

**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN REWARD MANAGEMENT PRACTICES
AND EMPLOYEE RETENTION IN COUNTY GOVERNMENT OF MERU,
KENYA**

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DECLARATION AND RECOMMENDATION

Declaration

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree or any other award in any other University.

Signature Date

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Recommendation

We confirm that the work reported in this thesis was carried out by the candidate under our supervision.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my kids; Michelle and Ian. God bless you.

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ABSTRACT

Employee retention is a major concern for many private and public organizations today. This is particularly so because it reduces costs associated with recruitments arising from high employee turnover. However, public sector such as the County government of Meru has recently suffered from losing good talents to other organizations; a situation which motivated the carrying out of this study with a view to recommend solutions to this challenge. This study sought to investigate the relationship between reward management practices and employee retention in the County Government of Meru in Kenya. The objective of the study was to examine whether career development, work-life balance, compensation and employee recognition have any relationship with employee retention in the County Government of Meru. Human capital theory, Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, Equity theory and Two-Factor theory guided this study. The study was based in Meru County government and adopted a descriptive survey research design. Data was collected from 66 heads of department in the County Government of Meru. All the 66 heads of department were included in the study. Data was collected using structured questionnaire and analyzed with the help of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS vs 25) software. Data was validated by ensuing content and construct validity of the instruments. Cronbach alpha value was used to assess reliability of the data. Mean and standard deviation were computed while hypothesis were tested using univariate regression analysis. Multiple linear regressions was also used to evaluate the overall proposition of the study. Findings were presented in form of tables and pie charts. The correlation results revealed a positive and significant relationship between career development and employee retention; work-life balance and employee retention; compensation and employee retention); and employee recognition and employee retention. This implied that reward management practices account for sixty two percent of variations in employee retention. Based on the results, the study recommended enhanced training of employees, flexible working conditions, and regular review of staff performance, industry-informed salary increments, paid holidays, and regular team building initiatives in order to mitigate employee turnover in county governments. Results have implication on employees reward management and retention policies in the public sector.

TABLE OF CONTENT

DECLARATION AND RECOMMENDATION	ii
COPYRIGHT	iii
DEDICATION	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	v
ABSTRACT.....	vi
LIST OF TABLES.....	ix
LIST OF FIGURES	xi
ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS.....	xii
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background of the Study	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem	5
1.3 General Objective	6
1.4 Research Hypotheses.....	7
1.5 Significance of the Study	7
1.6 Scope of the Study	8
1.7 Limitations of the Study	9
1.8 Assumptions of the study	9
1.9 Operational Definition of Terms	10
CHAPTER TWO	12
LITERATURE REVIEW	12
2.1 Introduction	12
2.2 Theoretical Review.....	12
2.3 Empirical Review	18

2.4 Career Development and Employee Retention	18
2.5 Work Life Balance and Employee Retention	19
2.6 Compensation and Employee Retention.....	22
2.7 Recognition and Employee Retention	24
2.8 Reward Management Practices and Employee Retention	25
2.9 Conceptual Framework.....	27
2.10 Operational Framework.....	29
2.11 Summary of Literature and Research Gaps	31
CHAPTER THREE.....	33
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	33
3.1 Introduction	33
3.2 Research Design	33
3.3 Location of the study	34
3.4 Target Population	34
3.5 Sample Size and Sampling Technique	36
3.6 Research Instruments.....	36
3.7 Reliability and Validity Test	37
3.8 Data Collection Procedure.....	38
3.9 Data Analysis and Presentation	39
3.10 Ethical Considerations	40
CHAPTER FOUR	41
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	41
4.1 Introduction	41
4.2 Response Rate	42

4.3 Demographic characteristics of Respondents.....	42
4.4 Reliability Analysis	45
4.5 Descriptive Statistics of Career Development.....	45
4.6 Descriptive Statistics of Work life balance	49
4.7 Descriptive Statistics of Compensation.....	53
4.8 Descriptive Statistics of Employee Recognition	56
4.9 Descriptive Statistics of Employee Retention	59
4.10 Pearson’s Bivariate Correlation.....	62
4.11 Results on Overall Model: Rewards Management Practices and Employee Retention	67
4.12 Results on Regression Analysis.....	68
4.13 Testing of Hypothesis.....	71
CHAPTER FIVE	73
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	73
5.1 Introduction	73
5.2 Summary of the Findings	73
5.3 Conclusion.....	75
5.4 Recommendations	76
5.5 Recommendations for Further Study.....	77
REFERENCES	78
APPENDICES.....	88

LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1: Target population	35
Table 4.1: Age bracket of respondents	42
Table 4.2: Gender of respondents	43
Table 4.3: Distribution of years of service at County Government of Meru.....	44
Table 4.4: Reliability statistics	45
Table 4.5: Descriptive statistics of career development	46
Table 4.6: Descriptive results on work-life balance	51
Table 4.7: Descriptive statistics on compensation	54
Table 4.8: Descriptive statistics on employee recognition.....	56
Table 4.9: Descriptive analysis of employee retention	60
Table 4.10: Correlation between career development and employee retention	63
Table 4.11: Correlation between work life influence and employee retention	64
Table 4.12: Correlation between compensation and employee retention.....	65
Table 4.13: Correlation between Employee recognition and employee retention	66
Table 4.14: Normality test.....	68
Table 4.15: Model summary - reward management practices and employee retention	69
Table 4.16: ANOVA analysis - reward management practices and employee retention	69
Table 4.17: Regression coefficient - reward management practices and employee retention.....	70

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1: Conceptual framework	27
Figure 2.2: Operational framework.....	30
Figure 4.1: Alternative ways of enhancing Career development in Meru County Government..	48
Figure 4.2: Ways of enhancing work-life balance in Meru County Government.....	53
Figure 4.3: Ways of improving ccompensations of employee in Meru County Government	55
Figure 4.4: Alternative ways of enhancing employee recognition in Meru County Government	59
Figure 4.5: Alternative ways of enhancing employee retention in Meru County Government ...	62

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CGM	County Government of Meru
HRM	Human Resource Management
HRP	Human Resource Planning
MCIDC	Meru County Investment Development Corporation
MCRB	Meru County Revenue Board
MEWASS	Meru Water and Sewerage Services
US	United States
WLB	Work Life Balance

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The concept of employee retention concerns strategies adopted by an institution to promote a lengthy stay of its productive workers. It comprises the various measures taken by an organization to ensure that an employee remains with the organization for a long time (Chiboiwa, Samuel, & Chipunza, 2010). Indeed, employee retention is crucial to any organization since it gives value to the investment an organization makes in grooming new employees to make them corporate ready materials and put them at par with organization's laid down policies (Connolly & McGing, 2017).

Organizations, whether public or private, incur losses whenever their employees resign after they have been fully trained. Considering that the public sector is composed of organizations that are owned and operated by the government, it is imperative that the government recruits knowledgeable and experienced personnel so as give standard services to its citizens. This being the case, employee retention is a vital human resources strategy aimed at boosting the productivity workers in public institutions (Crick & Spencer, 2011).

Today, organizations have started to develop employee retention strategies so as to be successful. Employee retention strategy in organizations originated in the United States, Europe and Asia before it spread to Australia (Accenture, 2001 as cited in Irshad & Afridi, 2007). Schuler (2015) observes that in 1990's, employers started feeling the effect of labour turnover following the effects of labour movements that had negatively impacted on job performance and the consequent drop in the productivity of an organization.

According to Sung and Choi (2012), companies are faced with the challenge of employees quitting their jobs in one organization to take up similar jobs in another organization. They note that the average workers within 18-37 age brackets are changing jobs about ten times. Zerga (2016) observes that most employees in the twenty first century lack the commitment demonstrated by workers of the early nineties. Indeed, as a result of organizations lessening their wage bill by way of worker reductions, the idea of trading security of tenure with employee loyalty is slowly becoming unpopular. It is therefore incumbent upon the employer to devise a strategy of retaining their best employees.

There is extensive literature on employee turnover. However, little is known about the factors that influence employees to stay. Leelavati and Chalam (2017) notes that there is scanty literature on factors that impel a worker's resolve to keep working for a given organization, and those that determine their attachment to the organization.

Steel, Griffeth and Hom (2002) observes that the reasons for employees quitting have not been extensively studied, yet reasons for a worker's decision to stay in an organization are not always the same as the reason they quit. Kalliath and Beck (2001) explores factors determining worker-decision to either quit or remain in an organization. However, their findings are controversial to-date.

Employment guidelines issued by the government to government demonstrates its appreciation of the benefits of employee retention. However, worker turnover in many organizations is unabated. It is vital, therefore, to examine factors that determine this employee movement across organizations.

1.1.1 Reward Management Practices

The term “reward” is used in human resource management to describe employment relations. Reward management strategy involves formulation and implementation of policies aimed at fair, equitable and sustainable rewarding of deserving employees in an organization (Taylor, 2010). According to Sutherland (2004), reward management practices entails development of reward schemes, their implementation and maintenance so as to satisfy the demands of both the organization and its stakeholders.

There are numerous reasons organizations plan for reward management practices (Smith & Shields, 2013). For instance, employees are usually rewarded for their outstanding performance, to inspire a culture of excellence; to enhance loyalty; and to suppress worker turnover, especially of the most efficient workers in an institution.

According to Alkandari and Hammad (2009), reward management strategy should not only outline the standards upon which a reward is given, but also develop systems that ensure continuity of the reward policies. Indeed, a reward scheme is founded upon the organization’s understanding of the standards upon whose attainment employees are valued.

A reward is conceived as the employer’s instrument for tool to enticing, encouraging and maintaining diligent employees (Armstrong, 2009). Total rewards incorporate the entirety of prized benefits arising from the employment contract. Poor reward management systems have been cited as the major cause for job dissatisfaction and consequent high employee turnover (Das & Baruah, 2013). Therefore, proper investment in employee reward practices should be the concern of every manager since an effective rewards strategy is key to enhance employee productivity and excellent business performance.

1.1.2 Employee Retention

Retention of competent and productive employees is a key determinant of an organization's health and success. Tilahun (2018) describes employee retention as the aggregate of employer endeavors to moderate employee turnover, while Armstrong (2012) sees it as the ingenuity of an institution to keep its employees. Indeed, employee turnover disrupts the flow of already work since organizations suffer knowledge gaps and work overload for some employees whenever an employee quits.

Employee retention strategy is aimed at giving an organization a competitive advantage. As such, there is need to explore approaches that an organization can use to retain critical employees. Armstrong (2009) observes that organizations need to understand the centrality of positive work environment in nurturing employees from entry level up to the attainment of positions of the most accomplished workers in an organization.

According to Holland (2011), the uniqueness of human capital gives organizations a competitive edge over others. However, Sempene, Rieger and Roodt, (2012) observes that employees tend to be less committed to their organizations in today's business environments. As a result, there is a shift in focus from machine investment to employees of organizations. Since the idea that a good employment contract, job security and fair work as a sure ticket to winning employee's loyalty has been overtaken by time (Overman, 2008), a more tailored approach to employee rewards can be used to discourage employees from quitting their jobs in an organization (Chemmanur, Cheng and Zhang, 2013).

