doctors. This showed the doctors discontent with their working conditions because their job characteristics entailed working in uncomfortable situations. They also demanded salary increment because of the strenuous job characteristics which surrounds their job.

### **Problem Statement**

In Kenya, a research by Ndeti *et al.* (2008) on incentive for health worker retention points out that internal migration of health workers in Kenya from rural to urban areas is as serious a problem as international migration. This necessitated incentives to recruit and retain personnel in hospitals. HRH – Annual Report – Kenya (2010) indicates that critical shortage of key health staff across regions, cadres and sub-sectors made their retention necessary. In the report the health policy makers and managers frequently highlighted retention as a major human resource challenge in Kenya with little empirical evidence to support their concerns.

Tenwek Hospital, in its Annual Report (2010) admits that they lost 40 nurses and some clinicians to the government under Structural Economic Stimulus Programme (SESP). This created shortages in many departments causing increased workload, shortages of staff, inadequate counselling time, reduced efficiency and effectiveness and frequent staff redeployments. The foregoing background information shows that there is need to retain millennial health workers in Kenyan hospitals which currently are affected by high turnover. In order to achieve this, the study assessed the socio-technical determinants of retention of millennial employees in private hospitals in Bomet and Kericho Counties. Ghosh and Sahaney (2010) note that in any organizational retention problem, socio-technical factors are at play. The research therefore sought to determine how job characteristics influence the retention of millennial employees in private hospitals in Bomet and Kericho Counties.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The study was confined to a representative sample of private hospitals instead of the whole population. The nature of the hospital work posed a challenge and the author had to take more time waiting for the appropriate time when the respondents were available to fill the questionnaires and participate in the interviews. The attitude of the respondents and limited sources of information were delimited by assuring the informants of the confidentiality of their responses. The research explored areas hitherto unfamiliar to researchers in this country; hence the author had to look outside the country for information on retention of millennial employees in hospitals.

### **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

This study adopted descriptive survey design. It includes surveys and fact finding inquiries of different kinds (Kothari, 2009). It was appropriate because it was used to collect data about variables of subjects as they are found in a social system describing the state of affairs as they exist at present. This study targeted private hospitals in Bomet and Kericho Counties which had a total population of 1196 employees. A comprehensive, correct, reliable and appropriate list of all hospital staff was prepared (Kothari, 2009). This was used to select a sample of the target population because a researcher rarely has direct access to the entire population of interest in social science research. A representative sample of the hospital staff was studied. The sample size considered costs of the research and parameters of interest (socio-technical factors). A sample of 359 respondents from a population of 1196 employees in private hospitals in Bomet and Kericho Counties was studied.

Stratified, simple random and purposive sampling procedures were used. The population was stratified into a number of non-overlapping strata. The stratification was done in the selected hospitals in to departments and sections. Later either simple random or purposive techniques were used to select the respondents. Simple random techniques were used to select hospital employees to respond to the questionnaire. Purposive sampling procedures were used with administrators, doctors and supervisors who were few to answer the questions in the interview guide. Identified methodological triangulation that involves the use of more than one method to gather data, such as interview guide, documents analysis and questionnaires was used. The questionnaires which were given to the

sampled hospital employees were corroborated with the information given by the hospital management concerning similar issues. As such, interview schedules and document analysis were used along with the questionnaires. Once the data collection instruments had been administered, the mass of raw data collected was systematically organized in a manner that facilitated analysis (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999). Qualitative data was analyzed descriptively in form of frequency counts and percentages. Karl Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was computed to establish the level of significance between specific independent variables and the dependent variable.

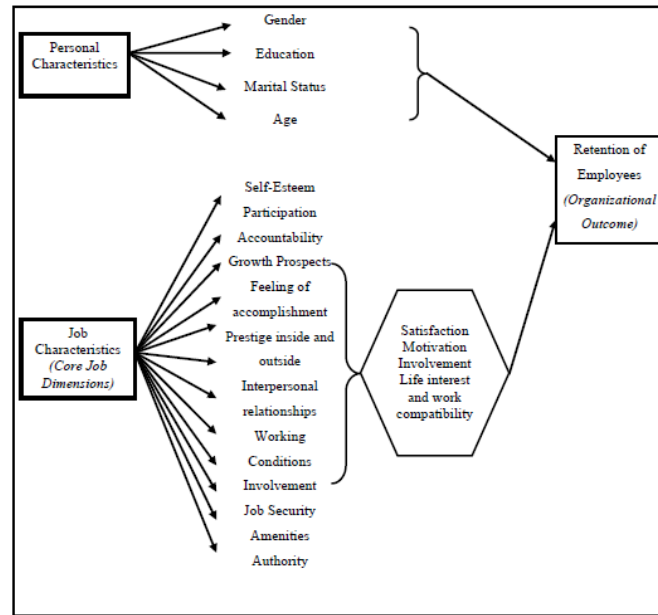
Relationships and predictions among variables are best determined using multiple regression technique and therefore a regression analysis was computed to predict the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable. All data was analyzed using Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0 computer software package. This ensured accuracy of the information and saved time. Analyzed data was presented by the use of charts, graphs, tables, figures and percentages.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

