



**SUCCESSION PLANNING PRACTICES AND EMPLOYEE RETENTION IN THE
INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION AND TECHNOLOGY AUTHORITY IN
NAIROBI KENYA**

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ABSTRACT

The study aim was to establish the effect of succession planning practices and employee retention at the Information, Communication and Technology Authority, Kenya. Specific objectives were to analyze the effect of rewards and benefits and Human Resource Planning on employee retention in the ICT Authority, Kenya. This study adopted a descriptive research design to enable the researcher reduce biases associated with qualitative research. The study targeted 259 staff of the ICTA. The study used the Taro Yamane formula arrive at the sample size of 189 respondents. The study collected primary data using questionnaires. Descriptive research design was adopted for this study. The descriptive research design enabled the researcher to reduce biases associated with qualitative research. This design was appropriate because it gave conclusive results among the research variables. Stratified random sampling design was applied to help in minimizing bias in sample selection. Structured questionnaires were used to collect primary data. Responses to statements provided in the questionnaires were rated using a Likert five-point scale. The researcher used descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution to analyze the data. The data was analyzed and tabulated with the help of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26. Data presentation was done by use of pie charts, frequency tables, and bar graphs. A regression and a multiple regression analysis to determine the relationship between succession planning factors and employees' retention was conducted. The determination of Coefficient of variation was undertaken to establish the relationship between independent variables and the dependent variable. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was also undertaken. The study investigated the impact of various factors on employee retention at ICT Authority. The findings revealed significant coefficients for each variable: rewards and benefits ($\beta = 0.314$, $p = 0.000$), and Human Resource management practices ($\beta = 0.417$, $p = 0.000$), with all variables positively influencing employee retention. This suggests that investing in these areas can enhance retention efforts within the organization. In conclusion, the study underscores the importance of rewards and benefits, and Human Resource management practices in fostering employee retention at ICT Authority. To improve retention outcomes, it is recommended that the organization focus on enhancing these areas, including competitive rewards and benefits packages and strategic Human Resource management practices tailored to the needs of employees.

Key Words: Succession Planning Practices, Employee Retention, Rewards And Benefits, Human Resource Planning, ICT Authority

Background of the Study

According to Kontoghiorghes, 2016 organizations are under increasing pressure to perform better than before in the challenging economic environment of globalization and fierce competition that exists in today's world. In order to develop and increase productivity, businesses are therefore urged to train their employees so that they can develop and enhance their productivity (Kontoghiorghes, 2016). Employees that are motivated and happy in their jobs are more likely to perform well therefore resulting to low turnover rate in the organization (Mary, Enyinna & Ezinne, 2015).

Perera and Edirisooriya, 2021 indicates that modern business organizations see succession planning as a critical employee retention strategy (Perera & Edirisooriya, 2021). Moreover, for improving the productivity of any organization employee retention is a crucial element. Organizations put their efforts to design attractive HR policies, for influencing and motivating employees to retain them. Therefore, succession planning practices can be considered the backbone of an organization toward employee retention (Lempaka, 2018).

Succession planning is a formal process designed by organizations to identify and develop their employees to bring them to leadership positions within the organizations. The primary objective is to develop appropriate and potential managers to fill vacant posts created by future immediate leaves of employees. Ultimately, it is directly related and contributes to making the employee retention rate better (Lempaka, 2018).

According to Okwakpam, 2019 succession planning as a process in which organizations can make sure that staff are being hired and constantly improve their skills to fill the competent key roles in the organization. Succession planning is a deliberate and systematic effort by an organization to ensure leadership continuity in key positions, retain and develop intellectual and knowledge capital for the future and encourage individual advancement (Okwakpam, 2019).

According to Hawkins, Reed and Kingsberry (2018) succession planning practices refer to the specific strategies and activities that organizations use to identify and develop internal talent for leadership positions. These practices include activities such as talent identification, training and development programs, career development planning, and mentorship opportunities. The implementation and effectiveness of these practices can vary between organizations (Peters-Hawkins et al, 2018).

As stated by Bleakley (2006) succession planning needs to be focused on senior management positions, starting from the top of the organization with particular attention paid to the CEO and or managing director and going to at least six or seven levels down this is to allow the inclusion of middle management positions (Bleakley 2006). It is doing all you can to have the right people in the right jobs at the right time (Hills, 2009). Succession planning is an activity that most firms would be quick to say is in place, however, it is widely known that succession planning efforts are all too often woefully underdeveloped, unevenly executed and sometimes simply ignored (Smither, 2016).

According to Abouraia and Othman (2017), the need to make the right choice(s) is what drives an organization's efforts in developing effective succession plans thus it is of utmost importance to organization so that any existing or ongoing projects are sustained even when personnel changes occur (Abouraia & Othman, 2017). Succession is just no longer about replacing executives, it comprises of strategic talent management in which a firm ensures that it has the global human capital to perpetually adapt, respond and succeed in an evolving business environment. It usually focuses on key talent pools regardless of leadership level whose performance makes the organizations effect in the market.

It is prudent to say that succession planning is one of the human resource management issues affecting the retention of employees in many organizations within the world. The term has been widely used before and given different approaches by the management dependent on specific organizations (Adebola, 2019). Organizations have greatly struggled with the challenge of retaining and attracting highly skilled and competent employees, as well as the right solution for addressing organizations concerns as to where the next generation of leaders will come from (Amankwaa & Anku-Tsede, 2015).

Researchers like Bano, Yasmeen & Omar, Siti Sarah & Ismail, Fadillah (2022) and Eugene Fibuch & Van Way III (2012) split the succession planning process into three main parts. The selection of candidates based on prior experience and the creation of a pool as the first part. The second element is the successor's responsibility, and the third element is changing management. According to a subsequent study by Owolabi and Adeosun (2021), succession planning management is the process of assessing the right talent at work with the aim of finding answers to the three key questions of the need for a potential successor to meet organizational long-term needs, the efficiency of the successor, and the need for the successor's appropriate skills and competency for the organization's future needs.