1.1.3 Meru County Government

Meru County, coded as county number 12, constitutes the 47 counties of Kenya. It is located in the upper Eastern region of the former vast Eastern Province. Kenya National Bureau of Statistic, KNBS puts the population of Meru County at 1.4 million (KNBS, 2018). The county headquarters is in the town of Meru. Meru County has nine sub counties and 49 wards (KNBS, 2018). The county's main economic activity is agriculture, and most of the residents engage in subsistence farming, mainly growing maize, beans, sorghum, millet cabbages and fruits. There is also large scale farming of cash crops such as coffee, teas and macadamia, bananas, potatoes and wheat. In recent years, Meru County has experienced profitable farming of fruits such as mangoes, avocados and passion fruits. The county is also the largest producer of Miraa (Khat) in Kenya. Miraa, a cash crop mostly grown by residents of the Sub-Counties of Tigania and Igemebe is not only for the local market but also for export to the neighboring countries of East Africa as well as Europe.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Employees are the most valuable assets of an organization and should be treated exemplarily so as to retain them. In Kenya, the devolved government guidelines have clear human resource policy that is expected to be followed by all the 47 county governments. As a result, adequate budget to support human resource strategy is expected to be provided by each county government, which includes programs to ensure that best talents are not only attracted but also retained in order to champion the desired local social-economic development.

After the devolution of some government services in Kenya in 2013, a number of employees left their original places of work to seek employment in the County Governments. However, Mulera (2012) notes that it is challenging for county governments to implement employee retention strategies due to competitive nature of

corporate environment. For instance, in Meru County 20% of the county government jobs are on contractual, while 80% are on permanent basis (County Government of Meru Human Resource Strategic plan, 2017-2021). Notably, the contractual employment in county governments does not guarantee any employee of contract renewal. As such, the 20% employees on contract employment are constantly tempted to leave their contract employment to seek permanent employment in other organizations.

The Meru County employee turnover does not only cost organization immense financial resources, but it also disrupts the smooth flow of workforce and service to the society. Whenever an employee quits their job, a substantial expertise opening is left, thereby, burdening the remaining team with additional tasks as they work to seal the gap left. While employee retention is today a key challenge in many public and private organizations (Danish, 2015), deliberate and appropriate strategies, such as clear career development path, competitive compensation structure, employee recognition and a consideration of work-life balance scheme are needed to make them loyal to their organizations.

Considering the individual differences among employees of an organization, it is imperative that organizations understand what motivates one employee to work happily as opposed to the other. Such consideration is critical while devising strategies for attracting and retaining good employees, because, poor employee retention techniques derail efforts to attain organizational objectives (Holtom, Mitchell, Lee & Eberly, 2014). This study seeks to explore the influence of career development prospects, work-life balance, compensation, and employee recognition on employee retention in the County Government of Meru.

1.3 General Objective

The main objective of this study was to establish the relationship between reward management practices and employee retention at the County Government of Meru, Kenya.

1.3.1 Specific Objectives

- i. To establish the influence of career development on employee retention in the County Government of Meru.
- ii. To examine the effect of work life balance on employee retention in the County Government of Meru.
- iii. To establish how compensation influences employee retention in County Government of Meru.
- iv. To investigate the effect of employee recognition on employee retention in County Government of Meru.

1.4 Research Hypotheses

The study was be guided by the following hypotheses;

H_{a1}: There is no significant relationship between career development and employee retention in the County Government of Meru

H_{a2}: There is no significant relationship between work-life balance and employee retention in the County Government of Meru

H_{a3}: There is no significant relationship between staff compensation and employee retention in the County Government of Meru

H_{a4}: There is no significant relationship between worker recognition and employee retention in the County Government of Meru

1.5 Significance of the Study

This research explores the impact of reward management practices on employee retention in the county government of Meru in Kenya. As such, its findings will be helpful to human resources managers in the county governments as well as public and private organizations. Specifically, HR managers will understand the employee retention drivers and hence inform investment decisions, for example in staff wellness programs. The national government through the Ministry of Devolution will benefit from this study as it revises devolved human resource policy which ought to take care of emerging issues pointed out in this study.

The findings are expected to inform human resource strategy in order to spur long term productivity in public service. Service continuity which has been a very common challenge in county government will be minimized to a great extent. The findings will therefore have implications on HR retention policy and influence change of reward management strategy. This is because, the results of the study gives insight into the use of reward strategy in the retention of productive employees in both the public and the private institutions.

Further, this study adds to literature on influence of reward strategy on county governments' employees' turnover and retention. This is because, retention of talents is very critical to the survival and success of an organizations. This takes cogzance that human resources are critical asset and hence insights into retention of good staff are indispensable. This study has contributed value by underscoring how the four constructs; career development, compensation, and work life balance and employee recognition work together to influence whether staff stay in an organization.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The scope of this study was limited to reward management as it relates to turnover rate and retention of employees of the County Government of Meru County Government. The study covered four constructs characterizing reward management practices, namely; career development, compensation, work life balance and employee recognition. All public service Departmental Heads in the County Government of Meru were targeted in this study.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

The primary data for this study was obtained from respondents. However, some respondents were hesitant to provide required information due to fear of victimization. The researcher allayed their fear by assuring them that the responses they give would be handled confidentially and would be used only for academic purposes. Once the questionnaires were issued, the researcher allowed respondents time to fill them. The anticipated challenge of collecting the already filled was mitigated by having research assistants drop and pick the questionnaires from the respondents. The vastness of the study area was too a challenge. However, the researcher moderated this challenge by engaging research assistants in collecting the questionnaires.

1.8 Assumptions of the study

The study assumed that valid, current, true and honest information was given by the respondents. The study further assumed that the County Government of Meru has embraced reward management practices in their human resources management. In addition, the study assumed that findings of this research would help the County

Government of Meru to understand employee retention challenges and how they can use reward management practices to address them.

1.9 Operational Definition of Terms

Human Resources Refers to the people that staff and operate an organization (Armstrong, 2012).

Employee retention According to Armstrong (2012), the strategies employed by managers to counter high worker turnover and enhance their lengthy stay constitutes employee retention.

Reward Management Reward management entails developing, implementing and maintaining strategies aimed at enhancing employee loyalty to both their employer and the organization (Thompson, 2014).

Career Development This is the state of advancing someone in the area of specialization for the purpose of career growth (Jaibunisha, 2016).

Work Life Balance Relates to work schedules that which allows employees room to attend their personal and family commitments even as they execute their career duties. (Ellenbecker, 2014)

Compensation Refers to money or other job-related allowances in reparation for damages or an incentive given by the employer for impressive performance (Bronchetti & McInerney, 2017).

Employee Recognition Refers to the gesture of appreciation by employers in acknowledgement of employee's exceptional performance (Wambugu & Ombui, 2013).

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses theoretical and empirical literature as guided by main variables; research gaps and concludes by presenting a conceptual framework. Literature review involves systematic identification, evaluation, synthesis and critical analysis of information gotten from published and unpublished sources with regard to given constructs (Ritchie & Lewis, 2012).

In this chapter, a review of literature relating to reward management practices and employee retention is provided. The specific constructs /theme upon which literature is organized include career development, compensation, work life balance, employee recognition, and reward management practices. In the first instance, the chapter covers relevant theories that anchored and guided this study. In the second instance, empirical literature is presented whose discussion includes research gaps identified during the review process. The chapter concludes by presenting a conceptual framework which is followed by a brief discussion and a demonstration on how variables were operationalized.

2.2 Theoretical Review

A theoretical framework helps a researcher to limit the scope of data. A theory is critical in clarifying features of the physical world (Cherry, 2015; Labaree, 2013). The data for this study was molded according to the principles of four theories, namely: Human Capital theory, Maslow's Hierarchy of needs Theory, Equity theory and Two Factor-theories. These theories were apt in establishing the link between employee turnover rates in Meru County Government and the selected reward strategies.

2.2.1 Human Capital Theory

Chemmanur, Cheng and Zhang (2013) describe human capital as the human aspect of a company's resources and the contribution they bring to the company by virtue of their expertise. The theory asserts that employee's intelligence and talent constitutes the company's reserve of industrious resource. This approach sees employees of an organization as assets that ensure the survival of the organization in a highly competitive atmosphere (Sutherland, 2004).

Human capital can be defined as the human factor in organizations (Armstrong, 2009). Uniqueness of a company is established around the intellectual endowment of its workers. It constitutes people capable providing the creative thrust which ensures survival of an organization. Human capital is a multifaceted concept which includes the intellectual capital, the social capital, the organizational capital and the emotional capital (Sutherland, 2004).

According to Sutherland (2004), value of an organization is derived from its employees, and when these employees leave the organization, they take this value with them. As such, attracting, retaining, developing and maintaining employees are key to maintaining the value of any organization.

Human capital theory gives relevance to career development variable since it underscores the importance of defining the career paths in within the county government of Meru as a motivation of employee retention. It is also relevant to the study since the organization need to develop its employees for them to strike a balance between the human capital required in an organization and the skills needed. Having the correct number of employees required with the necessary skills gives an organization a competitive advantage. Employee recognition is also covered under this theory since it is through recognition that

an organization is able to retain the competent employees that in turns leads to a competitive advantage.

2.2.2 Maslow's Needs Hierarchy Theory

The drive to pursue and achieve a given goal is a consequence of their desire to satisfy needs higher up in the hierarchy (Armstrong, 2009). Abraham Maslow (1943) identifies five levels of needs that people seek to satisfy, ranging from low-level needs to self-actualization. Once the needs at one level are met, there is a rebirth of fresh determination to satisfy the needs in the next (Gunnigle, Heraty and Morley, 2011).

Needs in Maslow's hierarchy of needs are arranged in a pyramidal manner (Kouloubandi, Jofreh & Mahdavi, 2012). Physiological needs fall at the bottom of the pyramid and self-actualization at the top of the pyramid. Employees seeking the fulfilment of physiological needs will not find the energy to pursue the needs in the next level of the hierarchy (Udechukwu, 2009; Armstrong (2012). However, good remuneration is critical to the attainment of the lower-level needs requires among employees of an organization (Udechukwu, 2009).

According to Udechukwu (2009), Maslow's hierarchy of needs is fundamental in management and psychology studies. The theory reinforces the need for constant reassessment of people's needs since needs change over time. For instance, depending on their remuneration, employees in any given organization happen to be pursuing attainment of needs at different levels on the Maslow's hierarchy. Money as a motivation works best for employees seeking lower level needs rather than those pursuing needs of a higher level.

Heylighen (1992) notes that lower level needs on Maslow's hierarchy of needs are applicable in matters of physical comfort and reasonable work hours in places of work.

