DOES EMPLOYEE WORK LIFE POLICIES AND EMPOWERMENT STRATEGIES DRIVE EMPLOYEE COMMITMENT? KENYAN PERSPECTIVE, SYNERGY APPROACH

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ABSTRACT: *Employees with strong organizational commitment are emotionally attached to the organization and have a strong desire to contribute significantly towards organizational success. The importance of individual commitment to the bottom line of the organization is highly essential for improved performance, higher employee loyalty, increased satisfaction and customer satisfaction. The purpose of this study was to analyse the effects of employee work life and empowerment strategies on employee commitment. The study employed a case study research design that was conducted at Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital. The target population was three thousand two hundred (3200) respondents targeted because the group was highly affected by commitment issues in the organisation. A sample size of 340 employees ware extracted from the target population and the sampling techniques used were stratified sampling for the departments working in and simple random sampling for the individual respondents. Data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (Software).The cronbach's alpha reliability obtained was 0.623. Multiple regression analyses were used to test the hypotheses. Exploratory factor analysis, specifically principal component analysis was conducted to reduce the variables to a manageable size regression analysis was performed to test the hypothesized relationships. Based on the observed correlation results, work life/policies was the strongest predictor of employee commitment ($\beta = 0.300$, $t=5.670$, $p< 0.01$), followed by employee empowerment ($\beta = 0.154$, $t=2.820$, $p<0.01$), the findings indicated that there was a significant positive correlation between employee work life policies strategy and affective commitment ($r=0.317$, $p<0.01$); normative commitment ($r=0.329$, $p<0.01$); and continuance commitment ($r=0.328$, $p<0.01$) the study also established that there was a significant positive correlation between employee empowerment and affective commitment ($r=0.186$, $p<0.01$); normative commitment ($r=0.194$, $p<0.01$); and continuance commitment ($r=0.188$, $p<0.01$). The study recommends that MTRH lays down proper structures for enhancing employee commitment since as seen from the study employee work life and empowerment drives employee commitment.*

KEYWORDS: Employee Commitment, Strategies, and Commitment

INTRODUCTION

From a managerial perspective, the attraction and retention of high-quality employees is more important today than ever before. The problem of staff retention is a global one which affects both developing and industrialized countries. Retention is a critical element of an organization's approach to talent management which involves integrating strategies or systems to increase productivity (Lockwood, 2006). The changing labour market has brought about an unprecedented labour turnover. According to Cappelli (2000) strategic poaching of competitor organisation's key employees has become an acceptable practice among employers today. In

the changing world of work; Lee (2001) argues that the psychological contract between employer and employee has changed fundamentally and long term commitment to an organisation is no longer guaranteed by either party. The main reason for the failure to retain these talented employees can be attributed to the inability of organisations to apply correct retention strategies in addressing the problem of retention and turnover.

The issue of employee commitment in contemporary organisations has become so dynamic that managers have to appraise and re-appraise their retentions strategies on an on-going basis. According to Czakan (2005), retention variables used to attain employee commitment in the past may no longer be appropriate to motivate talented employees to remain competitive thereby increasing the rate of turnover.A study conducted by the Centre for Health Policy at the University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa, in April, 2005 estimated vacancy rates for nurses in public hospitals and clinics in the Limpopo Province at 22.6% and 26.5%, respectively. Ponn- Kekana, Blaauw, Tint, Monareng and Chege (2005) report that a high percentage of nurses working in public hospitals in South Africa are demotivated and already considering quitting their jobs.

In order to succeed in attracting and retaining talented employees, Kenyan Hospitals including MTRH have to consider the needs of their organisations and those of the individuals, as well as the environment in which they operate. According to Schalkwijk (2000), organisations have to develop strategic reward programmes that incorporate pay and employee benefits as well as consideration for the individual employee's personal growth and development. These represent some of the personal needs and career aspirations of employees which must be considered by employers in order to retain and motivate them to help in achieving organisational goals. Dess, Lumpkin and Eisner (2008) concur that productive employees place professional development and personal enrichment (financial and otherwise) above an organisation's commitment. These arguments are consistent with the positions of Mengel (2001) and Davidson (2001) who listed critical factors to employee commitment to include career growth opportunities, learning and development, exciting and challenging work, a good boss, fair pay and benefits, and recognition for work well done. One of the challenges faced by the managers of human resources in MTRH today lies in the development and retention of competent employees. Czakan (2005) alludes to this assertion in submitting that the core of the problem remains the strategic imperative to attract and retain talented employees who will make the difference in service delivery and profit maximisation.