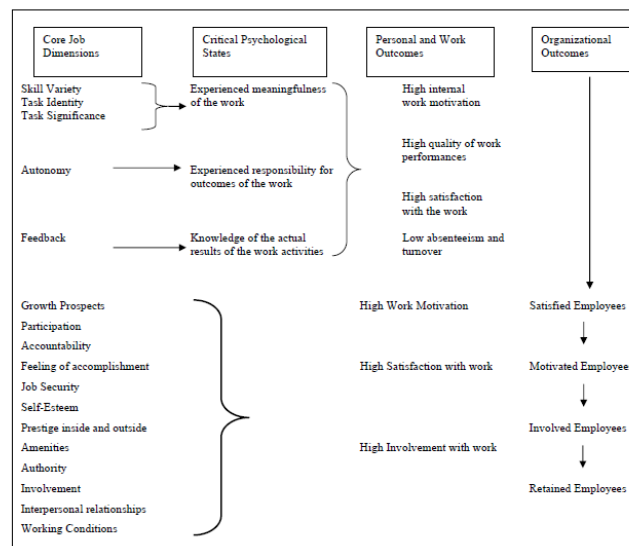
Respondents' opinions on the extent to which job characteristics affected employee retention were measured using a descending five-point Likert scale in which five (5) and one (1) represented 'very large extent' and 'low extent' respectively. A majority of the respondents, 74.7% (239), ranked their ability to control the way they do their jobs at their work places on a low extent scale while 25.3% (81) indicated that they could, to a moderate extent, control the way they performed their duties at their respective work places. A high percentage, 94.1% (301), of the respondents, to a low extent, indicated strongly that the feedback they received from their supervisors concerning their job did not interest them and therefore did not motivate them to continue working in their respective work places. This supports the views of Thomas and Tymon (2009) that manager's support is the building blocks of intrinsic motivation from intrinsic rewards given to employees. These feelings reinforce and energize self-management efforts and make work personally fulfilling and create an upward spiral of positive feelings and experiences. Relevant feedback concerning millennial employees' jobs therefore influences their retention.

A greater proportion, 70.3% (225), were to a very large extent of the opinion that the importance of their respective duties to the people they served made them choose to continue working in their respective work places. This shows that jobs of great significance to the hospital clients make millennial employees to continue working in their current organizations. Other 14.7% (47) respondents were to a large extent of the same opinion while 15% (48) only agreed to this assertion, to a moderate extent. A majority of the respondents, 31.1% (100) and 62.2% (199) were to a very large extent and to a large extent respectively, of the opinion that the nature of the jobs they performed in their respective departments were stressful and made them feel like leaving their work stations for other places. This supports Price (1997) views that of all the technological variables, standardization, mechanization, continuous process and routinization, routinization stand out as a factor which contributes to retention of employees. The main belief among many employees is that routinization increases turnover by its negative effect on job satisfaction. The repetitive nature of the hospital jobs therefore made millennial employees' work stressful in the hospitals under study. Only 6.6% (21) held the opinion that the jobs in their departments were stressful and that made them desire to leave their work stations for other places to a moderate extent.