Better working conditions, security of tenure, remuneration and other non-monetary benefits constitutes the safety needs on Maslow's hierarchy of needs, while collegiate relations, good customer care services and good supervisor-supervisee relations comprise the social needs. Esteem needs are usually met through praise, recognition by supervisors and promotion of employees to coveted job positions. Opportunities to participate in companies' decision organs, training and engaging in challenging and sophisticated assignments are what fulfil the self-actualization needs.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory is relevant to this study since it supports the work life balance objective in the sense that employees tend to fulfill certain needs maybe at the workplace or outside their work. When employees find the flexibility of attending to their personal commitments as they fulfill their career obligations, they get the motivation to pursue the next need in line. If the employees are able to achieve these needs while still at work, they are more comfortable staying in such an organization to make sure they actualize themselves.

2.2.3 Equity Theory

Equity theory is founded on the notion that all persons crave for reasonable and equal treatment (Adams, 1965). The term equity describes fair and respectable treatment of one person with reference to others. Such treatment is usually based on an individual's inputs and outputs. The word input refers to employee's knowledge, skills and know-how which they bring to an organization, outputs represents the employees' compensation for their inputs. Al-Zawahreh and Al-Madi (2012) observes that whenever employees perceive disparity between inputs and outputs, they work to adjust their performance to the perceived unfairness.

The organizations' reaction to inequalities emanating from the various levels of ranking among its employees is usually covered by the tenets advanced in Equity theory (Martin, 2013). For instance, whenever there is a salary disparity among employees, the most industrious workers compare among themselves to acknowledge fairness or equity, while average and dismal performers perceive low equity' (Grant & Shin, 2011). According to Taylor (2010), fairness is critical concept when analyzing pay and its implications to retention. Indeed, employees quit if they perceive unjust treatment in allocation of rewards (CIPD, 2010).

Equity theory relates compensation to employees' efforts to give assigned tasks impartial involvement commensurate to their salaries. The theory considers the parameters that one employee uses to gauge their inputs and outputs in to comparison with others, thus, forming perceptions of equality (Armstrong, 2012). Employees' perception of justice can be used to explain behaviors such as discontentment with rewards, diminished work morale and the disposition to quit work.

Equity theory validates the objective on compensation since employees would want to remain in an organization where they feel that what they are getting is commensurate to the effort they give to an organization. It is more of a psychological contract where the expectations of the employees are met and the expectations of the employers are fulfilled and this way everyone feels that whatever they get in I return is equal to whatever they have given.

2.2.4 Two-Factor Theory (Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory)

Job motivation is usually dependent on a set of factors, namely; hygiene and motivators' factors (Herzberg, 2013; Armstrong, 2012). Hygiene factors relate to psychological growth, while satisfiers relate to avoidance of pain (Viorel, Aurel, Virgil & Stefania, 2009). Salary, job security, working conditions, organizational policies and culture fall under the hygiene factors. According to Herzberg (2013), employees are not motivated by hygiene factors, rather their absence create dissatisfaction among employees. Smith and Shields (2013) notes that increased employee satisfaction is not necessarily a result of hygiene factors.

Encouraging hard work among employees and enhancing job satisfaction is a function of motivator or satisfier factors (Udechukwu, 2009). Satisfier factor includes giving employees' autonomy, recognizing their achievements and providing them opportunities for growth (Smith & Shields, 2013).

Two factor theories acknowledge that employee content or discontent in their jobs is a consequence of hygiene factors (Udechukwu, 2009). There is a big variation among employees on what causes satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Herzberg, 2013). However, two-factor theory, proposes that assigning work-related roles to employees since they have positive implications towards attainment of self-actualization and the consequent job satisfaction. Organizations should therefore enrich jobs so as to promote workers job satisfaction among their employees (Viorel, 2009).

The variable on employee recognition is validated by Two Factor theory. The theory asserts that making employee's feel valued by increasing their responsibility and recognizing their achievements raises their job satisfaction and consequently enhancing their retention. Of great importance to the human resource manager is to understand their employees since motivation varies across individuals.

2.3 Empirical Review

This section presents review of past studies related to reward strategy in human resource management and their implications on the rate of employee turnover. This review is crucial since it identifies the literature gaps which justify the study. The section is arranged according to the objectives of the study.

2.4 Career Development and Employee Retention

Career development can be regarded as an incentive for promoting employee retention and productivity (Musa, Ahmed, & Bala, 2014). It entails the company's effort to assess an employee's abilities and recommend to them possible career advancement through training. According to Mapelu and Jumah (2013), when organizations endorse their employees for specified career development programs, they raise their deployment chances and better their operations.

Career development is very significant to an employee. Numerous past studies have underscored its significance to long term survival of an organization. It lays basis for career progression opportunities with existing openings within the organization. It is therefore demonstrated in appointment of employees to positions that befit their expertise (Magnusson, & Silfverberg, 2013). Other indicators of career development include on-the-job or off-the-job training, overseas assignment, career growth opportunities, subscription to professional associations, support to attend professional forums, job enlargement, and role assignments, and equitable opportunities for career progressions among others (Leelavati, & Chalam, 2017; Magnusson, & Silfverberg, 2013).

.As a result, career development promotes organizational efficiency, high productivity and cultivates loyalty, engagement and retention of employees (Cohen & Katz, 2016). Amdany

(2017) noted how a country like Pakistan showed a strong relationship between career development programs and employee retention in telecommunication industry. Similar results were reported in Ghana by Kwenin (2013). However, working conditions in private firms slightly differs with that public sector. Some specific constructs that drive employee retention include; training and development programs, employees wellness programs, medical cover, staff welfare initiatives, and other internal mechanisms (Akala 2012; Sitati et al, 2016).

Employee perception of an organization is usually influenced by institution-initiated training. Chhabra and Mishra (2013) observe employee retention is high where workers are encouraged to acquire specialized skills and hence experience professional growth. Indeed, employees will continue working for a company where they find meaning and direction in assigned tasks. Therefore, career development provides opportunities for employees to find their dream careers and pursue higher career goals (Tan, 2008).

In organizations where employees are offered resources to grow their careers, there is heightened sense of employee loyalty to the organization. According to Musa, Ahmed and Bala (2014), loyalty is vital in the retention of employees, the organization's challenges notwithstanding. Indeed, some workers equate career development to the money they earn. Mapelu and Jumah (2013) observe that assessment of employee career needs is central to career development of employees and the general success of the organization.

Sutherland (2004) notes that employee retention rates in organizations would be boosted by organization's decision to invest considerable resources in training and development of their employees. Indeed, employees who have been lucky to advance their careers are more committed, thus giving their organizations a competitive edge over other organizations.

2.5 Work Life Balance and Employee Retention

According to Kumari (2012) work life balance is the act of an employee maintaining stability between professional duties and other responsibilities that one may be having that are personal, or related to family and the society. When there is a clash between works obligations and life responsibilities one may lose taste and may eventually leave an organization (Redman, 2009). Redman noted how some organizations help their staff to cope and balance whenever necessary. Key policy include normal leave policy, maternity policy, shift schedule policy benefits for dependents, for example, education tuition waive, hospital insurance covers among others. The study by Deery and Jago (2015) argued that such work-family policies are significant in enhancing job commitment and overall productivity as well as retention.

Recent literature from scholars such as Adebayo (2016), and Durodolu and Mamudu (2020) have indicated that an employee need to have a balance owing to many responsibilities that one may be having from the workplace and from the community. As much as the act of balancing as more of an individual obligation than a corporate duty, their studies emphasized on the need for organization to establish measure for supporting their staff in community development endeavors, personal development as much as they focus on improving organization's productivity. Work life balance is characterized by responsibilities that one does in the work place including the extra duties and assignments; personal engagements, family commitments, and other tasks and responsibilities that one has obligations in the societies (Abdulkadir, 2018; Mwangi et al., 2017).

The malleability of work schedules to allow a balance between career and social life is gradually becoming a key consideration in the employees' decision on whether to stay in an organization. Today, work schedules that are flexible enough to give employees room to attend to both their personal and professional life is highly preferred (Ellenbecker,

2014). A job that offers the holder a room to accomplish parental, family and other personal obligations has minimized chances for employee turnover rates (Loan-Clarke, Arnold, Coombs, Hartley, and Bosley, 2010).

Deery and Jago (2015) explores the subject of talent management, Work-Life Balance (WLB) and strategies used by the employers to minimize job turnover in the hotel business in Australia. Their studies draw data from recent literature on the said themes. It considered the characteristics of an organization, individual worker's attributes, the imbalance between work and personal commitments and organizational policies in its approach, as it sought to establish whether the aforementioned concepts enhance job fulfilment, loyalty and employee retention. The study used emphasized that successful talent management impedes employee turnover.

Work life balance is a central factor when studying factors that affect worker turnover in any organization (Deery & Jago, 2015). Recent literature shows that there is a definite connection between WLB and employee mindsets such as happiness with one's job, loyalty and individual aspects like anxiety and drunkenness. This link is critical in devising strategies to retain talented staff.

The centrality of work life balance arises from the ever increasing levels of anxiety, rivalry and fears in life. Employees are therefore seeking best methods that would assist them make a balance between job obligations and individual's social commitments. Agha et al. (2017) investigated the connection between social life-employment balance and the job fulfilment among post primary teachers in Oman. The study established that work and social commitments are always antagonistic towards each. This work-personal life interference negatively impacts a worker's feelings of job fulfilment, while its

enhancement positively affects job satisfaction. It is therefore important that organizations seek to integrate work and personal life through work-life balance initiatives.

Some organizations have well-established counseling programs for its staff with an intention to help them cope with challenging issues that may arise in the work place or outside the work station. This is critical in promoting behavior change in employees and further helps them develop appropriate coping strategies (Armstrong, 2012). As employees undergo various changes in the workplace, they may find some tasks as key contributors to imbalance in their life. Such staff can be rotated by being assigned other duties in a different section or department (Mwangi, 2017), for example, an Administrative Officer in the Department of Land being to the Department of Education. The new assignment may come with new challenges, opportunities for learning new things and may also help a staff to break monotony and overcome repetitive tasks. This goes a long way helping staff to balance the work place responsibilities.

2.6 Compensation and Employee Retention

Generally, compensation can be defined as either a monetary reward for a person who has either been injured or suffered loss, or a non-financial benefit awarded to an employee by the employer as an appreciation or a motivation (Bronchetti & McInerney, 2017). Non-financial benefits such as mortgages, diverse insurance covers for workers and allowances constitute the notion of compensation.

The main indicators of compensation as used in various organizations include commensurate salaries and wages, overtime payments, annual bonus, equitable payments for working during holidays (Wambugu & Ombui, 2013; Yang, 2011). Organizations have unique packages which they provide to their staff to compensate them for their inputs. In most cases, organizations have established salary grading structures and payment

schedules for other non-recurring benefits. That notwithstanding, organizations have always exploited the value of compensation to attract expertise and excellence in their human resource (Sharew, 2018).