The above discussion has provided a background to the problem of employee commitment among public sector hospitals including those in South African, and the challenges posed to employers. Managers are therefore saddled with the responsibility of addressing the problem through the designing and implementation of appropriate retention strategies that are capable of enhancing employee commitment to a manageable proportion. therefore the is twofold in addressing the issue as follows:

    a) Examine the extent to which employee work/life policies affect employee commitment.

    b) Establish the extent to which employee empowerment affects employee commitment.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Concept of Employee Commitment

Employee commitment is a concept that has been the subject of numerous studies (Meyer *et al.*, 2001; Moon, 2000; Meyer and Allen, 1997; Cohen, 1993; Mathieu and Farr, 1991; Meyer *et al.,* 1993; Morrow and McElroy, 1986; Mueller *et al.,* 1992). It does not necessarily conform to a universal definition or means of measurement (Meyer *et al.*, 2001). Furthermore, other concepts, similar or connected, may arise to cloud the understanding of organizational commitment. Certain authors therefore warn against reducing commitment to terms such as "motivation" or "attitude" (Brown, 1996; Scholl 1981), suggesting rather that commitment influences the behavior of individuals' independently of their personal motivation and interests. As a result of this, organizational commitment implies a major professional loyalties as well as a deep identification, (Steinhaus *et al.*, 1996).Moreover, based on other literature, the concept of organizational commitment should be very reliable as a way of measuring human behavior in organizational groups; more so in any case than other theoretical constructs such as job satisfaction or job involvement, Jae Moon (2000). Crewson (1997) furthermore presents a precise, clear definition of organizational commitment, which he analyzes as being an individual identification with an involvement in an organization. Organizational commitment has been generally defined as the degree that an individual in an organization accepts, internalizes, and views his/her role (Hunt and Morgan, 1994). The process of becoming committed to an organization involves internalizing the values and goals of the organization, a willingness to help the organization achieve its goals, and the desire to remain part of the organization, (Hunt and Morgan, 1994; Mowday, *et al.,* 1982).

Organizational commitment has been operationally stated as "Multidimensional in nature, involving an employee's loyalty to the organization, willingness to extent effort on behalf of the organization, degree of goal and value congruency with the organization and desire to maintain membership". (Mowday, *et al.*, 1979) identified commitment–related attitudes and commitment related behaviors.

Since the concept of organizational commitment was defined by (Mowday *et al*., 1982 as "….the relative strength of an individual's identification with the involvement in a particular organization". It has attracted its fair share of that skeptic about its distinguish ability from other behavioral constructs. According to (Meyer and Allen, 1997), the concept of organizational commitment is a construct distinguishable from other familiar concepts such as job satisfaction, job involvement, career salience, occupational commitment, turnover intentions, workgroup attachment and protestant work ethics (Cohen, 1993; Mathieu and Farr, 1991; Meyer *et al.,* 1993; Morrow and McElroy, 1986; Mueller *et al.,* 1992). Apart from being a distinguishable construct, organizational commitment contributes unequally to the prediction of important outcomes variables such as performance and withdrawal behaviors, (Mathieu *et al*., 1990; Meyer*.,* 1993; Tell *et al*., 1993).

Workplace Commitment

Commitment is central to the understanding of both human motivation and system maintenance which is an indicator of a learning organization. Workplace commitment generally reflected through generating energy and activating the human mind, and optimum utilization of human capital towards better performance. It is also an important element of work behaviours and behavioural intentions (Lease, 1998) and a multifaceted construct consisting of three aspects

such as affective, continuance, and normative. The affective commitment can reflect an attitude that focuses on employees' attachment to their organization and their emotional acceptance of its values and goals which can be termed as internal commitment. Continuance commitment corresponds to external commitment and reflected through material benefits and rewards to be gained by employees (Argyris, 1998), whereas normative commitment is a sense of loyalty to the organization. Each and every facet of workplace commitment serves a useful purpose in the workplace as employees internalize the values and norms of the organization and accepting its gains and losses as their own. Workplace commitment is consisting of organizational commitment, individual commitment, and possible outcomes of workplace commitment

Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment is the measure of strength of the employee's identification with the goals and values of the organization (Mowday *et al.,* 1982). It involves both organizational and supervisory commitment and is directed by organizational attributes such as values and human behavior at work (Morrow & McElroy ,1986). Supervisory commitment is defined as the strength of identification with the supervisor and the internalization of the supervisor's values.

