

# Relationship between Job Satisfaction and Employee Turnover Intentions among Employees of Public Universities

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## ABSTRACT

Globally, universities enhance economic productivity through teaching, research and outreach. Despite this contribution, retention of competent employees has become more challenging to managers of universities in Kenya as is indicated by a previous study that university academic and non-academic staff turnover is 12% and 11% respectively; which is way above the acceptable 5% for the functional staff. Whereas studies show that turnover is influenced by job satisfaction (JS), findings show inconclusive and contradictory results. The study sought to establish the relationship between job satisfaction and employee turnover intentions. Out of a population of 4,986 comprising academic and non-academic staff, a sample of 372 was drawn determined by Yamane's formula. Study results were: job satisfaction had a significant  $R^2 = .769$  ( $P = .000$ ) indicating that it accounts for 76.9 % variance in turnover intentions. Job satisfaction elements namely recognition ( $\beta = -.372$ ,  $p = .000$ ); sense of achievement ( $\beta = .096$ ,  $p = .081$ ); job advancement opportunity ( $\beta = -.316$ ,  $p = .000$ ); growth and promotional opportunities ( $\beta = -.187$ ,  $p = .004$ ); responsibility ( $\beta = -.958$ ,  $p = .000$ ). The level of JS indicated by recognition, sense of achievement, job advancement opportunity, growth and promotional opportunities and responsibility was low and this led to high levels of turnover intentions. It is recommended that the public universities' efforts on job satisfaction be increased because high levels of job satisfaction decreases turnover intentions.

**Keywords:** Relationship, Job satisfaction, Employee turnover intentions, public universities

## INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary world, universities are faced with complex challenges Frese and Fay (2000). With

increasing pressure of globalization, technology, international competition, changing employment relationships and increasing workforce diversity, universities these days are facing several problems, with many of them struggling for survival. According to Frese and Fay (2000), "The major expenditure that most universities are facing is the cost of labor in the form of employees that are highly qualified, innovative and competitive for long run success of the organization".

Employee turnover occurs when employees leave their jobs and must be replaced. Replacing exiting employees is costly to organizations and destructive to service delivery. It is therefore imperative for management to reduce, to the minimum, the frequency at which employees, particularly those that are crucial to its operations leave. Therefore the concern of any organization is not only to attract the best talents or skills but also to manage employee retention.

Retention is a voluntary move by an organization to create an environment which engages employees for long term (Chaminade, 2007). The main purpose of retention is to prevent the loss of competent employees from the organization as this could have adverse effect on productivity and service delivery. However, retention of high performing employees has become more challenging for managers as this category of employees frequently move from one job to another since they are being attracted by more than one organization at a time. Hendricks (2006); notes that employees with scarce skills are in great demand and are becoming difficult to source. When these categories of employees are eventually sourced, they become even more difficult to retain not only in the public sector but also in the private sector. The private sector managers admit that one of the most difficult aspects of their jobs is the retention of key employees in their organizations (Litheko, 2008). Most of the time when these employees move, they migrate to competing organizations with the knowledge and trade

secrets acquired from their former employers thereby creating an even more critical situation for the latter (Abassi and Hollman, 2000). Empirical studies such as Stovel and Bontis (2002) have shown that employees, on average switch employers every six years. This situation demands that management should identify the reason/s for this frequent change of employment by employees. Once this reason/s has been identified, management can then devise retention strategies that will help in keeping essential employees for a rather longer tenure. Theoretical arguments link job dissatisfaction to turnover intention and subsequent turnover. Despite the expected benefits of employee retention for longer tenure, no study has established the status of all job satisfiers namely (Level of recognition, sense of achievement, opportunity for advancement, growth & promotional opportunities and level of responsibility) and their joint relationship with turnover intention.