Globally, research demonstrates that compensation significantly minimizes employee turnover and is important in enhancing employee loyalty. Brown, Bosselman and Thomas (2016) observe that non-financial compensation in form of quality work environment has significant influence on employee turnover intentions. Lack of compensation exposes companies to unsatisfactory working environment. Williams, McDaniel and Ford (2007) found out that employees remain committed where companies communicate their compensation policies.

In Australia and Europe, both private and public firms reported how the amount of compensation was positively correlated with hierarchical mobility and obligations of staff. This meant that, the higher the responsibility in a hierarchical structure, the weighty the compensation of an employees. Many employees view such mobility and respective compensation as motivating and minimizes overall staff turnover (Mwangi, 2017).

The banking industry in Ghana was reported by Chiekezie (2017) to be experiencing high employee's turnover. A key solution to this challenge was noted to be the lack of commensurate compensation among commercial banks in Ghana hence the frequent mobility of staff.

Kumur (2013) investigated employees' benefits as a predictor for staff retention in hospitality industry in India. The study utilized interview and analyzed documents from exit interview recorders to collect data from 32 restaurant SMEs. It observed a strong link between the employees' compensation package and turnover. The study recommended

need for better compensation policy owing to its impacts on employee engagement and related other related merits that would minimize the need to look for other jobs.

The company's scheme for rewarding workers is an instrumental tool for encouraging retention and excellence. Although there is a great deal of inter-individual variation in understanding the significance of financial rewards for employee retention, there is enough literature that demonstrates the connection between compensation and employee retention.

2.7 Recognition and Employee Retention

Recognition can be defined as appreciation with a show of gratitude. The principle of positive reinforcement is founded on the principle that the actions and activities that attract rewards are likely to recur. Hence, employees who are appreciated feel inspired to better their performance (Sutherland, 2008). Within an organization, status system is a vital tool for motivation. For this reason, recognition schemes should be founded on competence, skills and talents of employees in organizations (Wambugu & Ombui, 2013).

Employee recognition may entail tangible and non-tangible items. It is usually characterized by appreciation programs (oral and non-oral), allowing staff to participate in decision making, delegation of authority, cash rewards, recognition certificates, recognition ceremonies, and others (Wambugu & Ombui, 2013).

Managers who appreciate that performing employees are harder to keep usually use recognition and reward program to steer their organizations to great success. Reward schemes can either be official or unofficial (Uddin, Das & Rahman, 2008). Formal reward programs offer material incentives to employees, while informal programs provide positive feedback by way of verbal praise.

Although some employers may dismiss reward programs as expensive, Wairimu and Ndeto (2019) observes that motivation tool of rewards raise employee morale, lowers their stress and absenteeism; and further reduces employee turnover. As such, much as employees benefit from reward programs, the employer too benefits from increased employee productivity and minimized costs related to turnover rates.

Different employees have preferences in so far as recognition is concerned. As such, employers should customize recognition (Samuel & Chipunza, 2009), and avoid the error recognizing the wrong person. It is also crucial that recognition be made commensurate to the degree of achievement. Poulston (2008) observes that there is low employee turnover in institutions where employees included in decision making.

2.8 Reward Management Practices and Employee Retention

Armstrong (2005) describes reward management as the process of ensuring that input made by members of staff towards realization of objectives of a given department are duly recognized appropriately through monetary and non-monetary items. Reward management entails development of reward scheme, its execution and continuation with the aim of satisfying the expectations of both the company and the shareholders (Thompson, 2014).

The study by San et al (2012) done in Malaysia focused on different strategies employed by insurance companies to measure performance of employees. They reported that

employees reward does not only improve performance but is also significant in enhancing the image and reputation of an organization. This is because, when an employee is duly rewarded, one feels deeply appreciated which further heightens self-actualization. This will ultimately cause employees to talk positively of their organizations. This study did not however link the construct to retention aspects.

In Nigeria, Opute (2010) noted serious challenges experienced by multinational corporations in sustain employee's rewards. This was attributed to harsh social economics factors, high level of unemployment, industrial unrest, low bottom-line among other contextual drivers. The study did not examine how such combinations of environmental factors were impacting retention of employees especially in public organizations.

To establish the impact reward strategy on job turnover rates, Okotoh (2015) studies the employees of Communications Authority of Kenya (CAK). The findings of his study indicated that Communications Authority of Kenya utilized rewards stratagem, job appraisals and grading to diminish employee turnover rate.

Further locally, Rotich (2020) focused on reward schemes, appraisals, salary reviews and grading while investigating influence of reward strategy on turnover rates in telecommunication firms in Kenya. Explanatory research design guided the study. The study confirmed a significant influence of rewards in minimizing employee in telecommunication firms. There was a positive significant relationship between reward management practices and employee retention in telecommunication companies. The findings indicated that for every unit of upward revision of a reward there is an equivalent improvement of worker retention in the studied telecommunication institutions. Kathombe et al (2018) established a strong relationship between financial & non-financial rewards

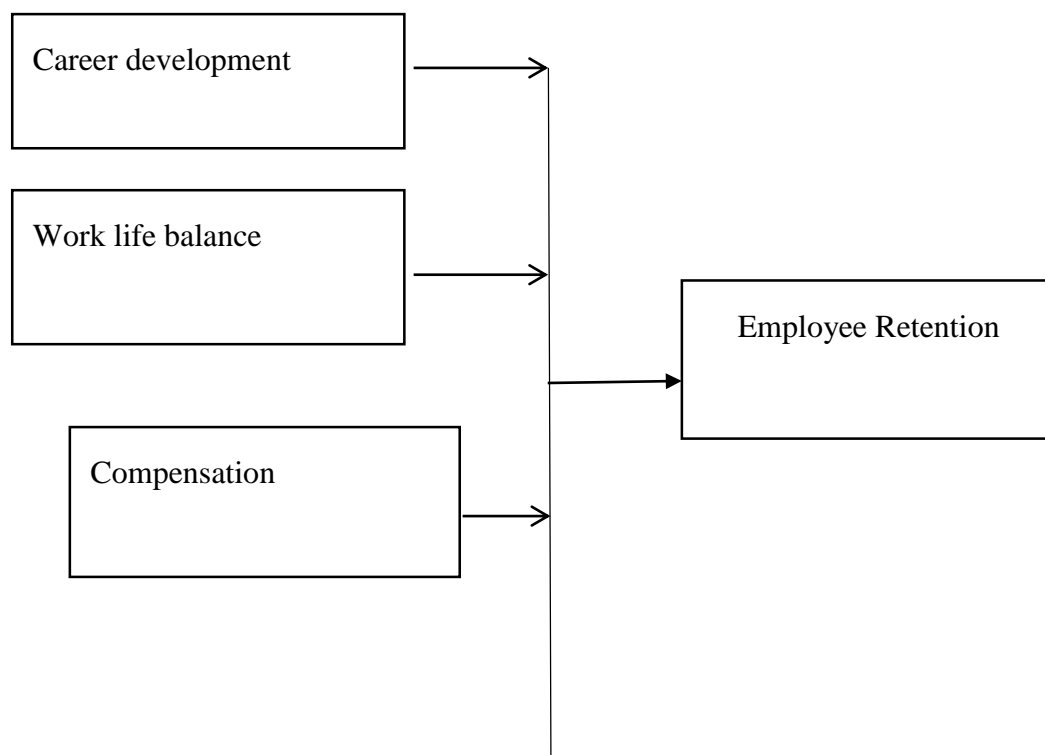
and performance of an employee. Although these studies underscored the significance of rewards to organization performance, they did not focus on staff retention.

2.9 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework can be defined as a figurative representation of the link between the study variables. Figure 2.1 shows the conceptual framework for this study.

Figure 2.1

Conceptual Framework





Independent variables

Dependent variable

2.9.1 Explanation of Variables

The conceptual framework represents the relationship between the dependent variables, namely; career development, work-life balance, compensation and employee recognition; and the independent variable, namely; employee retention.

Career Development

Career development and consequent promotions is a prerequisite to better remuneration and assignment of key roles, as well as an expression of employer's confidence that works to motivate workers to take the company to greater levels of excellence (Johnston, Griffith, Burton, & Carson, 2015). Indeed, promotions are an effective tool in the retention system of any organization (Döckel, Basson & Coetzee, 2014).

Work-life Balance

According to Ng'ethe (2013) employees are motivated to remain with an organization where that management understands its importance. Work-life balance is demonstrated in organization's encouragement for its staff to take vacations, offer late arrivals where employees stay late in the night to wrap up a project, or give day offs as compensation (Coetzee & Martins, 2007).

Compensation

Compensation refers to an awarded, often usually money, offered to someone as a recompense for misfortune or loss. It can also describe the financial gifts to employees in form of remuneration (Armstrong, 2009). Compensation can also take the forms of non-monetary benefits like pension, profit sharing, retirement plans and allowances (Liccione, 2007).

Employee Recognition

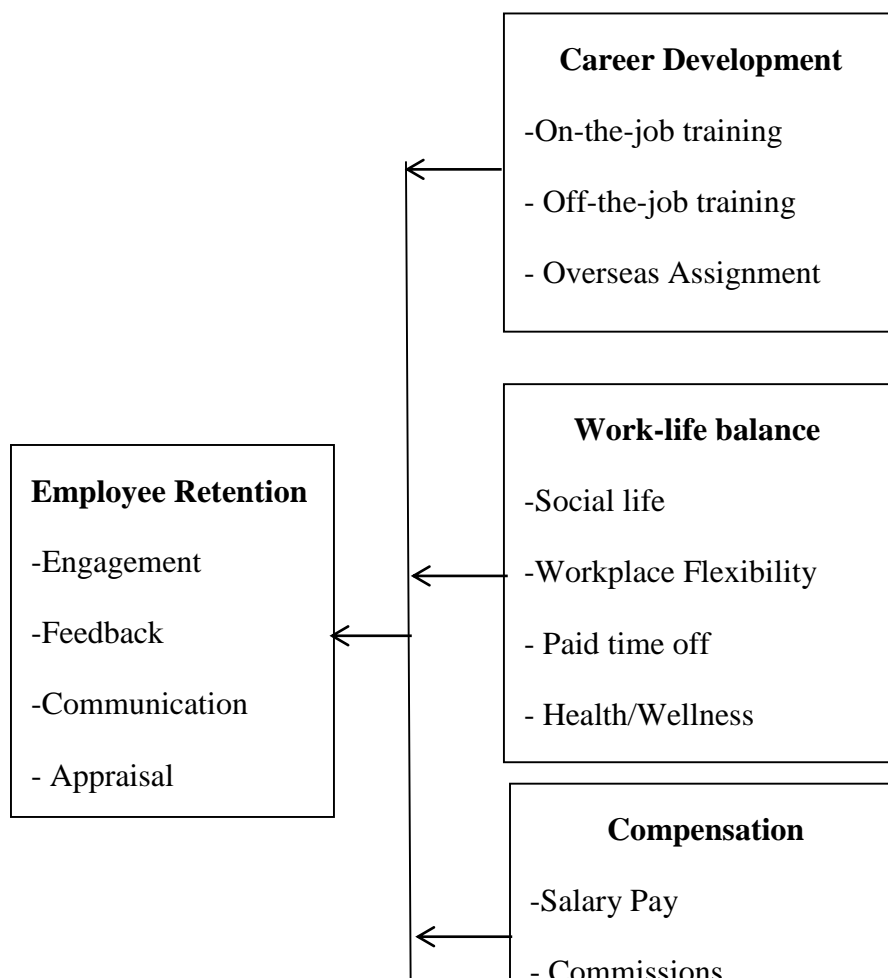
The productivity of many employees is normally driven by a sense of being appreciated. This appreciation and recognition is a strong retention factor for the staff. Bartłomiejczuk (2015) observes that feelings of being appreciated enables employees to remain fulfilled with their jobs even when their peers are offered higher pay in competitor organizations.