Components of Organizational Commitment

According to Allen and Meyer (1996), they proposed that three determinants of OC, is the emotional belongingness to their organization (Affective Commitment), the feeling of obligation to remain with the employer (Normative Commitment) and the cost associated with leaving the organization (Continuance Commitment). Affective commitment refers to the employee's emotional attachment to and involvement in the organization and its goals. It results from the fact that the employee wants retain the relationship with the organization. Continuance commitment is calculative and exchange based in nature and refers to the costs associated with leaving the organization. It makes the individuals to feel that they have to stay in the relationship, because leaving would cost too much like sacrificing pensions, status, and seniority etc., or because they perceive few employment alternatives exist elsewhere. Normative commitment refers to an employee's desire to stay with the organization based on a sense of duty, loyalty, or obligation. This study makes use of the Allen and Meyer's three determinants of organizational commitment measuring i.e, Affective, Continuance, and Normative commitment.
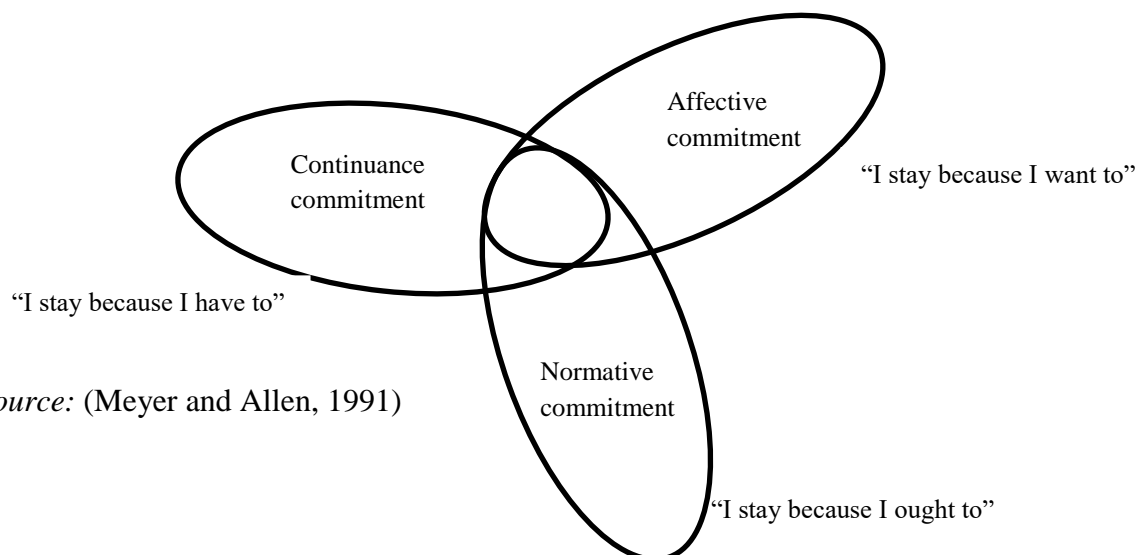
Source: (Meyer and Allen, 1991)

Indicators of Workplace Commitment

In the competitive environment, most of the organizations have successfully developed, executed, evaluated, refined and perused employee empowerment and improvement as a prime human resource practice with business value (Kandula, 2004). So an employee empowerment and involvement organization starts with the concept of strategic fit between people, tasks, technology, information processes, rewards and organization structure for which all must be in alignment before the organization can work efficiently.

Employee involvement can also result from providing employees with the skills necessary for decision making, problem solving, shared leadership and overall understanding of the business. The indicators of workplace commitment are the possible results derived from organizational and individual commitment. Employees with strong organizational commitment are emotionally attached to the organization and have strong desire to contribute significantly towards organizational success. This leads to increased competitiveness, accountability, risk taking, highly innovativeness, low wastage, and the desire to improve overall job performance. Higher degree of organizational commitment is associated with lower rate of turnover and absenteeism, and improved organizational effectiveness (Camp, 1993). Individuals who are more committed are highly motivated and will experience lower level of occupational stress, less emotional exhaustion and depersonalization (Jamal, 1990). Moreover, increased individual commitment and commitment to work groups or teams improves team performance, interpersonal interaction and group cohesion, and enhances individual performance and degree of satisfaction.