Empirically, findings of investigations into the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intentions are inconclusive. On one hand, research has shown that employees achieve job satisfaction when their psychological needs are invoked through the existence of sufficient motivators (satisfiers). For instance, (Accenture 2001; Miller and Wheeler 1992; Blau, 1964; Morris and Quarles 2004; Delaney & Huselid, 1996; Shahzad *et al.*, 2008; Teseema & Soeters, 2006; and Billah (2009) found significant negative relationship between promotional opportunities and intention to leave. Kwenin *et al.*, (2013) found that job satisfaction and favorable human resource policies have positive link with retention. On the other hand, studies on relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intentions have differed. Fairris (2004) found that there is no relationship between promotional opportunities and intention to leave and argued that employee promotion is actually associated with high turnover. Joarder *et al.*, (2011) also found that employees' opportunity for promotion has less impact on faculty turnover decision. While on the contrary, the study by Billah (2009) found that promotion opportunity is most significantly correlated to employees' turnover decision. Moreover, Dysvik and Kuvaas (2010) noted that when assessed jointly, intrinsic motivation was the strongest predictor of turnover intention. In other words, intrinsic motivational factors were identified as being responsible for a larger impact on employee turnover. A majority of these studies covered manufacturing firms in the West, East particularly China, Parkistan, Taiwan, United Kingdom and USA.

It is noted from the studies above that there exists inconclusive and contradictory results particularly in relation to job satisfaction intrinsic motivational factors such as promotional opportunities and recognition. It has therefore remained unclear the

reasons for the inconclusive findings and contradictory results.

Globally, employee turnover has been a challenge to most organizations. Workforce turnover presents a dilemma to all companies around the world. Some estimate that the cost of losing and replacing a single employee can equal more than twice that employee's salary, with costs increasing further based on the departing employee's seniority. Ramlall (2003) estimates the cost of employee turnover as 150% of an individual employee's annual salary. This cost can be substantial especially when high profile employees or high number of employees is involved. Workforce challenges vary by industry, location, and other differentiating factors, but rising employee turnover rates affect virtually all employers. For example, Millennials, who now make up the majority of the workforce in USA, change jobs more frequently than previous generations. Compdata Surveys & Consulting in their latest survey done in March 2018 tracked turnover rates from more than 30,000 US employers. Alarming, within the last seven years alone, voluntary turnover has risen steadily across all industries, increasing from 9.1% to a whopping 13.5% since 2010. That represents a 48% increase in voluntary turnover, clearly indicating the fact that employees are now in the driver's seat in today's highly competitive labor market. Gallup estimates Millennial turnover costs the US economy \$30.5 billion a year. According to Compdata Surveys & Consulting, Tech companies (software, not hardware) had the most turnover in 2017 with a 13.2% rate. Retail-a historically high-churn sector follows closely behind at 13.0%, while media/entertainment (11.4%), professional services (11.4%), and government/education/nonprofit (11.2%) round out the top five. Over the last few years, these sectors have consistently seen the highest turnover rates.

Locally, employee turnover has its fair share of challenges both in private and public sectors, manufacturing and services industries. This study is being undertaken within the context of Kenyan public universities. Kenya gained independence from the British colonialists in 1963. By independence, it had one university college (University College of Nairobi) which was affiliated to the University of East Africa. It became a fully-fledged University in 1970. From one public university, there are currently thirty one public universities and thirty three private universities. Universities, whether public or private, are training grounds for students undertaking various comprehensive courses in order to translate theory into practice (Adeniji, 2011). For an academic institution, its most talented and highly skilled employees are the faculties. Committed and competent faculties are valuable to an institution because they can ensure that good education is being delivered to the clients (i.e.

students). This is important because it increases the reputation of the institutions, which in turn lead to the successful future of not only the institution, but also the students and overall economy (Echevarria, 2009). However, retaining talented faculties is not easy, especially in the current economic conditions, whereby all academic institutions are competing for faculties at the global level. For example, a university in the USA, International Journal of Economic Perspectives ISSN 1307-1637 © International Economic Society <http://www.econ-society.org>. University of Wisconsin-Madison, reported in 2016 that they are able to retain only 77 percent of the faculty members who were offered a job elsewhere (Brown, 2016). The demand for highly talented and skilled faculty has enhanced their mobility (Ng'ethe *et al.*, 2012). According to Blazer, (2006) it has been found that about 20% of faculty members leave the job after three years and about 30% of them leave the profession after five years. The problem of employee retention is even more significant for the public universities. The public universities are facing harsh competitions from the private universities

#### **Objective of the Study**

The study sought to establish the relationship between job satisfaction and employee turnover intentions among employees of public universities in Kenya.