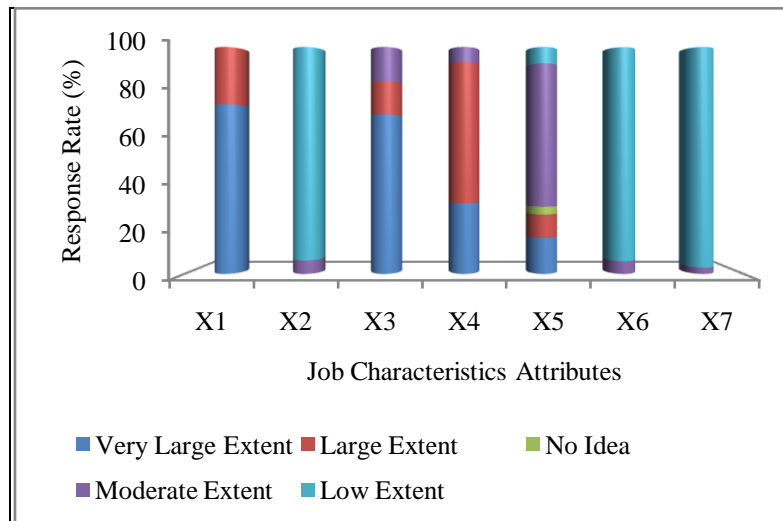
The attribute on job characteristics that tested respondents' opinions on whether or not the nature of their work required them to utilize several skills had varied responses that were recorded in various extents on the Likert scale. At least 15.9% (51) of the respondents, to very large extent, affirmed this attribute, 10.3% (33) to a large extent, 3.4% (11) were undecided, 7.2% (23) to a low extent, while a majority of them, 63.2% (202), affirmed this attribute to a moderate extent. The findings show that millennial employee's jobs in the hospitals under study did not fully utilize the variety of skills which they possessed. This made them desire to leave their current organizations. Some 5.6% (18) respondents were to a moderate extent in agreement with the fact that their work is organized in a way that they could receive credit for their work. A majority of them 94.4% (302) were to a low extent, in agreement with this assertion. Finally, 2.8% (9) were to moderate extent, of the opinion that following the same work routine made them desire to continue working in their respective places while a majority of them, 97.2% (311) were of the opinion, but to a low extent. These findings are illustrated in Figure 3.



**Figure 2: Basic Model Employee Retention**



**Figure 1: The modified Hackman and Oldham's job characteristics model**



**Figure 3: Job characteristics and employee retention**

Where:

$X_1$  is I can control the way I do my job in the hospital,  $X_2$ ; The feedback I get concerning my job makes me feel good and desire to continue working in the hospital,  $X_3$ ; the importance of my work to the people I serve makes me choose to work in this hospital,  $X_4$ ; the nature of the jobs performed in my department are stressful and make me feel like leaving my current employer for another,  $X_5$ ; the nature of work in the hospital requires me to utilize several skills,  $X_6$ ; my work is organized in a way that I can personally receive credit for the work I do,  $X_7$ ; following the same work routine makes me desire to continue working in this hospital

The hypothesis used to test the relationship between job characteristics and employee retention stated that: there is no significant relationship between job characteristics and retention of millennial employees in Bomet and Kericho Counties. Further, a Karl Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was computed using a two tailed test at 0.01 significance level. This was meant to establish the level of correlation between job characteristics and retention of the millennial employees. The results of this computation were as tabulated in Table 1.

**Table 1: Correlation Analysis Results between Job Characteristics and Employee Retention**

Interpersonal relationship	Employee	Employee Retention
$X_1$ I can control the way I do my job in the hospital	Pearson Correlation	.678**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001
	N	320
$X_2$ The feedback I get concerning my job makes me feel good and desire to continue working in the hospital	Pearson Correlation	.753**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	320
$X_3$ The importance of my work to the people I serve makes me choose to work in this hospital	Pearson Correlation	.783**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003
	N	320
$X_4$ The nature of the jobs performed in my department are stressful and make me feel	Pearson Correlation	.868**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000



like leaving my current employer for another	N	320
X <sub>5</sub> The nature of work in the hospital requires me to utilize several skills	Pearson Correlation	.691**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003
	N	320
X <sub>6</sub> My work is organized in a way that I can personally receive credit for the work I do	Pearson Correlation	.741**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	320
X <sub>7</sub> Following the same work routine makes me desire to continue working in this hospital	Pearson Correlation	.651**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results indicate that the calculated p-values for all the job characteristics variables were less than the level of significance of 0.01. The r-values ranged from 0.651 to 0.868. All the r- values were therefore above 0.500 and this shows there is a strong correlation between job characteristics and retention of millennial employees in private hospitals in Bomet and Kericho Counties. Out of the seven (7) factors studied four stood out with high correlation above 0.751. The factor with the highest correlation of 0.868 is the stressful nature of the jobs performed by employees in their departments which make them desire to leave their employer for another. The other factors which reported high correlation above 0.700 were; the importance of employees' work to the people served which made them choose to continue working in the hospital with 'r' value of 0.783 and the feedback received by employees concerning their job which did not motivate them to continue working in their respective work places with 'r' value of 0.753. The organization of the work in a way which does not make an employee to receive credit personally for the work they do had 'r' value of 0.741.