Work Life Policies and Organizational Commitment

Time pressure is a serious problem in today's workforce, with ever increasing number of workers bearing major responsibilities at home and meeting higher job expectations and heavier demands at work (Glass *et al*., 2002; Van der liper 2007). A mismatch between family and work roles can be disadvantageous for both employees and employers. Flexible schedules have been reported as having beneficial effects on job dedication and organizational commitment (Muse *et al.,* 2008). Work life policies have focused on intact nuclear families and largely ignored other household structures even though these are becoming increasingly prevalent (Casper *et al.,* 2007).

Other organizations introduce work life policies aimed primarily at employees with a family (Young, 1999). Previous studies have reported that this organizational focus leads to feelings of exclusion and unfairness among single employees and employees without children (Grandey, 2009). Work life policies have been reported by Pare *et al.,* 2001) to minimally influence affective commitment and strongly affecting continuance commitment. Grover and Grooker (1995) empirically tested the effects of work and family benefits on organizational commitment. The benefit included parental leave, flexible schedule, child care assistance and child care information. The employees who had access to work/life policies showed high significance on organizational commitment and express significantly lower intentions to quit their jobs. Because of the lock in effects employees are forced to focus more on work than on their families. Thus may not make for a committed employee.

Work/ life policies have been hailed by the popular press as the method for amending the conflict between working and raising families. Friedan (2001) recognizes work and family policies as positive for employers as a means of attracting and retaining a dedicated work force.

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Pare' *et al.,* (2001) defines these as, "work/life policies corresponding to work conditions provided by organizations to take into account the needs of conflict between work and family issues".

Work/life policies include flexible work scheduling (e.g. part-time work, job sharing, variable starting and quitting times), family leave policies allowing periods away from work for employees to take care of family matters, and child care assistance (Grover, and Crooker, 1995). The duo empirically tested the effects of work/life and family benefits on organizational commitment, and the benefits included; parental leave, flexible schedules, childcare assistance, and childcare information. Employees who had access to work/life policies showed significantly greater organizational commitment and expressed lower intention to quit their job.

In a society filled with conflicting responsibilities, commitment work/life balance has become a predominant issue. Various factors contribute to the interest in work/life balance. They are global competition, renewed interests and global force. When the work load is given beyond the bearable limit, it could affect the family. Naturally, the family members are driven to think that organization are overtaxing them and thus having a direct impact on employees' retention. Organizations/employers need to be more flexible, small gestures like allowing employees/parents to attend to their children's functions would improve loyalty and extended employment.

Employee Empowerment and Organization Commitment

Business organizations in competitive environment are facing major challenges like fast pace of changing technology, acute shortage of skilled manpower and obsolescence of products and services which arte compelling for reorienting of existing employees in order to survive and compete. A highly dedicated and committed workforce is essential for achieving organizational goals (Locke *et al.,* 1990). Psychologically empowered employees feel competent and confident to influence their job and work environment in a meaningfully way, they are likely to be proactive and innovative, (Boudrias *et al.*, 2009). The constant pressure on management to reduce costs and increase on productivity is possibly only through satisfied and committed work force. Kirkman *et al.*, (1999),asserts, the performance outcomes of empowerment practices are high on productivity and proactive and superior answer service, while the attitudinal outcomes comprise of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, team commitment and individual commitment.

A satisfied and committed employee is a valuable asset to the organization. Such an employee is psychologically attached to his job and less likely to leave the organization, (Kuo *et al.*, 2009) and thus makes greater contribution for the success of the organization. The basic objective of empowerment is redistribution of power between management and employee most commonly in the form of increasing employee authority, responsibility and influencing commitment (Greasley *et al.,* 2004). Individuals feel empowered when they perceive and possess power to adequately cope with events, situation or people they confront, (Conger *et al.*, 1988).

According to Thomas *et al.*, (1990), an employee feels empowered due to a meaningful job, gaining confidence to perform the task, degree of autonomy in decision making and perceives that the job autonomy is considered as significantly and positively related to organizational commitment and performance (Dewettinck *et al.,* 2006). Both work redesign and

empowerment generate positive and direct influence on employee's commitment (Kuo *et al.,* 2009).

According to Bramhar, (1994), a sense of commitment can be developed in employees through the process of de-layering and empowerment. Empowered employees has resulted to higher job satisfaction (Carless, 2004; Seibert *et al*., 2004; Aryee *et al*., 2006), higher level of commitment has been examined as a determinant of job performance and organizational citizenship behavior, (Meyer *et al.*, 2004).