#### **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

##### **Research Design**

The study adopted a cross-sectional survey type of correlation design. Correlation is aimed at determining nature, degree and direction of relationships. The design tested hypotheses and met the objectives of the study. Survey was viewed as being suited for such research (Sekaran 2006

). The approach is effective in handling research which needs information from different people and there is convenience of comparison. Survey is also important where the purpose of the study is to determine the extent to which variables relate to each other (Nachmias & Nachmias 2008) and provides both logical inferences.

The beginning of a research is the specification of research paradigm after defining the topic of concern. Research paradigm is a broad view or perspective of a study (Taylor *et al.*, 2006) or patterns of beliefs and practices that regulate inquiry within a discipline by providing lenses, frames and processes through which investigations is accomplished (Weaver and Olson, 2006). Dill and Romiszowski (1997) advanced the importance of research paradigm. They highlighted its functions as those of defining how the world works, how knowledge is extracted from this world and how one is to think, write, and talk about this knowledge and; defining the type of questions to be asked and the methodologies to be used in answering them. They also argued that a paradigm structures the world of the academic worker and provides its meaning and its

significance. The study used both quantitative and qualitative methodology and a positivist approach. This was due to the belief that research focuses on facts, examines causality and fundamental laws and then simplifies elements (Armstrong 2009). Positivism is referred to phenomenology because it can address a wide range of situations at the same time it may be relevant to policy decisions if statistical data is aggregated in large samples (Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 1991). The quantitative paradigm is also in tandem with the main purpose of the study (Creswell 2014), which is to investigate the relationship between job satisfaction, and employee turnover intentions in public universities of western Kenya. The use of a mixed method design that involves both quantitative and qualitative approaches will enrich the study and more particularly considering that the two variables (job satisfaction and employee turnover intentions) are behavioural in nature.

#### **Sample and Venue**

The study was conducted in 5 public universities in western Kenya region. Western Kenya region comprises 8 Counties namely: Kisumu, Siaya, Kakamega, Migori, Homabay, Vihiga, Busia and Bungoma formerly Western and Nyanza provinces, located at (0°30'N 34°40'N). It covers 20013.4 kms<sup>2</sup> with a population of 9,792,196 (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics 1999) There are 5 public universities in western Kenya region namely: Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Technology, Kibabi University, Maseno University, Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology and Rongo University. In the recent past, public universities in Kenya have continued to experience increasing employee turnover rates. According to Republic of Kenya National Bureau of Statistics in 2014, public universities in Kenya have experienced a 12% turnover of employees with Western Kenya region leading. This is considered high based on the recommendation by International Centre for Human Development at below 2%. The total study population consisted of employees of public universities in western Kenya region. The 5 public universities in western Kenya have a total employee population of 4,986 Stratified random sampling was used to obtain a sample from each university. This was done by first getting the population of academic and non-academic staff of each university. Using proportional allocation to determine the number of staff per stratum per university, a total of 142 academic staff and 230 non-academic staff were sampled. There after simple random sampling was used to select respondents. Simple random sampling is that method of drawing a portion or sample of a population so that each member of the population has an equal chance of being elected (Wolhuter *et al.*, 2003:26). Stratified random sampling facilitates achievement of the desired representation of various sub groups within a population of distinct categories of different sizes (Mugenda 2008).