Some businesses confuse the terms "succession planning" and "replacement planning," and vice versa. In order for organizations to have personnel who can take over responsibility for crucial positions during emergencies, the definition of replacement planning is a process of identifying short-term or long-term backups (Rothwell 2011).

The search for employees for a shorter period, such as when they are ill or on vacation, is the focus of short-term replacements. Long-term replacement planning, on the other hand, identifies employees' back-ups for longer periods, such as when an employee leaves suddenly. In terms of risk management, replacement planning is essentially disaster planning (Rothwell 2010).

Most businesses concentrate their hiring efforts on finding replacement employees. Until they find the right candidate, replacement planning typically identifies one person from within the organization (Rothwell 2010). It is very obvious how succession planning differs from replacement. As a result, succession planning cannot be replaced by replacement planning. However, succession planning has gradually evolved into a procedure that can be used to find qualified candidates for open positions both now and in the future. Additionally, replacement planning is more eager to fill openings than succession planning, which aims to develop talent for the future. Finally, succession planning is more likely to include the active development of successors than replacement planning (Wiesman et al., 2016). While succession planning builds a talent pool, a replacement plan ensures the continuity of business operations and focuses on quickly filling the positions.

Statistics shows that the practice of succession planning in private organizations is more than in public organizations. According to Chicago-based outplacement firm Challenger, Gray & Christmas Inc. (2021), a near-record 4.3 million U.S. workers quit their jobs in December 2021, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, from January through November 2021, 1,231 CEOs left their posts, an increase of 1.1 percent over the 1,218 CEOs who did so through the same period in 2020. This trend shows that many employees are retiring as soon as they become eligible and employees of all ages are jumping ship after a rough period characterized by pandemic-related changes, having a succession plan is more important than ever.

A key component of Human resource planning is succession management which ensures organizational and institutional readiness, flexibility and responsiveness in delivery of services. Succession management involves two key activities: tracking pivotal roles that are emerging as "resource pressure points" and proactively sourcing and developing a strong talent pool of human

resource (PSC, 2017). Leaders and managers therefore, need to manage employee succession effectively to ensure continuous availability of leadership, management and technical capacity to deliver services. Organizations and institutions that have an effective succession management system will positively impact on long-term leadership quality, managerial capabilities and overall organizational performance (PSC, 2017). It is against this background that the study sought to establish the effect of succession planning practices and their implications on employee retention in ICT Authority.

Statement of the Problem

The ICT Authority plays a huge role in public service delivery and therefore is a critical pillar for attaining rapid and sustained economic growth of at least 10% by the year 2030 as set forth in the Kenya National Digital Master Plan 2022 - 2032. Major actions must be made if Kenya is to accomplish its goal of increasing GDP contribution from 9.2 percent to 15 percent by 2025 (KAM, 2018). Employees are essential for the growth of this industry, however the Authority has lost a significant number of staffs to other organizations that have reasonable wage practices, career growth and better working conditions (Rotich and Kiiru 2021). Each year at least 38% of employees in the government sector quit to join the private sector or start their own business thus leading to lose of competent and talented performance which in turn put the Authority's performance at risk.

According to the GoK report of 2018, there was an inherent gap between manpower planning and strategic planning in most public sector organizations. This in turn led to difficulty in making accurate predictions on manpower requirements with the attendant staff shortages and a leadership crisis experienced in certain cadres in the public service. Despite this urgent need for succession planning, it has not been fully embraced especially by state owned enterprises (GoK, 2018). Succession planning is attributed to the selection of talented employees to replace senior managers who leave the organization due to retirement, reassignment or other reasons. While different organizations adopt unique succession practices, the results have always been different. Some of the practices have propelled some organizations to prosperity while others have led to the collapse of some organizations (Adebola, 2019).

Studies have been conducted on how succession planning affects organization performance for instance Odhiambo, Njanja & Zakayo (2014) conducted study on effects of succession planning practices on organization performance among the non-governmental organizations in Kenya and found that, succession planning have significant effects on internal business. Otieno (2014) analyzed the influence of succession planning practices on performance of selected health service organizations in Winam division, Kisumu County, Kenya and established that there is a significant relationship between career development, human resource planning and performance of health service NGOs in Winam Division. It is evident that limited studies have been conducted on succession planning strategies such as human resource planning, career development and human resource planning with how they affect employee retention more especially performance of state-owned corporation. It also safe to say that a majority of research has overlooked the ICT sector poor employee retention.

Despite this urgent need for succession planning, it has not been fully embraced especially by government state corporations. This is a clear indication that succession plans are unavoidable as organizations keep to struggle with creating a formal process aimed at identifying, developing and retaining a high potential pool of workforce within the organization to maintain organization performance that allow smooth transmission of responsibilities. It is against this background that the study sought to establish the effect of succession planning practices and their implications on employee retention in the ICT Authority, Kenya.

Objective of the Study

- i. To examine the relationship between compensation and benefits and employee retention at ICT Authority.
- ii. To examine the relationship between Human Resource management practices on employee retention at ICT Authority.

LITEARTURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

Herzberg Two Factor Theory

One of the primary interests of organizations is to satisfy the needs of employees, which is described in the Herzberg's (1957) Two Factor Theory. Based on the approach, employee motivation is greatly influenced by their attitude towards work. The theory holds that employee attitude towards work is determined by the work situations that define how they feel about their jobs. According to Hertzberg, the factors that promote employee motivation differ from those that cause their job dissatisfaction. This implies that satisfaction cannot be considered as an opposite of dissatisfaction. Employee motivation is influenced by the ability of the company to meet physiological and psychological needs. The former refers to monetary compensation that enables employees to pay for basic necessities such as food and shelter while the latter refers to factors such as working conditions that promote employee career development. Employee satisfaction is determined by intrinsic or motivating factors while dissatisfaction results from hygiene factors or extrinsic motivators.