2.10 Operational Framework

Figure 2.2 gives the operational framework of this study. It outlines the independent and dependent variables of the study as well as their measurements. Career development was measured using training on internship approaches, Off-the-job training and Overseas Assignment. Previous studies including Musa, Ahmed and Bala (2014) and Cohen and Katz (2016) also used similar measurements. Work-life balance variable was measured using Social life workplace Flexibility, paid/unpaid time off and Health/Wellness adopted from Deery and Jago (2015) and Agha et al. (2017) studies. Compensation was measured using salary pay, commissions and on-call pay, which were also used by Sharew (2018). Recognition was measured using service awards, retirement awards and appreciation luncheon. Similar indicators were also used by Wairimu & Ndeto (2019). The dependent variable employee retention was measured using engagement, feedback, communication and appraisal. These measurements were also used by Okotoh (2015).

Figure 2.2

Operational Framework



Dependent variable

Independent variables

2.11 Summary of Literature and Research Gaps

This chapter reviewed theories that relate employee retention to career development, work life balance, compensation and employee recognition. Each of the four theories adopted in this study, namely; Human Capital theory, Equity theory, Hierarchy-of-Needs theory and Two-Factor theory, was used to explain the four hypothesis of the study. In addition, the chapter reviewed empirical literature that relates to employee retention as a consequence of reward management strategy. The studies reviewed indicated that reward management practices influence employee retention. Finally, conceptual and operational frameworks that indicate the relationship between study variables have been provided.

The link between reward management and employee turnover rates has attracted the curiosity of many researchers. For instance, while Sangaran and Jeetesh (2015) investigates factors leading to resignation of hotel workers, Brough and Frame (2004)

explores the impact of sexual harassment within an organization, social welfare of workers and retention rates. Further, Bigliardi (2005) examines the effect of organizational culture and job advancement opportunities on resignation rates among engineers. However, there is no study known to the researcher that has investigated the influence of reward management strategies on worker in the County Governments of Meru in Kenya.

Theoretical and empirical review of studies related to this study indicated that reward practices employee retention. However, literature on the finest reward management practices that can be adopted by organizations is fragmented (Chew & Chan, 2008). Comparatively, Africa has not enjoyed much attention as Europe and America have done as pertains researches conducted on employee retention (Samuel & Chipunza, 2009; Tettey, 2009).

A study by Mapelu and Jumah (2013) examined the impact of training and development on employee turnover. Their study, however, did not focus on other reward management practices that the present study examines. Further, the study was limited to Kisumu as opposed to Meru County that this study considers. Further, a study by Kimunge (2014) which examined the influence of some reward management practices on retention was limited to officers mandated to design Kenya Vision 2030, hence creating a knowledge gap for the present study. Indeed, the absence of literature on how reward management practices influence retention of personnel in the county governments in Kenya accords this study the research gap that it seeks to fill.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the data collection and analysis procedures used in this study. It describes the research design, data collection tools, sampling and the sample size, validity and reliability of the research instruments, as well as the data analysis techniques and presentation.

3.2 Research Design

A research design can be defined as a plan of how the researcher intends to carry out the research (Burns and Grove, 2003). In this study, the researcher used descriptive research design. According to Sekaran (2011), descriptive survey research design allows the researcher to describe the features with reference to the study variables. Descriptive

research design is apt where the researcher intends to establish the interconnectedness of variables (Elahi & Dehdashti, 2011). The choice of this design was informed by the theoretical direction of the study and allowed the researcher malleability essential for data collection and analysis (Blumberg, 2014). The design was the most suitable for this study since the potentially related factors were measured at a specific point in time for a defined population and also was useful in investigating the reward management strategy as practiced in Meru County Government.

3.3 Location of the Study

This study was conducted in Meru County. Meru County is among the forty-seven counties recognized by the Kenyan constitution of 2010. It is located on the eastern side of Mt. Kenya, covering an area of 6936 square kilometers and has a population of approximately 1.4 million residents.

The Meru County Government has one of vibrant human resource strategy and a good budget to support staff development program. Each department usually have a budget where such expenditures are anchored. Similarly, the county organizes for several staff bonding activities on annual basis. Despite these initiatives, some department still report difficulties in retaining talented staff.

3.4 Target Population

Cooper and Schindler (2014) define population as a collection of characteristics that form the basis for addition in a study. A population can be divided into two categories, namely; the target population and the accessible population. While the target population defines the entirety of members of a hypothetical group, events or objects that constitutes the foundation for generalizing the findings of the study, accessible population refers to total number of persons who reasonably could be added in the sample (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2014). The population of this study constituted 66 departmental heads of Meru County Government. They were expected to provide accurate information in regard to reward management practices and employee retention.

Table 3.1

Target Population

Departments	Staff from various departments
Agriculture livestock and fisheries	4
Education Technology, culture gender and social services	7
Lands public works physical planning & Urban	5
Environment wildlife & natural resources	3
Finance economic planning & ICT	7
Youth and sports	5
Health	5
Trade investment Tourism & co-operatives	7
Roads Transport and energy	3
Water & Irrigation	3

Legal affairs, public service management & administration	10
Meru Alcohol Board	2
Meru Water and Sewerage Services	3
Meru County Revenue Board	6
Micro Finance	2
Meru Investment Corporation	2
<hr/>	
TOTAL	66
<hr/>	

Source: HR Office, Meru County, 2019

3.5 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

Trochim (2014) defines sample size as a list of available persons among whom a sample for investigation is drawn. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), a sampling frame explains the definite number of entities constituting the pool from which a sample is taken. The target population for this study comprised of all departmental heads of the County Government of Meru. The choice of department heads was justified because the study is about employee retention and they form part of employees and lastly, they were likely to give adequate and honest information given their positions.

It is imperative that the sample size demonstrates adequate characteristics of the population, much as it simplifies its analysis, (Kothari 2004). Indeed, a sample should be an archetypal of the population (Latham, 2007). Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) observe that the sample size must be an adequate illustration of the entire population. However, sampling was not done in this study since the population was not large. Therefore, all the 66 department heads were included in the study.

3.6 Research Instruments

Data collection is the process of gathering and measuring information on variables of interest, in an established systematic fashion that enables one to answer stated research questions, test hypotheses and evaluate outcomes (Creswell, 2011). This study employed the use of structured questionnaires in the collection of data. Questionnaires were appropriate in this study since they are easy to administer. Further, administration of questionnaires is inexpensive and less laborious as compared to other tools such as interviews.

The questionnaire was in form of closed ended Likert scale where the respondents were required to indicate the rating of their reactions on a calibrated scale with responses ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree” as shown in Appendix I. Using the Likert scale was apt since it enabled the researcher to obtain simple responses that subject to scientific enquiry (Allen, 2011). The choice for the questionnaire was informed by its abilities to give respondents freedom to express their views or opinions more objectively. Few open-ended questions were also included to allow staff to freely express their feelings and provide additional comments. The questionnaire had six sections. Section A contained the demographic information of respondents; section B dealt with career development; section C contained questions investigating the compensation issues of staff; section D probed on work life balance; section E asked question on employee recognition while section F sought information on the dependent variable, that is, employee retention.

3.7 Reliability and Validity Test

The consistency of the instrumentation was ascertained by carrying out a reliability test. According to Bryman and Bell (2015), reliability of a questionnaire is demonstrated by the ability of the tool to draw similar answers even when administered severally by diverse researchers. Cronbach Coefficient Alpha test was used to test the internal consistency of

the research tools. Low level of reliability of the research instrument is indicated by scores between 0-0.6 while a high level of reliability is suggested by scores of between 0.7-1.

The correctness and the relevance of the research instrument, also known as its validity, were computed using content validity test. Content validity refers to extent to which data collected using a given tool signifies a particular area of hypothesis (Metcalf, 2008). The researcher sought expert opinion from the supervisors in respect to content validity. Mugenda (2008) suggested that a pilot group should range from 5 to 10 respondents. Further a pilot group ranging from 5 to 10 respondents was used to fill in the questionnaire helping in assessing the degree of consistency and five members from selected pilot County were selected to fill the pilot questionnaire totaling to 10 questionnaires.

3.8 Data Collection Procedure

The researcher first got an authorization letter from Meru County Government. The researcher then booked appointments with Heads of Department and section which was followed by a pre-visit to the selected departments on the respective appointment dates. The researcher employed self-administered method of distributing questionnaires to the respondents, where the questionnaires were delivered by hand to safeguard their safety while on shipment. To ensure that respondents understood the purpose of the research, a cover letter explaining the objectives of the study, as well as giving instructions on how the questionnaire was to be filled. Three research assistants were engaged to assist in data collection exercise. The researcher ensured that adequate training of research assistants was conducted. In some instances, respondents completed the questionnaires in the presence of the research assistant while in other instances, question was picked later as agreed with individual staff. All collected questionnaires were numbered chronologically

to ease data analysis process.

3.9 Data Analysis and Presentation

Kothari (2011) explains that research data should be sort out, evaluated and organized according to guidelines outlined while crafting the research design. Analysis of data entails the translation of data into meaningful knowledge that can be used while making conclusions, amendments, error correction, and alteration of prohibitions and assembling of the information collected. The study used both qualitative and quantitative data analysis. Cronbach's alpha was used to ascertain the quality and consistency of the study, and Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS Version 25) for Windows was used in data analysis. The researcher used rate counts, percentages, means, standard deviations, regressions and correlations in analyzing the data. According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2011), regression entails solving statistical relationships between one or more variables. This study utilized multiple regression analysis to demonstrate the correlation between independent and dependent variables.