### Data Collection Instruments

This study used a structured questionnaire designed to reflect employee attitudes and perceptions towards their level of job satisfaction and turnover intentions. The instrument was adapted from Rusbult *et al.*, (1988) and Saunders *et al.*, (1992) for job satisfaction and turnover intentions respectively. For this study, the items tapping the theoretical constructs were developed based on the literature review. Questionnaire items for the five job satisfaction constructs were scored along a five (5) point Lickert scale ranging from 1 = “strongly dissatisfied” to 5 = “very satisfied” with number (3) = “somewhat agree”. With respect to dependent variable (turnover intentions), respondents scored along a five (5) point Lickert scale ranging from 1= “strongly disagree” to 5 = “strongly agree” with number (3) being “somewhat agree”. Keeping the original format, higher scores on the scale suggest high perception levels of job satisfaction. The questionnaire captured the main study items and was used to obtain the primary data from the sample. Lickert scales were used because they communicate interval properties to respondents and therefore produce data that can be assumed to be interval scaled (Madsen, 1989). A five point scale was considered sufficient and used throughout because reliability is not enhanced in any way by higher resolution scales (Forker *et al.*, 1997). Further, an interview schedule was used to collect qualitative primary data in the form of narrations. Secondary data was collected through review of existing documented information.

### Piloting

To achieve reliability, Masinde Muliro University of Technology was randomly selected for pilot study. Convenient sampling was used to select 10 respondents comprising of four academic and six non-academic staff. (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2013). Isaac and Michael (1995) suggested 10 – 30 participants for a pilot test. Piloting was important for the study in detecting possible flaws in the questionnaires. The reliability of the instruments was estimated after the pilot study using the Cronbach’s reliability coefficient (Cronbach 1951), which is a measure of internal consistency. According to George and Mallery (2003), an instrument that has more than .70 Cronbach’s Alpha is considered to be very reliable given the high internal consistency. No rule was used to determine the number of respondents used (Melopdy and Herzberg, (2008). However care was taken to isolate the respondents selected for participation in the pilot test. Questionnaires were personally administered to the selected pilot test respondents upon introduction and collected immediately upon completion or depending on the respondent’s wish. The respondents who wished to complete the questionnaire later were allowed two or three days to ensure that they did not forget. Interpretation was given to the respondents

where it was required or requested. Upon collection of the filled questionnaires, they were inspected for completeness then coded for processing using SPSS. Data generated from the pilot study revealed that all the employees were married and that Five employees were within the age bracket of (31-40) One within (41-50), Two within (26-30), One within (18-25) and the remaining One was within the bracket of over 50. The analysis also revealed that Eight had achieved university education while two had achieved Tertiary College level. Six of them had attained between 10-15 years of experience, Three had attained between 5-10 years while only One had attained between 0- 4 years of experience.

### Data Collection Procedures

The data collection instruments were printed out and packed and a letter of introduction was obtained. Identification and training of five research assistants was done. A pre-visit to the five public universities purposely to identify any significant challenges that might arise as well as to declare intention to serve the research instruments and to prior identify the respondents was done. The research assistants personally administered the data collection instrument accompanied by a letter of introduction to the respondents. Most questionnaire forms were collected immediately they were completely filled by the respondents. However, some respondents had wished that they be collected later. These respondents were given a week to complete filling the forms.

### Data Analysis Procedure

Data was prepared or analysed by editing, coding, categorizing and recording in the numerical order of objectives (Churchil & Lacabucci, 2004; Sekaran and Bougie, 2009). The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24.0 was used to process and analyse data. Hypotheses were tested at 5% level of significance ( $p = 0.05$ ) whereby null hypothesis with a  $p$ -value that was  $< 0.05$  was rejected while one whose  $p$ -value was  $> 0.05$  was accepted. Qualitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics whereas quantitative data was analysed using inferential statistics. This approach was deemed appropriate since descriptive methods tend to be stronger in validity but weak in reliability whereas inferential statistics tend to be stronger in reliability but weak in validity (Kibwage 2002, Odondo *et al.*, 2007). Moreover Bubbie (1986) indicates that the use of both methods aids the researcher in gaining a higher degree of reliability and validity. Descriptive statistics involved the computation of frequency distribution, mean, and standard deviation was used to summarize the data so as to indicate their explanatory capacity.