Hertzberg argues that the extrinsic motivating factors have no effect on the satisfaction of employees but their absence results into dissatisfaction. These factors include job security, salary and other fringe benefits. The intrinsic motivators, on the other hand, provide employees with extra motivation to work hard. They include involvement in decision-making and recognition. Both the extrinsic and intrinsic motivators are independent such that the presence of one factor does not affect the other. The Two Factor Theory holds that organizations should combine both the hygiene and motivating factors for optimal employee productivity. Businesses should structure the jobs in a way that makes it interesting to the employees. Aspects such as job enlargement are useful in promoting employee motivation because they are offered a wide variety of tasks that reduce monotony and boredom. Additionally, the employees are empowered make decisions about their jobs, which motivate them further (Cole, 2014).

Although the Two Factor Theory provides important insights about employee motivation and productivity, critics argue that it is inaccurate. The theory assumes that job satisfaction results to increased employee productivity, which is not true. However, despite the weakness, the theory cites that motivation comes from within the employees based on the working conditions. Thus, managers need to consider both the hygiene and motivating factors in organizations. Jobs should be structured in a way that employee are offered opportunities to develop their careers as they meet organizational needs. This theory was used in the study to expound the effect of career development on employee retention.

The Resource-Based View (RBV)

The RBV theory was developed by Penrose in 1974 and figures out why organizations practicing in the same industry have different performance index in a specific time frame. The theory affirms that the difference in performance of the organizations is caused by the internal competences of a firm that result in it enjoying competitive edge. The RBV theory posits that each organization has

unique resources and capabilities that make them different hence the competitive advantage (Wheelen and Humger, 2012).

According to Barney (1991), RBV defines why organization operating in the same industry have different parameters noting that an organization constitutes of capital resources, organization resources, physical resources and human capital resources (Barney, 1991). The theory holds that organization capabilities and resources differ from one firm to another and this difference in variation can help the firm to attain stability (Peteraf and Barney, 2003).

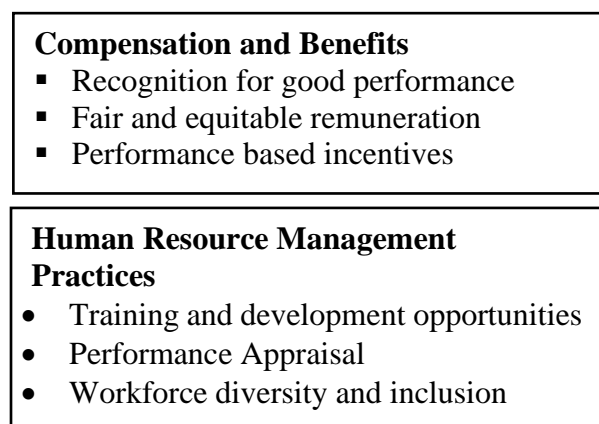
The main objective of the theory is that the management should consider and motivate its most valued assets and how the assets in this case employees can be developed to improve performance. By leveraging these principles of resource-based theory, organizations can enhance their ability to retain talented employees. By offering valuable, rare, inimitable, and well-organized resources, organizations create an attractive and supportive environment that motivates employees to stay and contribute to the organization's success Barney, J. B., & Wright, P. M. (1998). The theory further identifies HR competence, financial resources and past experiences as organization critical success (Ireland et al, 2013). The theory according to Falora et al (2014) posits that since resources are rare, scarce and limited, organization should employ strategies to exploit resources and capabilities to maximize returns from existing resources. Resource Based Theory is used to analyse internal processes of an organization (Pearce & Robinson, 2005). Since RBV theory rotates within a firm and each unit is described as an autonomous organization, they are different in their performance over a period of time due to differing internal capabilities.

This theory is therefore relevant to the study because the more qualified or experienced the staff hired/retained and their skills and competences updated on regular basis to be abreast with the ever-changing environment the more the organization is able to retain them and achieve its organizational goal. Since the theory focuses on the activities within the firm, talents can be established, nurtured to ensure that there is no skills gap if a position falls vacant.

Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework clearly outlines the independent and dependent variables in a diagram form. In this study the independent variables were human resource management practices, rewards and benefits, while the dependent variable was employee retention.

Independent Variable



Dependent Variable

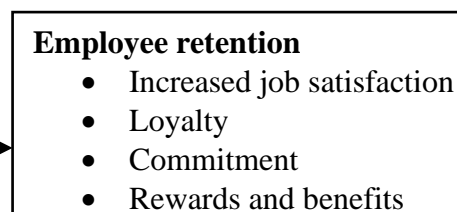


Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework

Compensation and benefits

According to Amstrong (2016) rewards and benefits are incentives provided by organizations to their employees to recognize their contributions, motivate them, and enhance their overall

experience. These rewards and benefits can take various forms, including monetary compensation, non-monetary perks, recognition programs among others (Amstrong 2016).

According to Bose and Maheshwary (2019) reward and benefit is a system where people are acknowledged for their performance in intrinsic or extrinsic ways. Recognition & Reward is present in a work environment where there is appropriate acknowledgement and appreciation of employees' efforts in a fair and timely manner (Bose and Maheshwary 2019).

Rewards basically falls into two categories; extrinsic and intrinsic rewards where extrinsic rewards are tangible rewards provided by the organization to recognize and motivate the employees, they are typically given as a result of accomplishing a specific task or reaching a given goal examples include salary, bonuses, profit sharing, certificates or plaques, paid time off, flexible work arrangements among others. Intrinsic rewards are internal rewards that come from within an individual such as enjoyment, fulfillment and personal satisfaction derived from performing the task itself or achieving personal growth (Bose and Maheshwary 2019).