In a general perspective, empowerment is delegating the power or decision and action to the employees and giving more responsibility and authority to complete their tasks (Yasarf *et al.,* 2010). It means that employees have sufficient authority to determine how they perform their tasks. In a broader view, empowerment includes involvement of employees in goal setting, decision-making and motivational techniques and enabling employees to work in a participative environment, (Osborn, 2002). It is because they are more motivated and committed to the organizational operations. Hummayoun Naeem *et al.,* (2010), employee empowerment can create sense of belonging and ownership towards the current organization. Studies have identified lack of job dissatisfaction, Moore, (2002) and low level of empowerment, (Baudrias *et al.,* 2009) and low levels of support from superiors (Hatton and Emerson, 1998), may lead to turnover, (Salman *et al.,* 2010). (Huselid and Becker, 2000) found that human resource policies play a strategic role in employee retention through stimulating skilled labor. It should also focus at gaining more self-governance to the employee to avoid turnover and job burnout, Salman *et al*., 2010).The goal setting process that involves employee can enhance employee empowerment as employee considers himself more empowered knowing his/her job, (Stanfield *et al.,* 2006). Empowered employees tend to be more confident and try to give their best to their employer because they are given more authority in decision making process (Hummayoun *et al.,* 2010).

According to the researchers; (Ripley *et al.,* 1992), and (Spatz 2000), employee empowerment will bring the followings: increase employees' trust and commitment; increase motivational level to reduce mistakes and individuals take more responsibility for their own actions; provide a forum through which employees can express their beliefs and innovative ideas about day-to-day activities; assist the continuous improvement of processes, products, and services; increase employee loyalty, while at the same time reducing turnover, absenteeism, and illness; increase productivity by increasing employee pride, self-respect, and self-worth; use peer pressure and self-managing team methods for employee control and productivity; increase the bottom line by such methods as reducing waste and building quality, while meeting customer requirements; maintain and increase competitiveness and achieve long-term competitiveness with an ever increasing market share; increase trust and cooperation with management; increase communication among employees and divisions; enable employees to identify & solve problems so that they can improve their own performance; increase organizational commitment and organizational effectiveness; and build a healthy organizational climate and culture.

Proactive management practices promotes an organizational climate that is supportive, respectful and trusting of employees and where individual contributions are highly recognized are more likely to facilitate empowerment than only delegation of authority (Eisenberger *et al*., 1990). The various facets of empowerment (Busche *et al*. 1996), which are complimentary to workplace commitment includes firstly, Choicefulness where Most of the employees appreciate the ability to exercise some degree of choice in their day to day work life. Secondly

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is Effort where Self-efficacy and a sense of empowerment will arise when one believes that the more effort given to assigned work, the more successful he will be in achieving the outcomes. Thirdly Impact where the facet of impact exists for employees when they can have impact on the organization that is when they are able to accomplish the tasks they have set out for them and disempowered when they cannot. The fourth includes self-system control which involves the feeling like strong performance will translate into benefits or rewards, employees will feel empowered. The fifth is Meaningfulness where people feel more empowered the more meaningful the rewards they receive for their efforts. The fifth one is Universal Justice that occurs when people are rewarded for their effort, regardless of outcomes; a form of empowerment call universal justice is present.

Employees' empowerment is a process of giving authority to the employees to make necessary important decisions on their own about their day to day activities (Hass, 2010). In order to expedite the process of providing quick services to the customers, it is inevitable for the employees to take quick corrective actions so as to save the precious time of customers. If cases are procrastinated, the organization may lose many of its customers. Empowered employees are expected to perform their work more effectively and efficiently than non-empowered employees. The importance of employees' empowerment in service industry like banking industry cannot be condoned. The results of different empowerment studies conducted in different settings are inconsistent. For example, (Sharma and Bhatnagar, 2009) conducted his study in India and concluded that some of the empowerment dimensions were positively related to organizational commitment and some other dimensions were negatively or not related to organizational commitment, Similarly (Chen *et al*.,2008) conducted study in Taiwan and found an inconsistence relationship between empowerment and organizational commitment; some dimensions of empowerment were negatively correlated to organizational commitment while some others positively or not correlated to organizational commitment .