## RESULTS

### Extent of job satisfaction among employees of public universities in western Kenya

Job satisfaction is the pleasurable feelings that an employee experiences as a result of the fulfillment of one's important job values. Job satisfaction represents the extent to which needs, desires and expectations that one brings to the job are met. The extent of job satisfaction was measured using 17 items on a summated scale ranging from (1) to (5) where (1) represents strongly dissatisfied, (5) represents very satisfied and (3) represents somewhat dissatisfied for five constructs namely: Level of recognition, sense of achievement, job advancement opportunity, Growth

deviation for the items is (1.281) with the least being 1.269 for the item "Because of dissatisfaction at work place I have often thought of quitting my job in the university" and the highest being 1.287 "I often dream about getting another job that will better suit my personal needs".

**Objective one: The relationship between job satisfaction and employee turnover intentions**

Research objective one sought to establish the

**Table 1: Model Summary<sup>b</sup>**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig.F Change	
1	.877 <sup>a</sup>	.769	.759	.27698	.769	1503.535	5	366	.000	1.58

a. Predictors: (Constant), Responsibility, Sense\_of\_achievement, Growth\_and\_promotional\_opportunities, Job advancement opportunity, Recognition

b. Dependent Variable: Turnover

and promotional opportunities and Level of responsibilities. The first 5 items measured level of recognition, followed by 4 items which measured sense of achievement, 2 items for job advancement opportunity, 3 items for growth and promotional opportunities and lastly 3 items on level of responsibilities.

The findings reveal that the level of job satisfaction in public universities in western Kenya is "low" in regard to recognition ( $\mu = 2.378$ ), sense of achievement ( $\mu = 2.85$ ), job advancement opportunity ( $\mu = 2.47$ ) and level of growth and promotional opportunities ( $\mu = 2.86$ ) but "high" in regard to level of responsibility ( $\mu = 3.60$ ), where: "Low" =  $\mu$  of 1.0 - 3.0 and "High" =  $\mu$  of 3.1 - 5.0. The overall mean score for all the 17 items on the level of job satisfaction was ( $\mu$ ) = 2.801 with a standard deviation (SD) of 1.383 indicating "low" levels of job satisfaction. The SD value of 1.383 indicates a wide variation implying polarity with the responses on the level of satisfaction; with 'annual bonuses given' being the least polarized (SD = 1.208) while 'the way reviews for promotions are done' being the most polarized (SD = 1.567). This implies that even though the means for all items indicate they were rated low ( $2.801 \leq \mu \leq 3.95$ ), the spread of the responses from the mean of each item were varied, implying that universities human resource management practices regarding job satisfaction are quite varied.

**Extent of turnover intentions among employees of public universities in western Kenya**

A total of five items were used to measure employee turnover intentions among public universities in western Kenya. The mean response score for all the items was 4.066 meaning they strongly agreed with the statements and implying very high turnover intentions should opportunity arise. Besides, the mean standard

relationship between job satisfaction and employee turnover intentions among the employees of public universities in Western Kenya region. The study conceptualized that turnover intentions is a function of job satisfaction motivators (recognition, sense of achievement, job advancement opportunity, growth and promotional opportunities and responsibility). The study conceptualized recognition to include timely, informal or formal acknowledgments, achievement as proud feeling when a worthwhile difficult task is accomplished, advancement opportunity as the upward trajectory of an individual's career while responsibility was conceptualised as the employees' responsiveness to complete the tasks as assigned.

The construct scores were estimated by obtaining the mean response score of all items per case under each construct. Thereafter, the mean value of the five constructs of job satisfaction (recognition, sense of achievement, job advancement opportunity, growth and promotional opportunities and responsibility) were used for regression against the mean value of turnover intentions.