Human Resource Management Practices

According to Carr, A., and Kline, K. (2016) human resource management practices are strategies, policies, and procedures that an organization implements to efficiently handle its workforce. These procedures cover a range of actions intended to fill positions and accomplish organizational goals and objectives through hiring, screening, developing, training, rewarding, and keeping staff. An organization can adopt a set of HRMP that suits its operational requirements. There are seven HRMP that influence organization performance such as employment security, targeted selection, training and development, rewards and benefits, workforce diversity and inclusion among others. Faced with intensive and complex competitive pressure, organizations closely examine their organizational structures especially how they organize employment.

According to Reily, 2003, training and development initiatives are essential for enhancing employees' skills, knowledge, and competencies. These initiatives can take various forms, including orientation programs for new hires, technical skills training, leadership development programs, and continuous learning opportunities. Investing in employee training and development yields numerous benefits for organizations. It enhances employee performance, boosts morale and engagement, and fosters a culture of continuous improvement. Moreover, providing opportunities for growth and development can increase employee loyalty and retention, as employees are more likely to remain with organizations that invest in their professional growth (Reily, 2003).

In addition, diversity and inclusion initiatives are aimed at creating a workforce that reflects the diverse perspectives, backgrounds, and experiences of the broader community. Diverse and inclusive workplaces are not only ethically and socially responsible but also benefit from increased creativity, innovation, and problem-solving abilities. HRM practices related to D&I include diversity recruitment strategies, unconscious bias training, and the establishment of affinity groups and diversity councils. By fostering a culture of inclusion where all employees feel respected and valued, organizations can unlock the full potential of their workforce and drive innovation and performance (Torrington et al. 2011).

This practice enables an organization to conduct succession planning by systematically determining the future management needs of the organization and developing high potential employees to meet those needs (Mondy et al., 2006). It is not predetermining who will be promoted into a specific position, but a method of ensuring that the organization will have individuals who are ready to fill key positions when they occur. Succession planning should be integrated into the organization's business strategy (Rothwell et al., 2005).

According to Byham (2001), succession planning through human resource management has not been able to empirically demonstrate success in the retention of talented staff and effective replacement of departing senior management. Therefore, this and its lack of face validity led many organizations to discontinue its implementation. The contemporary Succession planning was subsequently developed in an attempt to overcome the shortcomings of succession planning and to align with strategic business drivers. More specifically; the goal of succession management was to come up with a systematic process that could objectively and effectively respond to contemporary business imperatives such as organizational restructures, team-based work systems, diversity issues, global outsourcing, and talent shortages (Armstrong, 2012).

In conclusion, effective HRM practices are essential for driving organizational success by aligning human capital with business objectives, fostering employee engagement and development, and creating a positive work culture. By implementing strategic HRM initiatives, organizations can gain a competitive edge in today's dynamic and rapidly evolving business environment (Bowey, 2005).

Employee Retention

Mhlongo and Harunavamwe (2017) defined employee retention as a process in which there is total encouragement to the employees to remain with the organization for a long period of time. Armstrong (2018) asserts that employee retention refers to policies and programmes aimed at ensuring that the organization keeps its productive employees for a long period. Retention programmes are therefore designed to ensure that people remain as committed members of the organization. It needs favorable HRM policies and practices, which let the key employees commit to an organization. Therefore, the retention of talented employees is an advantage to an organization because employee's knowledge and skills are central to a company's ability to be economically competitive. If the company is not able to retain its employees, it will not be able to capitalize on human assets developed within the organization (Jong & Hartog, 2016). Retention is considered as all-around module of an organization's human resource strategies. It commences with the recruiting of right people and continues with practicing programs to keep them engaged and committed to the organization (Freyermuth, 2014).

The main purpose of employee retention is to prevent competent employees from leaving an organization as this could have adverse effect on productivity and profitability (Samuel & Chipunza, 2019). Employee retention brings all kinds of benefits especially since globalization and the creation of regional economic blocs have increased labour mobility across nations. Also, companies that keep their employees are likely to gain an advantage over their competitors by reducing overall labour costs and improving productivity. Retaining talent with critical skill sets is therefore acknowledged by organizations as vital to the achievement of business growth and the building of organizational competencies (Punia & Sharma, 2018).

Empirical Review

Effect of compensation and benefits on Employee Retention

Osibanjo, Adeniji, Falola and Heirsmac (2014) in their study on compensation strategies argued that there is a strong connection between compensation strategies and employee retention. This study was conducted in a select private institution in Nigeria on the concern that employees in academic institutions were constantly on the move to other institutions. Questionnaires were used to collect data and the results' analysis showed that compensation packages of incentives, allowances and salary levels had an impact on employee turnover. Over 100 employees interviewed argued that they were leaving their jobs for lack of proper compensation incentives

hence prompting the management to amend various levels of compensation to maintain their workforce.

A study done in the Telkom sector in Pakistan by Haider et. Al in 2012 indicated that compensation has a positive relation with employee retention. The study used questionnaires to gather data, a sample of 250 employees and statistical packages such as SPSS analyzed the data collected. According to the analysis, employees who were properly compensated usually did not have the tendency to leave. The results would guide management in various organizations to come up with proper compensation practices that would help in the retention of employees.

Kinyili (2015) study on the role of HRM practices on the retention of staff in public health institutions in Machakos County. The study sought to explore the role of remuneration practices, training and development practices, career advancement practices and to work-life balance practices on the retention of staff in public health institutions in Machakos County. From the results there it was evident that there was a weak but statistically significant positive relationships between remuneration practices and retention of health care staff in Machakos County.

Effect of human resource management practices on Employee Retention

Okoth (2015) carried out a study to examine the effects of rewards management practices influence on employee retention at Communication Authority of Kenya. The study found a strong relationship between retention and employee reward management. The study established the importance of developing an employee retention practice and reward management policy and total reward system with benefits such as pension scheme, health insurance, life insurance, sabbatical leave, flexible work plan among others.