Thereafter, both the descriptive and the inferential statistics were utilized in the analysis of quantitative data, while frequency, mean and standard deviations were employed in analysis of descriptive information. With respect to inferential statistics, variance and multivariate regression analysis were used in this study to test the hypotheses. The study registered 95% confidence level. A significance level of 0.05 indicated in this study was as a result of the 95% confidence interval. These Figures implied that any null hypotheses whose p-value fell below the significance level of 0-05was rejected. Variance was vital in determining dissimilarity in means of diverse classes. In order to establish the connection between the dependent variable and the independent variables, the researcher conducted the correlation analysis as well as he multiple regression analysis. Orodho (2007)

observes that multiple regression analysis is important because it establishes the relationship between variables. The assumptions made on different investigative simulations chosen for this study were verified using multiple linear regressions which indicated normal distribution of data. The regression equation assumes the formula indicated below:

$$Y = B_0 + B_1X_1 + B_2X_2 + B_3X_3 + B_4X_4 + \varepsilon$$

Where;

Y= Employee retention in the County Government of Meru.

B₀ = Constant

β₁- β₄=Coefficients of determination

X₁ = Career Development

X₂ = Work life balance

X₃ = Compensation

X₄ = Employee Recognition

ε= Error term

3.10 Ethical Considerations

This research adhered to strict ethical procedures laid down by both Kenya Methodist University School of Business, and National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation, NACOSTI. Before starting to collect data, the researcher acquired a letter from Kenya Methodist University, School of Business authorizing them to conduct the research. In addition, the researcher obtained research permit from NACOSTI as indicated in Appendix III.

The researcher sought informed consent of the respondents to participate in the research process by explaining to them in detail the reason and benefits of the study and their participation is voluntary. To ensure anonymity and truthfulness of the data collected, the researcher ensured there was no provision for the respondents to indicate their names on the questionnaires. Confidentiality in this study observed by ensuring that data collected was kept in safe custody. Further, the biasness and falsifying of data collected was avoided and the results were truthfully reported so as to advance knowledge in the study area. Finally, all sources that used in the study were acknowledged using American Psychological Association guidelines, 7th edition.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the data collected, the findings of the study and a discussion of the results arranged with regard to the objectives of the study. The study sought to investigate the relationship between reward management practices and retention of employee in the county government of Meru, Kenya. Both the descriptive and the inferential statistical findings presented in form of Tables and graphs are given in this chapter. The key variables are: career development, work life balance, compensation and employee recognition. Hypotheses testing results are also provided. A multiple regression model is estimated to corroborate the correlation between reward management strategy and employee retention.

4.2 Response Rate

The researcher administered 66 questionnaires to every departmental head of the County Government of Meru public service. Out of the 66 questionnaires, 51 were appropriately filled and returned, representing 77% response rate. The 77 percent response rate was deemed substantial to do the analysis of the data collected in this study. This implied that information obtained was adequate for analysis and inference.

4.3 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

4.3.1 Age Distribution

There were 25 respondents aged between 21 – 30 years old representing 49.0 percent; followed by 18 participants between the age of 31 – 40 representing 35.3 percent of all respondents; 4 respondents aged 41 – 50 (7.8 %) and 3 respondents aged 51 -60 (5.9%). Participants aged under 20 were least represented (1, 2.0%), as shown in Table 4.1

Table 4.1

Age Bracket of Respondents

	Frequency	Percentage
Under 20	1	2.0
21 – 30	25	49.0
31 – 40	18	35.3
41 – 50	4	7.8
51 – 60	3	5.9

Total	51	100.0
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The above findings indicate that respondents aged between 21 and 40 years were the majority in this study. This is a relatively young group of employees working for the County Government of Meru. The implication is that it might be difficult to retain such young employees. This is because young employees are more likely to shift jobs compared to older employees. This means that the management of the County may need to find ways of ensuring that the young employees do not leave. The use of reward management practices maybe a solution to ensuring high retention, especially among young employees.

4.3.2 Gender of Respondents

The findings in Table 4.2 revealed that 54.9 percent were female while male respondents constituted 45.1 percent. The findings indicated that there were more women working for the County Government of Meru than men.

Table 4.2

Gender of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	23	45.1
Female	28	54.9
Total	51	100

The Table above indicates that women employees are slightly more than male employees in the County Government of Meru. However, the difference in gender composition is small and is not expected to have any effect on the study subject matter. Notably, the one-third gender rule according to the 2010 constitution of Kenya was met given that either gender had a representation of above 33 percent.

4.3.3 Years of Service

It was established that most of the respondents had worked below five years at the County Government of Meru (76.5%). Following were participants who had worked at the County Government for 6 – 10 years (17.6%) and finally those who had worked for 26 - 30 years constituting 5.9%.

Table 2.3

Distribution of Years of service at County Government of Meru

	Frequency	Percentage
Below 5	39	76.5
6 – 10	9	17.6
26 – 30	3	5.9
Total	51	100.0

Table 4.3 indicates that majority of employees had worked in the county government of Meru for less than five years. This could be attributed to change of County Government

leadership following the 2017 general elections, where a new Governor was elected. It is likely that the new leadership brought new employees to help them achieve their manifesto. The implication is that employee retention level at the County Government is low given that over 70 percent of the employees had served for less than five years.

4.4 Reliability Analysis

In this study, the researcher used Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient to evaluate internal consistency of the research tool. Commutated reliability of the collected data was .894 indicating an 89.4% reliability level. This was considered reliable as stated by Tavakol and Dennick (2011) that a reliability score of more than 0.70 is considered acceptable. This implied that the items used to measure the study variables were appropriate and therefore, the subsequent findings were accurate. Table 4.4 presents the reliability statistics of the questionnaire.

Table 4.4

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha Based on		
Cronbach's Alpha	Standardized Items	N of Items
.886	.878	30

4.5 Descriptive Statistics of Career Development

Objective 1 of this study sought to establish the influence of career development on employee retention in the county Government of Meru. To achieve this respondent were presented with statements on career development and indicated their level of agreement in each. Results of average scores recorder are presented in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5***Descriptive statistics of Career Development***

No	Statement	1	2	3	4	5	Mean
.	(N=51)						n
(i)	My employer offers on-job training	6(11.8%)	5 (9.8%)	5(9.8%)	30(58.8%)	5(9.8%)	3.45
(ii)	Employees go for overseas assignment	19(37.3%)	17(33.3%)	11(21.6%)	1(2.0%)	3(5.9%)	2.06
(iii)	There is job rotation	12(23.5%)	11(21.6%)	8(15.7%)	14(27.5%)	6(11.8%)	2.82

(iv)	Coaching is done	12(23.5%)	3(5.9%)	9(17.6%)	25(49.0%)	2(3.9%)	3.04
(v)	There is mentorship program	9(17.6%)	10(19.6%)	15(29.4%)	15(29.4%)	2(3.9%)	2.82
(vi)	Employees are trained on new Technology	14(27.5%)	4(7.8%)	9(17.6%)	22(43.1%)	2(3.9%)	2.92

Findings on career development revealed that respondents relatively agreed with the statements provided. 30 (58.8%) respondents agreed to their employer offering on-job training as evidenced by the average mean recorded of 3.45. 14 (27.5%) respondents also agreed to existing job rotation in their respective departments resulting to the average mean of 2.84. With the recorded average mean of 3.04, 25 (49.0%) of the respondents also agreed to coaching culture practiced in the departments. 22 (43.1%) participants agreed to trainings on new training also representing a high average mean score of 2.92. There were however mixed reactions on the statement about existence of a mentorship program with equal number of participants neutral to the statement and equal number agreeing to it. One statement had the lowest average score recorded. This was result of 11 (21.6%) participants were neutral to the statement of employees going for overseas assignment.

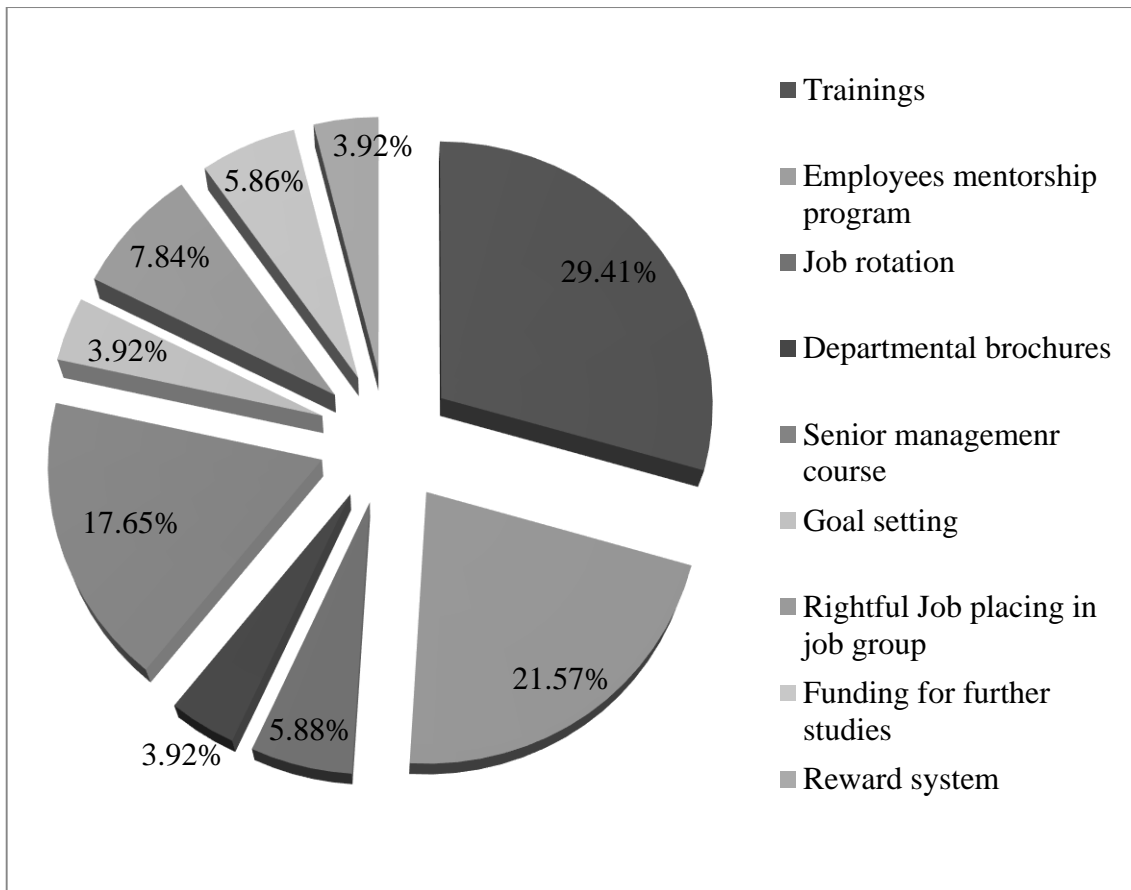
The results above imply that the county government of Meru has made efforts towards enhancing career development of the employees. Notably, the government provides on job-training, coaching, job rotation, mentorship program and use of technology to the staff. The implication is that employees are likely to remain loyal to the institution and therefore, increase the retention rate. High employee retention is good for the County Government

since it can focus on service delivery as opposed recruiting and training new employees all the time.