Table 1 and 2 presents the results of the regression model. The results on table 1 shows that job satisfaction which is indicated by recognition, sense of achievement, job advancement opportunity, growth and promotional opportunities and responsibility has a very strong significant correlation ( $R = .877$ ).  $R^2 = .769$  and is also significant. Similarly, the adjusted  $R^2 = .759$  and is also significant. The shrinkage in this case is 0.010 (0.769 - 0.759) which is a negligible value confirming that the model is valid, has stability for prediction and predicts variance of employee turnover intentions at 76.9%.

Table 2 presents the analysis of the job satisfaction constructs. The constructs have beta standardized

coefficients and p values as follows: variable. Recognition ( $\beta = -.372, p < 0.05$ ); job advancement opportunity ( $\beta = -.316, p < 0.05$ ); growth and promotional opportunities ( $\beta = -.187, p < 0.05$ ) and responsibility ( $\beta = -.958, p < 0.05$ ) are significant and predictors of employee turnover intentions. Sense of achievement ( $\beta = .096, p > 0.05$ ) is however, insignificant in predicting employee turnover intentions. The implications of these results are that variations in individual motivators are likely to result in variations in employee turnover intentions. Further this might mean that different job satisfaction strategies embraced are likely to impact on employee turnover intentions with varied magnitude. The unstandardized and standardized beta coefficients of recognition, job advancement opportunity, growth and promotional opportunities and responsibility imply inverse relationship with turnover intentions since their coefficient values are negative. This means that a unit increase of each causes decrease in turnover intentions equivalent to respective coefficient value and vice versa. Therefore, a unit increase in recognition causes

support of the organization's goals and values, turnover intentions also increases.

Sense of achievement is the proud feeling of having done something difficult and worthwhile and is only prompted and reinforced by recognition. This perhaps explains why this study reveals that sense of achievement is an insignificant predictor of turnover intentions with beta standardized coefficient ( $\beta = .096, p = .081$ ). There may be no sense of achievement if the achievers are not recognized.

Job advancement opportunity refers to the upward trajectory of an individual's career. The results of this study suggests that if job advancement opportunities are reduced or if there is no clear upward career trajectory, turnover intentions increases. It further suggests that managers of universities should strive hard to create clear and transparent upward career trajectory paths for their employees, through a robust human resource policy; since career advancement is the big picture. In other words, it is what an individual

**Table 2: Analytic regression examining the relationship between job satisfaction and employee turnover intentions (Individual constructs)**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error			
			Beta		
(Constant)	2.729	.371		7.356	.000
Recognition	-.389	.070	-.372	-5.557	.000
Sense of achievement	.104	.059	.096	1.753	.081
1 Job advancement opportunity	-.273	.053	-.316	-5.148	.000
Growth & promotional opportunities	-.179	.061	-.187	-2.917	.004
Responsibility	-.875	.049	-.958	-17.892	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Turnover  
Source: Survey Data 2020

0.389 units decrease in turnover intentions while a unit increase in job advancement opportunity causes 0.273 units decrease in turnover intentions. A unit increase in growth and promotional opportunities and sense of responsibility causes 0.179 and 0.875 units decreases in turnover intentions respectively if others were to be held constant. However, a unit increase in sense of achievement causes insignificant change in employee turnover intentions.

**DISCUSSION**

Recognition is the timely, informal or formal acknowledgement of a person's or team's behavior, effort or business result that supports the organization's goals and values, and which has clearly been beyond normal expectations. This study results suggests that if management is not keen on providing timely, informal or formal acknowledgements for efforts made individually or by a team which are in

ultimately aspires to accomplish career wise. It is the dream and hence the hub that drives an employee to exceed his/her expectations and the fulcrum point that balances the employee's level of satisfaction. If managers stifle the realization of this dream in one way or the other, then it exponentially increases the propensity of turnover intentions. It includes more than getting promoted but encompasses an individual's experience, training etc. Research has shown that best performing organizations are those that have embraced job/career advancement policies which basically give an employee the opportunity to ascend to a higher position of responsibility. Job/career advancement is quite frankly, more tangible and therefore easier to identify with. This is probably so because whether you are new to the job market or an established professional seeking a different career, you will want to know your chances to move forward in an organization. If an employee knows that an

organization offers advancement opportunities, s/he might be more likely to think of that position as a long term prospect. Opportunities for advancement might also be considered as part of one's overall compensation. Having opportunities to advance in an organization could be more important to one than a higher initial salary or other perks. It makes one exhibit drive to succeed in his/her initial role and that s/he has the ambition to succeed in others.