Gachunga (2010) carried out a case study on Standard Group Limited on HRM practices influence on the retention of key employees in the media industry. The study found that the company valued leadership qualities aligned with the recruitment process and the company's retention strategies. A survey by Wanjiru (2007) on factors influencing employee retention in manufacturing firms in Nairobi established that to a great extent, organizations in the manufacturing sector valued the gaining of competitive advantage and engaged in proper HRM practices to ensure retention of the most key employees.

A study by Kazira (2014) to analyze the relationship between HRM practices and commitment of the employees in Kenya's retail banking sector, with a special focus on Standard Chartered Bank concluded that the practices; reward management, recruitment, orientation, performance management, training and development did influence employee commitment. Recruitment and orientation influences employee commitment in that it informs them about the job. Performance management helps to identify employee needs and helps in placing what they require to improve their performance.

Njeru (2016) conducted a study on the role of performance appraisal on performance of job in the public sector at Kirinyaga Central District. The study established that majority of civil servants set goals and attains them while a few received feedback on their performance. The study revealed that performance appraisal acts as important factor that contributes to the employees' motivation.

Empirical studies on Employee Retention

Several studies on the determinants of employee retention have been carried out globally, referring to the factors as human resource practices that enhance employee retention. This implies that there needs to be active or intentional participation by the organization to create an environment that positively influences employees to stay with the organizations Li-Qun (2013). Abduljlil, Yazam and Ahmid (2018) conducted a study to investigate the role of employee retention in organizational

performance and derived from the outcomes of the study that the employee retention has a mediating role in the linking of between HRM practices and organizational performance.

Ng'ethe (2013) conducted a study on determinants of staff retention in institutions of higher learning in Kenya. The study conducted on 496 respondents revealed that 72.7% of the respondents were dissatisfied with their salary and 72.5% did not think that bonuses were fairly allocated and 74.6% did feel that they were remunerated at par with employees in other organization with similar qualifications.

Ruth (2011) investigated the influence of human resource policies on employee retention at Hass Petroleum in Nairobi, Kenya discovered that trainings, promotions and rewards policies have a great influence on employee's retention and are the major reasons why former employees left the organization while the current employees were satisfied but would leave their current employer for one who would offer greater rewards. Kabera (2012) carried out a study on retention programs of human resources in the private security firms located in Nairobi discovered that motivation of employees, working conditions and individual security determines retention of employees in the private security firms.

Other studies posit that retention practices such as job enrichment, workspace characteristics and socialization can reduce turnover and its effects (Boles et al., 1995; Pizam & Ellis, 1999). Walsh and Taylor (2007) study found that although it was important to obtain a good salary and benefits package, whether employees remain with the organization primarily depends on the degree to which their employers respond to their professional growth. They noted: "those employees most committed to performing challenging work are the ones most likely to remain with their companies" (Walsh & Taylor, 2007, p. 147).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research design as defined by Inaam Akhta (2016) refers to the strategy of conducting research. Descriptive research design was adopted for this study. The descriptive research design enabled the researcher to reduce biases associated with qualitative research. This design was appropriate because it gave conclusive results among the research variables. The study population refers to a group of individuals or items under study. The targeted population of the study was 259 staff. Stratified random sampling design was applied. The study adopted Taro Yamane formula to select a sample of 185 respondents. Data collection instruments are tools used for carrying out research. In the course of the study, both primary and secondary data will be collected. The collected data was examined for completeness before being summarized, coded and tabulated. The researcher used descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution to analyze the data. The data was analyzed and tabulated with the help of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26. Data presentation was done by use of pie charts, frequency tables, and bar graphs. Additionally, a regression and a multiple regression analysis to determine the relationship between succession planning factors and employees' retention were conducted. This is a statistical method for determining the relationship between one dependent variable and one or more independent variables.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The study selected a sample of 185 employees from the ICT Authority. They were administered with questionnaire for final data collection out of which 162 were filled and returned, representing a response rate of 87.6%. As indicated by Metsamuuronen (2017), a response rate that is above 50% is considered adequate for data analysis and reporting while a response rate that is above 70% is classified as excellent. Hence, the response rate of this study was within the acceptable limits for drawing conclusions and making recommendations.

Descriptive Data Analysis

In this section, the study presents descriptive statistics analysis based on the data collected for the study. The study requested respondents to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with various statements on effect of succession planning practices and their implications on employee retention in the ICT Authority, Kenya. The analysis includes measures such as mean, and standard deviation to describe the data comprehensively. They used the scale of 1-5 where 1= Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree and 5=Strongly Agree. The means and standard deviations were used to interpret the findings where a mean value of 1-1.4 was strongly disagree, 1.5-2.4 disagree, 2.5-3.4 neutral, 3.5-4.4 agree and 4.5-5 strongly agree. Standard deviation greater than 2 was considered large meaning responses were widely spread out and not tightly clustered around the mean.

Compensation and Benefits

The first objective was to examine the effects of compensation and benefits on employee retention at ICT Authority. Respondents were therefore asked to indicate their agreement level on statements in regard how rewards and benefits influence employee retention at ICT Authority, Head Office. Table 1 presents summary of findings obtained.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics on Compensation and Benefits

Statements	Mean	Std. Dev.
Rewards and benefits are important in retaining employees in the organization	3.961	0.86
Recognize and reward employees for enhancing their own skills or knowledge	3.927	0.454
The organization provides flexible and fair benefit packages	3.873	0.612
Rewards are given to all employees without discrimination	3.746	0.756
In the organization there are opportunities available for employees to improve their skills and competencies.	3.719	0.613
In the organization there are flexible rewards and benefits that cater for individual needs and preferences	3.709	0.942
The organization encourages and recognizes employees for good performance	3.702	0.622
The organization focus on merit philosophy throughout the organization: put emphasis on individual performance	3.685	0.573
Aggregate Score	3.790	0.679

Based on the findings, respondents agreed on average that compensation and benefits are important in retaining employees in the organization (M= 3.961, SD= 0.86); that recognize and reward employees for enhancing their own skills or knowledge (M= 3.927, SD= 0.454); that the organization provides flexible and fair benefit packages (M= 3.873, SD= 0.612); and that rewards are given to all employees without discrimination (M= 3.746, SD= 0.756). They further agreed that in the organization there are opportunities available for employees to improve their skills and competencies (M= 3.719, SD= 0.613); that in the organization there are flexible rewards and benefits that cater for individual needs and preferences (M= 3.709, SD= 0.942); that the organization encourages and recognizes employees for good performance (M= 3.702, SD= 0.622); and that the organization focus on merit philosophy throughout the organization: put emphasis on individual performance (M= 3.685, SD= 0.573).

