

Staff Retention Strategies: A Survey of Private Universities in Former Central Province, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

The relationship between strategic management and human resource management involves more than just the administration of human resource programs or activities. Done well, strategies in human resource management provides a useful focus that energizes and moves the organization towards its mission, goals and ultimate successful running of an organization through integrated strategies designed to increase employee productivity. However, the use of strategies in human resource management is not as widespread as one may expect. As a result, many organizations are faced with the challenge of staff retention caused by high movement of staff to organizations that are more receptive to change. Kenyan Institutions of Higher Learning (Universities) experience the problem of retaining their academic staff, and those who seem to settle down seek part-time teaching either inside or outside their Universities. This study aimed to examine staff retention strategies with a focus on private Universities in the former Central province. The objectives of the study were to establish the causes of high staff turnover amongst the members of academic staff in Kenyan private Universities and to identify the strategies that could be used to enhance staff retention in these institutions. The total population of the study was 216 members of staff. The research employed simple random sampling technique to arrive at a sample size of 140 respondents and one human resource representative in each of the Universities. The response rate was 64.2%. Data was collected by use of questionnaires and interview and was processed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The findings indicated that there was high movement of academic staff in the private universities and that majority of the academic staff engaged in other income generating activities such as moonlighting. The findings also indicated that there was a positive correlation of the independent variables to the dependent variable. The results of the study are significant for theory, policy and practice. University managers should try to understand and employ strategic human resource management practices which are likely to enhance staff retention in order to retain desirable competencies, build future capacity and cut down on costs.