The other factors which reported similar results that support the evidence are the nature of the work in the hospital which does not require the employees to utilize several skills (r-0.691), employees cannot control the way they do their work (r-0.678) and following of the same work routine which make them not to desire to continue working in their current stations (r-0.651). The 'r' values implies that there is a significant relationship between job characteristics and retention of millennial employees at their work places. Hence, the null hypothesis was therefore rejected and the alternative hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between job characteristics and retention of millennial employees in Bomet and Kericho Counties adopted.

These findings are in line with findings obtained by Price (2001) that indicated that job stress has negative influence on job satisfaction thus determines turnover. The lesser the job stress the higher the possibility of millennial employees not to quit. Price (1997) also observed that routinization is a job characteristic which can also cause stress due to jobs being repetitive and lack of variety. Of all technological variables standardization, mechanization, continuous process and routinization, routinization stands out as a factor which contributes to retention of employees. The main belief among many employees is that routinization increases turnover by its negative effect on job satisfaction. The job schedules in the hospitals could cause discontent and desire to quit. Overall, there exists a positive correlation between job characteristics and millennial employee retention in private hospitals.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study has shown that there is a significant relationship between job characteristics and retention of millennial employees at their work places. Of all technological variables standardization, mechanization, continuous process and routinization, routinization stands out as a factor which contributes to retention of employees. The main belief among many employees is that routinization increases turnover by its negative effect on job satisfaction. The job schedules in the hospitals could cause discontent and desire to quit. It is therefore recommended that the hospital management should strive to increase retention of millennial employees by transforming its typical environments through re-designing of jobs to enable them receive relevant feedback, credit for their work and reduce stress. The hospitals should also develop appropriate reward systems which values high performance, utilize flexible work schedules and care for millennial employees in order to enhance their retention.

## REFERENCES

- Amstrong, M. (2009). *Handbook of Human resource Management Practice*. London & Philadelphia: Kogan Page.
- Bevan, S., Barber, L., & Robinson, D. (1997). *Keeping the best: a practical guide to retaining key employees*. Brighton: Institute for Employment Research.
- Bhatnagar, J. (2007). Talent management strategy of employee engagement in Indian ITES employees: Key to retention. *Employee Relations*, 29(6), 640-63.
- Deloitte – Survey (2007). Generation Y. Moving with the times. Retrieved from Ghosh, K., & Sahney, S. (2010). Impact of socio-technical system on managerial retention. *Journal of Modelling in Management*, 16(1), 2011.
- Griffeth, R. W., Hom, P. W., & Gaertner, S. (2000). A meta-analysis of antecedents and correlates of employee turnover: Update, moderator tests, and research implications for the next millennium. *Journal of Management*, 26(3), 463-488.
- Gupta, S. S. (2012, October). *Retention Models*. <http://www.jiit.ac.in/uploads/Ph.D.20Santoshi20Sen.pdf> Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup>, 2012.
- Hackman, J. R., & Oldham, G. R. (1976). Motivation through the design of work: Test of a theory. *Organizational Behaviour and Human Performance*, 16, 250-279.
- Holbeche, L. (2003). *Aligning HR and Business Strategy*. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Kothari, C. R. (2009). *Research Methodology: Methods and Techniques* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New Delhi: New Age International Publishers.
- Mobley, W. H., Griffeth, R. W., Hand, H. H., & Meglino, B. M. (1979). Review and conceptual analysis of the employee turnover Process. *Psychological Bulletin*, 8(6), 493-522.
- Mugenda, O. M., & Mugenda, A. G. (1999). *Research Methods: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*. Nairobi: Acts Press.
- National Human Resource for Health (2010). Annual Report. Nairobi: Government Printers.
- Ndeti, D. M., Khasakhala, L., & Omollo, J. O. (2008). *Incentives for health worker retention: An assessment of current practice*. Africa Mental Health Foundation (AMHF): Institute of Policy Analysis & Research (IPAR): Kenya.
- Price, J. L. (2001). Reflections on the determinants of voluntary turnover. *International Journal of Manpower*, 22, 600-624.
- Price, J. L. (1997). *The Study of Turnover*. Iowa State: University Press Ames, IA.
- Smart, J. (2012). Breaking News: NTV Monday, September 10<sup>th</sup> 2012, 4 PM
- Tenwek Hospital Annual Report (2010). *Message from the Chief Executive Officer*. Tenwek Hospital.
- Thomas, K. W., & Tymon, W. G. Jr (2009). *Work Engagement Profile*. CPP, Mountain View, CA.
- Thuo, N. (2006). Staff Retention. In *KIM Management Magazine*, November-December 2006 issue: Nairobi.