The findings supported by an aggregate mean of 3.790 (SD= 0.679) show that respondents agreed on average that compensation and benefits affects employee retention at ICT Authority. The

findings resonate with the empirical research conducted by Osibanjo et al. (2014) on compensation strategies in Nigerian institutions and Haider et al.'s (2012) study on compensation's impact on employee retention in the Telkom sector in Pakistan, both of which underscore the significant influence of compensation and benefits on employee retention. Osibanjo et al. (2014) revealed that proper compensation strategies, including incentives and salary levels, play a crucial role in mitigating turnover by addressing employees' needs and expectations. Similarly, Haider et al. (2012) found that well-compensated employees tend to exhibit higher retention rates, indicating the importance of aligning compensation practices with employees' perceived value and market standards. These findings substantiate the aggregate mean score of 3.790 obtained in the current study, indicating respondents' agreement regarding the impact of compensation and benefits on employee retention within the ICT Authority.

Human Resource Management Practices

The second objective of the study was to examine the effect of Human Resource management practices on employee retention at ICT Authority. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement on statements in regard how human resource management practices influence employee retention at ICT Authority, Head Office. Table 2 presents summary of findings obtained.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics on Human Resource Management Practices

Statements	Mean	Std. Dev.
Succession planning processes in our organization are designed to promote diversity at all levels of leadership	4.016	0.578
My manager/supervisor provides adequate support and guidance during the performance appraisal process.	3.964	0.52
The organization effectively implements its HRP initiatives.	3.951	0.559
The succession planning process includes measures to mitigate unconscious bias in decision-making.	3.926	0.542
I feel supported by my manager/supervisor in pursuing training and development opportunities	3.906	0.544
I have opportunities for advancement within the organization as a result of training and development programs	3.902	0.573
The organization considers diversity and inclusion factors when identifying potential successors for key roles	3.834	0.503
Succession planning initiatives include mentorship and sponsorship programs to support the development of diverse talent.	3.775	0.622
The organization provides training and development opportunities to support the advancement of diverse talent into leadership positions	3.767	0.583
The organization actively seeks feedback from employees from diverse backgrounds to improve succession planning practices	3.741	0.587
Feedback received during performance appraisals is constructive and helpful.	3.707	0.533
The performance appraisal process motivates me to improve my performance	3.703	0.578
The organization encourages employees to participate in external training programs/workshops.	3.683	0.522
I believe that individuals from diverse backgrounds have equal opportunities to be included in the succession planning process	3.677	0.606
The performance appraisal process helps me identify areas for development.	3.675	0.619
Aggregate Score	3.815	0.565

The findings show that the respondents agreed that succession planning processes in their organization are designed to promote diversity at all levels of leadership (M= 4.016, SD= 0.578);

that their manager/supervisor provides adequate support and guidance during the performance appraisal process (M= 3.964, SD= 0.52); that the organization effectively implements its HRP initiatives (M= 3.951, SD= 0.559); and that the succession planning process includes measures to mitigate unconscious bias in decision-making (M= 3.926, SD= 0.542). They were also in agreement that they feel supported by their manager/supervisor in pursuing training and development opportunities (M= 3.906, SD= 0.544); that they have opportunities for advancement within the organization as a result of training and development programs (M= 3.902, SD= 0.573); that the organization considers diversity and inclusion factors when identifying potential successors for key roles (M= 3.834, SD= 0.503); and that succession planning initiatives include mentorship and sponsorship programs to support the development of diverse talent (M= 3.775, SD= 0.622).

Respondents further agreed that the organization provides training and development opportunities to support the advancement of diverse talent into leadership positions (M= 3.767, SD= 0.583); that the organization actively seeks feedback from employees from diverse backgrounds to improve succession planning practices (M= 3.741, SD= 0.587); that feedback received during performance appraisals is constructive and helpful (M= 3.707, SD= 0.533); and that the performance appraisal process motivates me to improve their performance (M= 3.703, SD= 0.578). Furthermore, they agreed that the organization encourages employees to participate in external training programs/workshops (M= 3.683, SD= 0.522); that they believe that individuals from diverse backgrounds have equal opportunities to be included in the succession planning process (M= 3.677, SD= 0.606); and that the performance appraisal process helps them identify areas for development (M= 3.675, SD= 0.619).

The findings supported by an aggregate mean of 3.815 (SD= 0.565) showed that respondent agreed on average that Human Resource management practices affects employee retention at ICT Authority. The study findings align closely with the empirical research conducted by Umana et al. (2020) demonstrated that effective human resource planning significantly influences employee retention by ensuring organizational alignment with employees' needs and aspirations. Similarly, Nzuve and Ng'ang'a's (2018) study emphasized the pivotal role of performance appraisal systems in shaping employees' perception of organizational support and recognition, thereby impacting their commitment and retention. These findings substantiate the aggregate mean score of 3.853 obtained in the current study, indicating respondents' agreement regarding the influence of human resource management practices on employee retention within the ICT Authority.