While this study finding reveals a significant negative relationship between growth and promotional opportunities and turnover intentions; which is in concurrence with a number of studies, (Delery and Doty, 1996; Accenture 2001; Wheeler 1992; Blau, 1964; Morris and Quarles 2004; Delaney and Huselid, 1996; Shahzad *et al.*, 2008; Teseema & Soeters, 2006; Billah 2009; Irshad and Afridi 2010; Kwenin *et al.*, 2013; Luthans 2005; Santhapparaj and Alam 2005; Billah 2009; Irshad and Afridi 2010; Kwenin *et al.*, 2013; Luthans 2005; Santhapparaj and Alam 2005), it is in contrast with the finding by Joarder *et al.*, (2011) whose study revealed that employees' opportunity for promotion has less impact on faculty turnover decision. It is also in contrast with the study by Fairris (2004) who found the opposite result and argued that employee promotion is actually associated with high turnover. This can be explained by the context of the studies that varied considerably. This in essence may imply that indeed growth and promotional opportunities causes job satisfaction and may consequently cause a decrease in turnover intentions if used isolated to other satisfiers, while in some cases may not predict turnover intentions to a significant level. Another possible explanation to the contradiction is in the sampling approach used by these studies. The current study used stratified and simple random sampling methods and was robust in constructs for each variable while the earlier studies used single constructs of a variable of a sample.

Sense of responsibility refers to the responsibility of employees to complete the tasks they are assigned, to perform the duties required by their job, and to be present for their proper shifts in order to fulfill or further the goals of the organization. This study reveals that among the job satisfaction scales tested on a multiple regression model, sense of responsibility causes the greatest (-.957) decrease in turnover intentions for a unit increase of it. This means that it is the strongest predictor of turnover intentions for public universities in western Kenya. In other words, it is responsible for a larger impact on employee turnover. This simply suggests that job advancement opportunity is what the employees attach greatest importance to. This is probably so because responsibility position is embedded with power, authority and financial elevation

This further implies that the managers should give employees ownership of the work. They should minimize control but retain accountability in order for the employees to achieve their full sense of responsibility. The results further suggest that management of universities should cultivate a culture of responsibility among their employees because responsibility drives results. Responsible workers are more engaged and hold themselves accountable to deliver results. Responsible leaders create environments which cultivate high performance teams which in turn deliver results. Leaders who cultivate responsibility within their teams will see results in the form of more engaged team members actively looking for ways to deliver stronger results. Workplace responsibility as in executing your job duties or following human resource guidelines is important because it leads to a functioning business and a safe and compliant working environment.

The results further suggest that it is imperative for workers to take personal responsibility in their workplaces because it's a major component of one's personal character that gets tested every day. Every choice a worker makes shows the world an image of the kind of person the worker is. Over time those images layer together and the resulting composite is the worker's character as perceived by the others. How the worker shapes that character is up to him/her and s/he does it slowly over time through his/her thoughts and actions. When the worker's actions are guided by strong ethics, morals and beliefs the foundation is laid upon which strong personal character is built.

Doing your job and how you do it are two different things and personal responsibility is the differentiator. As a worker, fulfilling your job duties is one thing, but investing yourself in your work and holding yourself accountable to deliver your best results transforms the work you do and how your performance is perceived. Therefore this finding further suggests that a leader should make it a personal responsibility to connect with, motivate and inspire his/her team, to go extra mile and to lead by example. Holding yourself personally responsible to the highest of standards of leadership elevates your personal and professional results. Personal responsibility is the catalyst which transforms an average leader into a strong motivational force.