Departmental heads were further requested to offer proposals to the county government of Meru on how career development can be enhanced in their respective departments. Their suggestions were recorded as shown in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1

Alternative ways of enhancing career development in Meru County Government



From results above, on-job training, job rotation and coaching are identified to be crucial for career development in driving employee retention. The findings are in same comparison with Norah, Susan and Waititu (2016) who noted that career development structures are interrelated and, they work together to advance efficiency, retention and output of workers. The implication of the findings is that with the enhancement of on-job training, job rotation, coaching and other career development strategies, the employee retention level will increase. This means that the institution can channel efforts towards realization of the primary goal which is service delivery to the people of Meru.

4.6 Descriptive Statistics of Work-life Balance

Objective 2 of this study was to find out how work-life balance of the employees of the County Government of Meru affected their retention. To achieve this respondent were presented with statements touching on work-life balance and indicate their level of agreement in each. Table 4.6 presents the results of average scores recorder.

Table 4.6*Descriptive results on work-life balance*

Statement (N=51)	1	2	3	4	5	Mean
My employer offers time for social life	6(11.8%)	6(11.8%)	11(21.6%)	23(45.1%)	5(9.8%)	3.29
There is workplace flexibility	4(7.8%)	3(5.9%)	9(17.6%)	31(60.8%)	4(7.8%)	3.54
Employees are given paid offs	8(15.7%)	8(15.7%)	8(15.7%)	22(43.1%)	5(9.8%)	3.15
Employees are given unpaid offs	8(15.7%)	12(23.5%)	14(27.5%)	13(25.5%)	4(7.8%)	2.86
There is a health insurance in my organization	2(3.9%)	0(0.0%)	4(7.8%)	21(41.2%)	24(47.1%)	4.27
Employees are given financial support if need be	6(11.8%)	16(31.4%)	9(17.6%)	14(27.5%)	6(11.8%)	2.96
We have an insurance policy in our organization	4(7.8%)	5(9.8%)	5(9.8%)	24(47.1%)	13(25.5%)	3.72
Employees are entitled to annual leave	1(2.0%)	4(7.8%)	4(7.8%)	16(31.4%)	26(51.0%)	4.23

Results on Table 4.6 above reveals that most of the respondents agreed to the assertions provided. Representing the highest average scores of 4.27 and 4.23, 24 (47.1%)

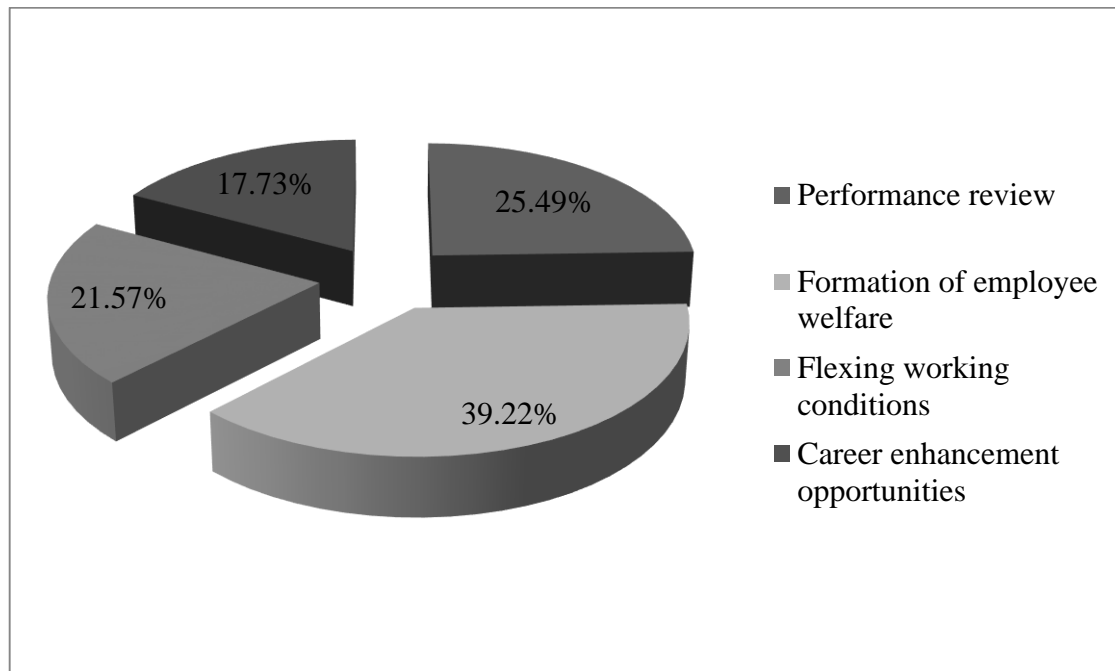
respondents strongly agreed to existence of a health insurance in County Government of Meru and 26(51.0%) respondents to employees entitled to annual leave. 31(60.8%) respondents agreed on workplace flexibility evidenced by the average mean score of 3.54. Identically, 22(43.1%) respondents also agreed to the employees being given paid of resulting to the average mean recorded of 3.15. However, 16(31.4%) respondents differed with the statement regarding the provision of financial support.

The findings indicated that majority of employees agreed with the statements on work-life balance implying that work-life balance is a significant aspect for determining employee retention in an organization. The results also imply that a number of elements are essential in boosting work-life balance. These are; annual leaves, presence of organizational insurance policy and workplace flexibility. Provision of these work-life balance enablers is expected to enhance employee retention.

Respondents were further asked to provide suggestions on how work – life balance can be enhanced in their respective departments. The results of this variable are presented in Figure 4.2.

Figure 1.2

Ways of enhancing work-life balance in Meru County Government



The above findings mirror those of Robert (2019) who states that flexible work arrangements including telecommunicating, flextime, compressed workweek and job-sharing build employee loyalty, fulfilment and promote employee retention. This means that when there is flexible working condition, formation of employee welfare, career enhancement opportunities among others, then employees are likely to remain loyal and continue working for the County Government.

4.7 Descriptive Statistics of Compensation

In pursuit of gaining in sights on how compensation influence employee retention in the County Government of Meru, respondents were asked to say to what extent they agreed or disagreed with statements provided. The findings of average scores recorder are indicated in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7

Descriptive statistics on compensation

Statement (N=51)	1	2	3	4	5	Mean
Employees have a monthly salary	0(0.0%)	4(7.8%)	0(0.0%)	16(31.4%)	31(60.0%)	4.45
Commission is given on piece rate	16(31.4%)	19(37.3%)	11(21.6%)	3(5.9%)	2(3.9%)	2.14
Work on call is paid	13(25.5%)	18(35.3%)	16(31.4%)	3(5.9%)	1(2.0%)	2.24
There is holiday pay where earned	12(23.5%)	13(25.5%)	17(33.3%)	7(13.7%)	2(3.9%)	2.49
Employees receive stock pay where necessary	14(27.5%)	13(25.5%)	15(29.4%)	8(15.7%)	1(2.0%)	2.39
There is subsidized hours pay	17(33.3%)	14(27.5%)	16(31.4%)	2(3.9%)	2(3.9%)	2.20

Results from Table 4.7 above show disparities in agreeing to statements aimed at establishing how compensation influences employee retention in county government of Meru. 31(60.0%) respondents strongly agreed on having a monthly salary as represented by the average mean of 4.451. 17(33.3%) respondents were neutral to holiday pay where

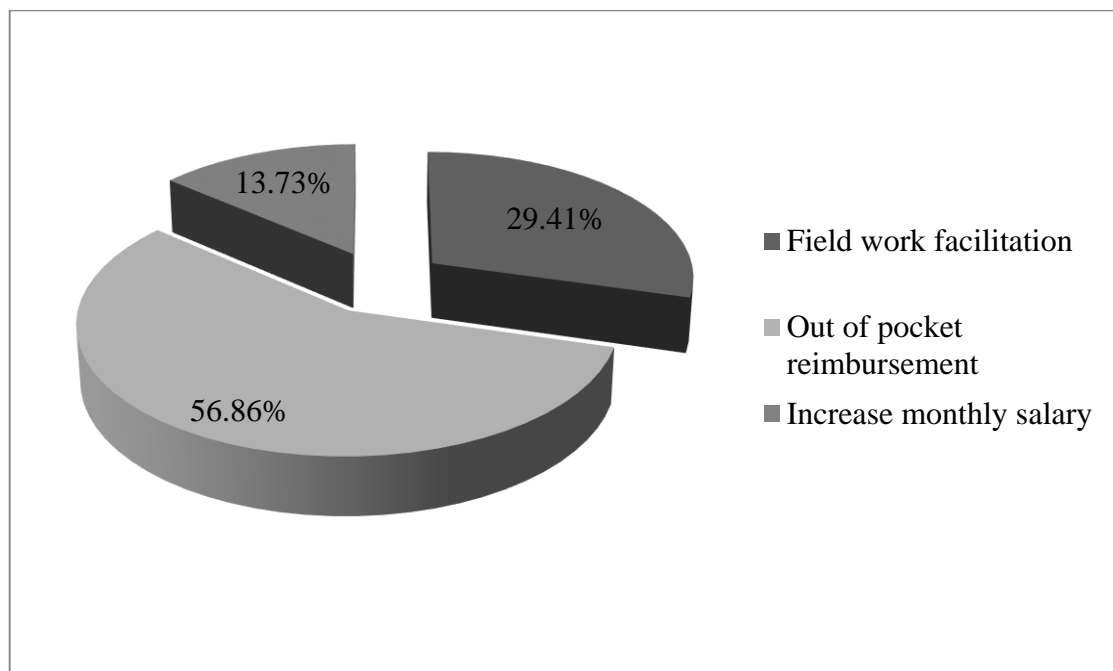
earned as stipulated with the average mean of 2.49. 15(29.4%) respondents were also neutral to the statement regarding employees receiving stock pay where necessary. Identically 16(31.4%) respondents remained neutral on presence of subsidized work pay as evidenced by the average mean score of 2.20. In contrast, 19(37.3%) participants disagreed on commission being given on piece rate as represented by the average mean score of 2.14.

The findings denote that a monthly salary and entitlement to holiday pay are the most essential aspects of compensation enhancing employee retention. The implication is that provided employees receive a monthly salary and paid holiday, then they are likely to continue working for the county government. This implies that compensation in form of monthly salary and paid holiday is an important determinant of employee retention.

Respondents were further asked to provide suggestions on how compensations can be enhanced in their respective departments. The results were noted as shown in Figure 4.3.

Figure 4.3

Ways of improving compensations of employees in Meru County Government



Findings in Figure 4.3 agree with those of Phill and David (2013) who state that compensation and benefit-related approaches result to managing role expectations and that they foster positive relations among co-workers and immediate supervisors in turn enhancing employee retention. The findings imply that compensation in form of field work facilitation; out of pocket reimbursement and increased monthly salary will most likely enhance employee retention in the County Government of Meru.