Employee Retention

The main objective of the study was to establish the effect of succession planning practices and their implications on employee retention in the ICT Authority, Kenya. Respondents were asked to indicate their agreement level on statements in regard to employee retention at ICT Authority, Head Office. Table 3 presents summary of findings obtained.

Table 4. 1: Descriptive Statistics on Employee Retention

Statements	Mean	Std. Dev.
Managers motivate employees to stay as they groom them to take management positions	3.991	0.831
Employees are committed to work in the organization because they do not want to lose their benefits	3.985	0.564
In the organization there is increased job satisfaction leading to low staff turnover	3.876	0.513
In the organization line managers always support employees and are willing to assist them anytime they seek guidance	3.871	0.643
In the organization performance appraisal are always done to facilitate promotions and transfer of employees	3.736	0.312
Compensation plays significant role in attracting and retaining good employees	3.679	0.543
The employees are committed and loyal to the organization vision and mission	3.675	0.529
Aggregate Score	3.830	0.562

The findings show that respondents agreed on average that managers motivate employees to stay as they groom them to take management positions (M= 3.991, SD= 0.831); that employees are committed to work in the organization because they do not want to lose their benefits (M= 3.985, SD= 0.564); that in the organization there is increased job satisfaction leading to low staff turnover (M= 3.876, SD= 0.513); and that in the organization line managers always support employees and are willing to assist them anytime they seek guidance (M= 3.871, SD= 0.643). They further agreed that in the organization performance appraisal are always done to facilitate promotions and transfer of employees (M= 3.736, SD= 0.312); that compensation plays significant role in attracting and retaining good employees (M= 3.679, SD= 0.543); and that the employees are committed and loyal to the organization vision and mission (M= 3.675, SD= 0.529).

The aggregate mean of 3.830 (SD= 0.562) show that the respondents agreed on average that succession planning practices affected their implications on employee retention in the ICT Authority, Kenya. The study findings resonate with the empirical research conducted by Wane (2016) on the effect of career development programs on employee retention in international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) in Kenya and Mule's (2019) investigation into the relationship between career development and employee retention in the county government of Meru, Kenya. Wane (2016) demonstrated that career development programs significantly influence employee retention in INGOs, highlighting the importance of organizational career planning and growth opportunities in fostering long-term commitment among employees. Similarly, Mule (2019) research revealed a positive and significant relationship between career development and employee retention in the county government context, emphasizing the strategic role of career advancement practices and training opportunities in enhancing retention rates. These findings substantiate the aggregate mean score of 3.830 obtained in the current study, indicating respondents' agreement regarding the influence of succession planning practices on employee retention within the ICT Authority, Kenya.

Inferential Data Analysis

Pearson Correlation Analysis

The study computed correlation analysis to test the strength and the direction of the relationship that exists between the dependent and the independent variables. The correlation values range from 0 to 1; if the correlation values are $r = \pm 0.1$ to ± 0.29 then the relationship between the two variables

is small, if it is $r = \pm 0.3$ to ± 0.49 the relationship is medium, and when $r = \pm 0.5$ and above there is a strong relationship between the two variables under consideration. Table 4.10 presents correlation analysis findings for this study.

Table 4: Correlations

		Employee Retention	Compensation and Benefits	HR Management Practices
Employee Retention	Pearson Correlation	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)			
	N	162		
Compensation and Benefits	Pearson Correlation	.758**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		
	N	162	162	
Human Resource Management practices	Pearson Correlation	.682**	.386	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.507	
	N	162	162	

Compensation and benefits have significant correlation coefficient of 0.758 ($p < 0.05$) with Employee Retention highlights the importance of offering competitive rewards and benefits packages to enhance employee retention within the ICT Authority. When employees perceive that they are fairly compensated for their contributions and receive desirable benefits, they are more likely to feel valued and satisfied in their roles, leading to higher levels of retention. The significant correlation is supported by the findings of Osibanjo et al. (2014) that emphasized the impact of compensation packages on employee turnover, highlighting the importance of offering competitive rewards and benefits to enhance retention rates. This literature aligns well with the significant correlation observed in the current study, emphasizing the role of rewards and benefits in fostering employee loyalty and commitment.

Human Resource management practices shows the strong positive correlation of 0.794 ($p < 0.05$) with Employee Retention underscores the significance of implementing efficient performance management systems within the ICT Authority. This suggests that when employees receive regular feedback, are recognized for their achievements, and are provided with opportunities for growth, they are more likely to remain committed to the organization. Performance management not only enhances individual performance but also contributes to organizational effectiveness by aligning employee goals with organizational objectives and fostering a culture of continuous improvement. The finding agrees with Umana, Umana, and Umoh (2022) underscores the significance of human resource planning in influencing employee retention rates within the banking sector. Similarly, the robust correlation observed between Human Resource Management practices and Employee Retention in the current study aligns with the importance of strategic HRM initiatives in fostering employee commitment and loyalty. This literature emphasizes the pivotal role of HRM practices in shaping organizational culture, promoting employee engagement, and ultimately contributing to higher retention rates.

Multiple Regression Analysis

This study sought to establish the effect of succession planning practices and their implications on employee retention in the ICT Authority, Kenya. Therefore, using multiple regression analysis, the study examined the combined effect of succession planning practices (compensation and benefits and human resource management practices) on employee retention at ICT Authority. The findings were presented in three tables discussed in sub-sections below.

Model Summary

The Model Summary indicates the effectiveness of the regression model in explaining the variation in the dependent variable. The study used model summary to test the amount of variation in employee retention at ICT Authority as a result of changes in compensation and benefits, and human resource management practices. Table 5 presents findings obtained.