METHODOLOGY

Survey research design was employed in this study to investigate effect of retention strategies on employee commitment probability sampling design A sample of 320 employees study target population was 3200 employees(Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003) Structured questionnaires were presented to the selected population in the hospital who were the respondents for the study data was done using descriptive statistics specifically mean and standard deviation. Inferential statistics were Pearson correlation coefficient and multiple regression analysis The multiple regression analysis model.

RESULTS

Response Rate

The sample population consisted of Administrators, Section Heads, and the Other employees drawn from the Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital. A total of 340 questionnaires were distributed to 10 administrators, 30 section heads and 300 to other employees. As shown in Table 4.1, the overall response rate to the questionnaire was 93.4% (299 respondents). A total of 5 questionnaires were discarded for lack of response and being improperly filled.

Table 4.1:   Distribution of Respondents Response

Sample size	Administrators		Section Heads		Other Employees	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total sample size	10	100	30	100	300	100
Total responses	8	80	27	90	264	88.0
Total unusable	1	10	1	3.3	3	1.07
Total usable response	7	70	26	86.7	261	87.0
Description of unusable questionnaires						
Returned blank		1		0		1
Incomplete questionnaire		0		1		2

Source: Survey Data (2013)

The researcher ended up with 294 (86.5%) usable questionnaires. This response rate was deemed acceptable since according to (Fowler, 2002), while there is no agreed-upon minimum response rate, the more the responses received; the more likely it is that statistically significant conclusions about the target population will be drawn.

Work Life Policies and Employee Commitment

Research objective three set out to examine the extent to which employee work/life policies affect employee commitment. Work life policies were conceptualized to have direct effects on employee commitment. Consequently, work life policies were measured using four items. Respondents were asked to respond to items related to work life policies. Responses were elicited on a five point scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

Results presented in Table 4.4 depict that most of the employees don't view their work as influencing their personal lives. Respondents tended to agree that their work schedule is not in conflict with their personal life (M=3.52, SD = 1.208); that their job does not affect their roles as spouses or parents (M=3.60, SD=1.267); and that their job does not negatively impact on their personal life (M=4.11, SD = 1.242). Besides, the Skewness and Kurtosis statistics provide evidence of normally distributed responses.

Table 4.4: Descriptive Data on Prevailing Status of Work Life Policies

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness Statistic	Std. Error	Kurtosis Statistic	Std. Error
Employees feel that work is not too much	3.47	1.204	-.579	.143	-.647	.285
Employees work schedule is not in conflict with their personal life	3.52	1.208	-.592	.143	-.687	.285
The job does not affect the employees role as a spouse or parent	3.60	1.267	-.700	.143	-.583	.285
The job does not have a negative impact on employees personal life	4.11	1.242	-1.344	.143	.698	.285

Source: Survey Data (2013)

These results imply that respondents are contended with the prevailing work life policy. The nature of their work is such that they do not feel any pressure in terms of their family responsibilities. These findings are essential for employee commitment and lend support to prior findings that point to the importance of organizational culture in predicting organizational commitment (Lok *et al.*, 2001).

The finding in this study that work/life policies in the hospital correlate positively with employee commitment is consistent with several other findings. According to (Friedan 2001) work and family policies act as positive incentives for employers to attract and retain a dedicated work force. On the other hand, (Grover *et al.,*1995) found out those employees who had access to favorable work life policies showed significantly greater organizational commitment and expressed lower intentions to quit their jobs. Supporting these views,(Muse *et al.,* 2008) reported that flexible schedules which form part of employee work life policies have a direct influence on employee job dedication. Besides, the effect of work life policies is further demonstrated by (Young,1999) when noting that although some organizations tended to introduce work life policies for employees with families; this never went down well with other employees. (Parker *et al.,* 2001) concurred that such an act could result in an increase in turn-over intentions and lack of job commitment among employees.

Employee Empowerment and Employee Commitment

The fourth and final objective of this study was to establish the extent to which employee empowerment affects employee commitment. As a result, five items were proposed to measure employee empowerment. Only three of the five items were extracted and used to measure the prevailing status of employee empowerment in the Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital. Respondents were required to indicate their level of agreement with presented items on whether or not the hospital empowers the employees. Once again, responses were elicited on a 5-point scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

Results presented in Table 4.5 indicate that participating respondents were satisfied with the prevailing status of employee empowerment in hospital. They tended to agree that they have the opportunity to determine how to do their jobs (M=3.59, SD=1.215); that their work makes good use of employees skills and duties (M-4.43, SD=0.663); and that employees make decisions about new ideas when doing their duties (M=4.08, SD=0.992). Their responses were also found to be normally distributed.