In conclusion to the analysis of the results of the job satisfaction constructs, whenever a university invests in matters of recognition, providing a clear and transparent upward career trajectory (job advancement opportunities), and in enhancement of growth and promotional opportunities as well as levels of responsibility to her employees, then there would be a reduction in turnover intentions.

These findings support theoretical arguments by Herzberg's two factor theory (1959), as also cited by Band, *et. al.*, (2016), which provides background

knowledge of what stifles motivation to perform well and what enhances it as well as the outcomes of both realms with the job task as the fulcrum point. He argues that if the task an employee performs is non-motivating then one of the outcomes is employee turnover which begins with employee intentions to quit. Herzberg for instance observes that recognition, sense of achievement, job advancement opportunity, growth and promotional opportunities and sense of responsibility are the motivating factors that would stably sustain employee satisfaction. He further argues that the factors are inherent to work. That these factors motivate the employees for a superior performance and that they are called satisfiers. The absence of any one of them causes dissatisfaction and consequently turnover intention.

The study findings further supports the argument by (Hausknecht, Hiller, & Vance, 2008; Lee *et al.*, 2008) that employees who have lower levels of job satisfaction and consequently are not committed to their organization have more tendencies to make mistakes in the job, tend to be absent, tend to experience stress and have more intention to quit the job. It is also in support of the study by Band, *et al.*, (2016), who asserts that motivational factors yield positive satisfaction.

Whereas a majority of the studies above were carried out on fragmented aspects of hygiene factors which symbolized psychological needs of individuals and a few job satisfaction aspects (motivators), this study was carried out using all the job satisfaction motivators and was found to explain job satisfaction. This gives more credibility to the results because the various aspects of job satisfaction often interact and play together in a practical situation. This is important as it would help organizations define their investment and budget appropriation levels on employee retention.

## CONCLUSIONS

From the findings, conclusions are that the level of job satisfaction is low among the employees of public universities in western Kenya. Likewise, public universities have not yet put sufficient emphasis on distributive and interactional justice. These two phenomenon explain the finding that public universities have very high propensity to employee turnover evidenced by its high levels of turnover intentions. Secondly, recognition, sense of achievement at work place, job advancement opportunity, growth and promotional opportunities and responsibility at work which are the key elements of job satisfaction indeed interact to reduce turnover intentions of public university employees.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Findings of this study have important implications for institutions of higher learning and practitioners. Based

on the findings the study has the following recommendations:

- i) The management of universities should invest in job satisfaction particularly putting more emphasis on sense of responsibility since it emerged as the greatest predictor of turnover intentions among the job satisfaction scales.
- ii) Most universities have encouraged enhanced education levels of their staff through provision of fee waiver. This has resulted into a majority of university employees attaining minimum first degree, but remaining in the same positions they were in before achievement. Consequently, the results indicate serious demoralization depicted in their low levels of satisfaction. This study therefore recommends that university management should strive hard to create clear and transparent upward career trajectory paths for their employees, through robust human resource policies; since career advancement is the big picture. In other words, it is what an individual ultimately aspires to accomplish career wise. It is the dream and hence the hub that drives an employee to exceed his/her expectations and the fulcrum of employee's level of satisfaction.
- iii) Thirdly this study recommends imperative responsibilities for both the management and the employee taking cognizant of the fact that the management are first of all also employees. Since it is important for the employees to hold themselves responsible for the work, the managers should give them sense of ownership of the work. They should minimize control but retain accountability in order for the employees to achieve their full sense of responsibility. They should cultivate a culture of responsibility among their employees because responsibility drives results.
- iv) Finally the management or a leader should make it a personal responsibility to connect with, motivate and inspire his/her team, to go extra mile and to lead by example. For the employees, the results further recommends that it is imperative for them to take personal responsibility in

their workplaces because it's a major component of one's personal character that gets tested every day. Every choice a worker makes shows the world an image of the kind of person the worker is. Over time those images layer together and the resulting composite is the worker's character as perceived by the others. Holding yourself personally responsible to the highest of standards of leadership elevates your personal and professional results.

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