Table 5: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.872 ^a	.760	.777	.47216

a. Predictors: (Constant), Human Resource management practices, Compensation and Benefits

The regression analysis yielded a model with a considerable explanatory power, as indicated by the high coefficient of determination (R-squared) value of 0.760. This implies that approximately 76% of the variance in the dependent variable, likely Employee Retention, can be explained by the independent variables included in the model, namely Human Resource Management practices and Compensation and Benefits. The adjusted R-squared value of 0.777, which considers the number of predictors in the model, suggests a good fit as it is close to the R-squared value. Therefore, the findings suggest that the combined influence of human resource management practices, and compensation and benefits significantly contribute to explaining variations in Employee Retention within the context of the study.

Analysis of Variance

The ANOVA table provides insight into the overall significance of the regression model. The study significance of the model Significance was tested at 95% confidence interval.

Table 6: Analysis of Variance

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	75.970	4	18.992	85.192	.000 ^b
1	Residual	35.001	157	.223		
	Total	110.971	161			

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Retention

b. Predictors: (Constant), Human Resource management practices, Compensation and Benefits

The analysis of variance (ANOVA) table illustrates a highly significant relationship between the combined independent variables—human resource management practices and compensation and benefits—and the dependent variable, Employee Retention, as evidenced by the regression model's F-statistic of 85.192 ($p < .05$). This indicates that the variation in employee retention can be largely explained by the variation in the independent variables. The regression model accounts for a substantial portion of the total variance. These findings suggest that the model effectively captures the relationships between the predictors and employee retention, reinforcing the importance of human resource management practices, and compensation and benefits in influencing retention outcomes within the studied context.

Coefficients of Study Variables

The regression coefficients provide insight into the relationship between each independent variable and the dependent variable. The beta coefficient represents the change in the dependent variable for a one-unit change in the independent variable, holding other variables constant.

Table 7: Beta Coefficients of Study Variables

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.387	.118		3.280	.008
1 Compensation And Benefits	.314	.084	.308	3.738	.000
1 Human Resource management practices	.417	.074	.468	5.635	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Retention

From the coefficients in Table 7, the following regression model was fitted;

$$Y = 0.387 + 0.314 X_1 + 0.417 X_2$$

The beta coefficient for Compensation and Benefits is 0.314 with a p-value of 0.000, signifying a statistically significant positive association with Employee Retention. This implies that higher levels of compensation and benefits are linked to increased employee retention rates. This finding resonates with the research conducted by Osibanjo et al. (2014) on compensation strategies in private institutions in Nigeria. Their study revealed that compensation packages significantly influenced employee turnover rates, emphasizing the role of competitive compensation practices in retaining valuable employees.

The beta coefficient for Human Resource Management practices is 0.417 with a p-value of 0.000, demonstrating a statistically significant positive relationship with Employee Retention. This implies that well-implemented HRM practices contribute to higher levels of employee retention within the organization. This finding is supported by the research conducted by Umana, Umana, and Umoh (2022) on the influence of human resource planning on employee retention in commercial banks in Nigeria. Their study emphasized the crucial role of strategic HRM practices in fostering employee loyalty and commitment, ultimately leading to higher retention rates.

Conclusions

For the second research question regarding the influence of rewards and benefits on employee retention at ICT Authority, the study findings indicate that rewards and benefits play a crucial role in retaining employees within the organization. Respondents expressed satisfaction with the rewards and benefits offered by the ICT Authority, including recognition programs, fair compensation, and flexible benefit packages. The correlation and regression analyses confirm these findings, demonstrating a significant positive correlation between rewards and benefits and employee retention, with rewards and benefits significantly predicting employee retention. Thus, it can be concluded that a comprehensive rewards and benefits system contributes to higher levels of employee retention by fostering a culture of appreciation, motivation, and loyalty within the organization.

For the fourth research question regarding the effect of Human Resource management practices on employee retention at ICT Authority, the study findings highlight the critical role of HRM practices in influencing employee retention. Respondents expressed satisfaction with HRM practices related to succession planning, performance appraisal, training and development, and diversity and inclusion. The correlation and regression analyses underscore these findings, demonstrating a significant positive correlation between HRM practices and employee retention, with HRM practices significantly predicting employee retention. Thus, it can be concluded that effective HRM practices contribute to higher levels of employee retention by fostering a

supportive, inclusive, and development-oriented workplace culture, thereby enhancing employee satisfaction, engagement, and commitment within the ICT Authority.

Recommendations

In light of the findings regarding the influence of rewards and benefits on employee retention, it is recommended that ICT Authority continue to prioritize the development and implementation of a competitive rewards and benefits package. This should include fair compensation, recognition programs, and flexible benefit options tailored to meet the diverse needs and preferences of employees. Moreover, there should be a transparent and equitable process for administering rewards and benefits to ensure all employees feel valued and appreciated for their contributions. Additionally, regular benchmarking against industry standards should be conducted to ensure the organization remains competitive in attracting and retaining top talent.

Considering the findings regarding the effect of Human Resource management practices on employee retention, it is recommended that ICT Authority continue to prioritize the adoption of effective HRM practices aimed at enhancing employee satisfaction, engagement, and commitment. This includes implementing fair and transparent performance appraisal systems, providing ample opportunities for training and development, and promoting diversity and inclusion throughout the organization. Moreover, there should be a focus on fostering strong relationships between employees and their managers/supervisors to ensure adequate support and guidance is provided in navigating career development and advancement opportunities. Additionally, regular feedback mechanisms should be established to solicit employee input and address any concerns or issues in a timely manner.

Suggestions for Future Studies

For future studies, it would be beneficial to delve deeper into the specific mechanisms through which each variable identified in this research influences employee retention at ICT Authority. This could involve conducting qualitative interviews or focus groups to gain a more nuanced understanding of employees' perceptions and experiences related to rewards and benefits, and Human Resource management practices. Additionally, comparative studies across different organizations or industries could provide valuable insights into the generalizability of findings and the effectiveness of various retention strategies in different contexts. Finally, exploring the role of organizational culture and leadership styles in shaping employee retention could offer valuable insights into additional factors that may influence employee retention outcomes.

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