Table 4.5: Descriptive Data on Prevailing Status of Employee Empowerment

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness Statistic	Std. Error	Kurtosis Statistic	Std. Error
Employees have the opportunity to determine how to do their job	3.59	1.215	-.832	.143	-.207	.285
The work makes good use of employees skills and duties	4.43	.663	-1.182	.143	1.930	.285
Employees make decisions about new ideas when doing their duties	4.08	.992	-1.187	.143	1.070	.285

Source: Survey Data (2013)

These findings regarding prevailing status of employee empowerment imply that the Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital as an organization values an empowered and committed workforce for effective functioning. This is consistent with prior findings that empowerment is an intrinsic motivation that involves positively valued experiences essential for generating organizational commitment (Singh, 2005). In essence, the employees consider themselves as having freedom, autonomy and discretion, feel personally connected to the organization, and feel confident about own abilities and capability of having an impact on the organization.

The results showing that employee empowerment is likely to lead to high levels of commitment supports findings by other scholars (Boudrias, *et al.*, 2009). According to these studies, psychologically empowered employees feel competent and confident and are likely to be proactive and innovative. These findings further concur with the findings by (Kirkman *et al.*, 1999) who found out that the performance outcomes of empowerment practices are high on productivity and proactive and superior services. Adding to these findings, (Mullins *et al.*, 1991) pointed out that empowered employee had a greater sense of job satisfaction, motivation and organizational loyalty. Consequently, empowerment could further be viewed as an antecedent to job autonomy which is considered as significantly and positively related to organizational commitment (Westman, 1992; Brown *et al.*, 1994).

Prevailing Level of Employee Commitment at the Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital

Employee commitment was conceptualized as the dependent variable in the present study. Fourteen items were proposed to measure employee commitment. However, principal components analysis extracted ten items that were used to analyze the Hospital's prevailing levels of employee commitment. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with suggested items regarding employee commitment.

Responses were elicited on a 5-point scale with responses ranging from 1 = strongly disagree, to 5 = strongly agree. The descriptive data presented in Table 4.17 depict on overall a committed workforce. The mean response to all the items was approximately 4.0 showing agreement with all the items. More particularly, respondents tended to agree to the following. That staying at the hospital is a matter of employee necessity (M=3.73, SD=1.154); that it is difficult for employees to leave the hospital (M=4.11, SD=0.885); that employees have few options to leave the hospital (M=4.01, SD = 0.879); that employees have an emotional attachment to the organization (M= 4.10, SD = 0.881); that employees would feel guilty if they were to leave the hospital (M = 4.04, SD = 0.872); that employees own the hospitals problems (M=4.03, SD = 0.89); that employees have a strong sense of belonging to the hospital (M= 3.97, SD = 0.935) that employees feel obligated to remain with the hospital (M=4.01, SD = 0.894); that the hospital deserves employees loyalty (M= 3.97, SD = 1.313) and that employees are happy to spend the rest of their careers with the hospital (M = 3.86, SD = 1.327).

Table 4.6: Descriptive Data on Prevailing Level of Employee Commitment

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness Statistic	Std. Error	Kurtosis Statistic	Std. Error
Staying at the organization is a matter of employees' necessity	3.73	1.154	-.890	.143	.069	.285
It is difficult for employees to leave the organization	4.11	.885	-1.365	.143	2.341	.285

Employees have few options to leave the organization	4.01	.879	-1.026	.143	1.226	.285
Employees have an emotional attachment to the organization	4.10	.881	-1.423	.143	2.687	.285
Employees feel guilty if they leave the organization	4.04	.872	-1.061	.143	1.226	.285
Employees own organizations' problems	4.03	.890	-1.029	.143	1.140	.285
Employees have a strong sense of belonging to their organization	3.97	.935	-1.128	.143	1.329	.285
Employees feel an obligation to remain with the organization	4.01	.894	-1.046	.143	1.149	.285
The organization deserves employees' loyalty	3.97	1.313	-1.243	.143	.304	.285
Employees are happy to spend the rest of their career in the organization	3.86	1.327	-.919	.143	-.367	.285

Source: Survey Data (2013)

These results imply that most of the Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital's employees depict a high level of commitment. Given that the study also found out that the respondents tended to be happy with the prevailing status of training and development, work life policies, and employee empowerment, the study therefore postulated that employee commitment at the hospital could be modeled as a function of these variables.

Correlation statistics

Correlations between Employee Empowerment and Employee Commitment

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Employee Commitment	1				
2. Training and development	.186**	1			
3. Compensation	.194**	.966**	1		
4. work\life policies	.188**	.990**	.975**	1	
4. Empowerment	.231**	123**	112**	178**	1

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

Source: Survey Data (2013)

As shown from the Table 4.16, results indicate that there was a significant positive correlation between employee empowerment and training and development (r=0.186, p<0.01); Compensation (r=0.194, p<0.01); work\life policies (r=0.188, p<0.01); Empowerment (r=0.231, p<0.01). This implies that the perceived empowerment of employees by the hospital was likely to impact positively on their commitment to the hospital.

Multiple regression Model

The multiple regression results for predicting employee commitment are presented in Table 4.18, findings showed that 20.7% of the variance in employee commitment was explained by employee compensation, training and development, employee empowerment and work life policies (R^2 squared = 0.24). As expected based on the observed correlation results, work/ life policies was the strongest predictor of employee commitment ($\beta = 0.300$, t=5.670, p< 0.01), followed by employee empowerment ($\beta = 0.154$, t=2.820, p<0.01), employee compensation ($\beta = 0.172$, p<0.01), and training and development ($\beta = 0.134$, p<0.05).

The results show that a 1% increase in work/ life policies was likely to result in a 0.3% in employee commitment, similarly, a 1% increase in employee empowerment was likely to lead to a 0.154% increase in employee commitment, a 1% increase in employee compensation could result in a 0.172% increase in employee commitment, and finally, a 1% improvement in employee training and development could result in a 0.134% increase in employee commitment.

Multi-collinearity Diagnostics

Multi-collinearity occurs when a single independent variable is highly correlated with a set of other independent variables. Consequently multi-collinearity significantly affects not only the predictive ability of regression models, but also the estimation of regression coefficients and their statistical significance tests. Multi-collinearity was assessed using variance inflation factor (VIF). According to Hair *et al.,* (2006) a common threshold is a tolerance value of 0.10 which corresponds to a VIF value of 10. Implying that there is no threat of multi-collinearity when tolerance is upto 0.10 or VIF is below 10. The researcher chose a VIF threshold limit of 10.

The tolerance values for the independent variables were 0.662, 0.686, 0.963 and 0.900 respectively. The corresponding VIF values were 1.511, 1.457, 1.038 and 1.111 respectively. These values indicated that each of the retention strategies made a significant unique contribution to the prediction of employee commitment.

The findings regarding the contributions of the independent variables to employee commitment lends support to the findings by (Meyer *et al*, 1997) that researchers ought to consider the strength of all three forms of commitment together rather than to assign a specific "type" of commitment to an individual.

Multiple Regression Results for Employee Commitment Model

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	4.443	0.4		11.107	0		
Compensation	0.307	0.114	0.172	2.703	0.007	0.662	1.511
Training and Development	0.233	0.109	0.134	2.143	0.033	0.686	1.457
Work life policies	0.427	0.075	0.301	5.67	0	0.963	1.038
Employee Empowerment	0.263	0.093	0.154	2.82	0.005	0.9	1.111

Multiple R	0.490
R2	0.240

a) Predictors:(Constant), Employee Empowerment and Work life policies ,

b) Dependent Variable: Employee Commitment

Source: Survey Data (2013)

CONCLUSIONS

The current study sought to investigate the effects of employee retention strategies on employee commitment in the case of MTRH. Consequently, on the basis of the findings highlighted above, the following conclusions were made.

Use of employee compensation in the hospital as an employee retention strategy has a direct effect on employee commitment. However, the hospital does not seem to have put proper structures to address employee compensation. This could have negative consequences for the hospital when trying to retain its employees since employee compensation directly affects both affective, normative and continuance commitment. In underscoring the importance of training and development of employees in its operations, the hospital proactively engages training and development as a strategy by providing opportunities for skills related training and development. This is useful considering that training and development has a direct effect on affective, normative and continuance commitment and hence could have potential to make employees to stay longer with the hospital. The work/ life policies strategy appears to be effectively used in the hospital. Most employees appear satisfied with the hospital's work life policies. This augers quite well for the hospital since work/life policies were found to correlate positively with employee commitment. The hospital also applies the employee empowerment strategy by letting employees be in charge of their work. Given that employee empowerment correlates positively with commitment, the hospital seems to have committed employees.

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