4.8 Descriptive Statistics of Employee Recognition

The researcher sought to investigate the influence of employee recognition on the retention of employees in the county Government of Meru. To achieve this, the participants were requested to state the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with a set of statements provided. Table 4.8 indicates the findings of average scores recorder are shown in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8

Descriptive statistics on employee recognition

Recorder average means on employee recognition revealed that most of the participants

Statement (N=51)	1	2	3	4	5	Mean
Employees are entitled to service awards	11(21.6%)	11(21.6%)	11(21.6%)	13(25.5%)	5(9.8%)	2.80
Employees receive retirement benefits	2(3.9%)	0(0.00%)	6(11.8%)	25(49.0%)	18(35.3%)	4.12
Employees are appreciated for job well done	8(15.7%)	10(19.6%)	12(23.5%)	16(31.4%)	5(9.8%)	3.00
There are opportunities for team leadership	4(7.8%)	10(19.6%)	15(29.4%)	13(25.5%)	9(17.6%)	3.25
My organization holds events to recognize employees	11(21.6%)	14(27.5%)	14(27.5%)	7(13.7%)	5(9.8%)	2.63

concurring with the propositions provided. 25(49.0%) respondents agreed on employee receiving retirement benefits evidenced with the average mean of 4.12. With an average mean score of 3.25, 15(29.4%) respondents were neutral to the statement although 13(25.5%) respondents agreed to opportunities for team leadership. 16(31.4%) respondents agreed on employees being appreciated with job well done represented by the mean score of 3.00. 13(25.5%) respondents also agreed to entitlement of service awards

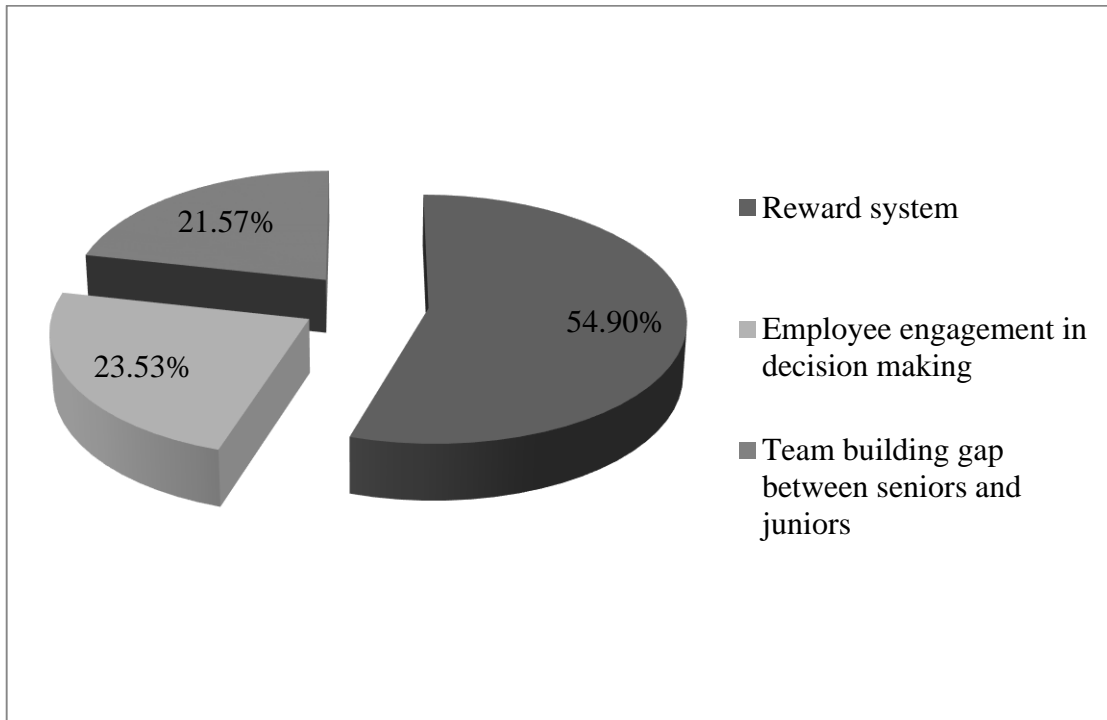
to employee resulting to the recorded average score of 2.80. There were disparities in agreement of the statement regarding holding of events for employee recognition with equal number of 14(27.5%) residents disagreeing to the statement and the same number remaining neutral to the statement.

From findings above it can be observed that receiving of retirement benefits, opportunities for team leadership and job appreciation for job well done are the main drivers of employee recognition for employee retention. The implication is that employee recognition is paramount towards achieving high employee retention in an organization. This means that recognizing employees through retirement benefits, opportunities for team leadership and appreciation for job well done is expected to ensure that they continue working for the organization.

Respondents were further asked to provide suggestions on how employee recognition can be enhanced in their respective departments. Figure 4.4 shows the percentages of the suggestions given.

Figure 4.4

Alternative ways of recognizing employees in Meru County Government



Results from employee recognition concur with those of Nonhlanhla (2015) who concluded that employee recognition aspects play an important role in employee retention. Employee recognition builds a climate of trust and performance in turn enhancing employee engagement. The findings imply that employee recognition aspects including reward system, employee engagement in decision making and team building contributes towards employee retention.

4.9 Descriptive Statistics of Employee Retention

In order to get insights on employee retention in the County Government of Meru, respondents were again presented with a series of statement and asked to rate their level of agreement to each. Average means of the statements are presented in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9*Descriptive analysis of employee retention*

Statement (N=51)	1	2	3	4	5	Mean
Employees are engaged in various issues affecting the organization	6(11.8%)	13(25.5%)	12(23.5%)	13(25.5%)	7(13.7%)	3.04
There is effective feedback channel in my organization	8(15.7%)	9(17.6%)	14(27.5%)	17(33.3%)	3(5.9%)	2.96
There is effective communication within the organization	3(5.9%)	9(17.6%)	14(27.5%)	21(41.2%)	4(7.8%)	3.27
Appraisals are fair and just in the organization	6(11.8%)	9(17.6%)	21(41.2%)	14(27.6%)	1(2.0%)	2.78
There is an effective evaluation policy in the organization	8(15.7%)	8(15.7%)	24(47.1%)	9(17.6%)	2(3.9%)	3.04

Recorded results of Table 4.9 above revealed that respondents agreed to most of the statements regarding employee retention in county government of Meru. With the highest

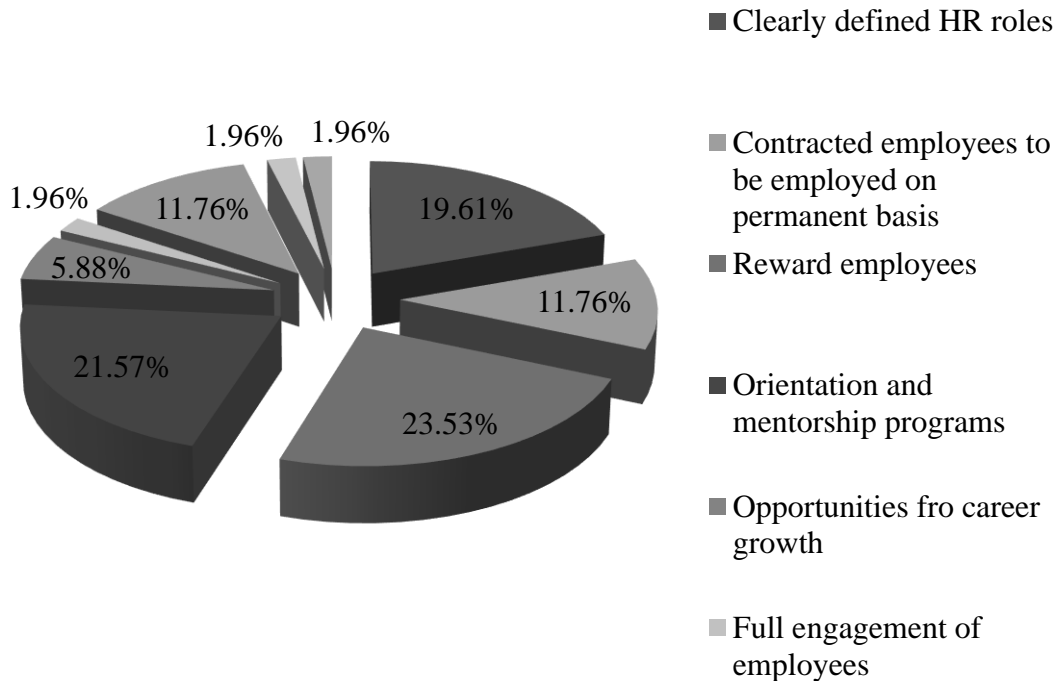
recorder mean score of 3.27, 21(41.2%) respondents agreed on presence of an effective communication channel. 13(25.5%) respondents also agreed on employees being engaged in various organizational issues as evidenced with the average mean score of 3.04. The same average mean score was recorder on the statement regarding presence of an effective evaluation policy in the organization with 24(47.1%) respondents neutral to the statement. Additionally, 17(33.3%) respondents agreed on presence of an effective feedback channel as shown by the recorded mean of 2.96. With the lowest recorded average mean score of 2.78, 21(41.2%) respondents remained neutral to appraisals being just and fair.

The implication of the above findings is that presence of an effective communication channel, active engagement in organization issues, effective evaluation systems and effective feedback channel play a great role in enhancing employee retention.

Respondents were further asked to provide suggestions on how employee retention can be enhanced in their respective departments. The results were recorded as indicated in Figure 4.5.

Figure 4.5

Alternative ways of enhancing employee retention in Meru County Government



The findings imply that employee retention in the County Government of Meru can be enhanced in several ways. These are; having a well-defined HR, rewarding employees, operationalizing staff union committee, providing opportunities for career growth, permanent employment and effective communication channels.

4.10 Pearson's Bivariate Correlation

Bivariate correlation reveals how one variable stands in relation to another. Its scores vary from 1 to -1. Bivariare correlation score of 1 shows a strong progressive correlation; while -1 indicates a strong undesirable correlation. Bivariate correlation score of zero shows absence of interrelatedness between variables. In order to establish the correlation between

the diverse constructs of reward management practices and employee retention in the county government of Meru, Pearson’s correlation was used.

4.10.1 Career Development and Employee Retention in the County Government of Meru

Table 4.10 provides findings on the correlation between career development and employee retention in the county government of Meru.

Table 4.10

Correlation between career development and employee retention

		Career Development	Employee retention in County Government of Meru
Career Development	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N	51	51
Employee retention in County Government of Meru	Pearson Correlation	.521**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	
	N	51	51

Results from Table 4.10 above revealed existence of a constructive relationship between career growth and worker retention in the county government of Meru. This is as exhibited by a relationship coefficient of 0.521. The recorded association is important as demonstrated by the p value of 0.000.

The findings imply that growth in career progress is associated with increase in worker retention in the county government of Meru. This means that efforts by the county

management to boost career development of employees would also be accompanied by increase in their retention.

4.10.2 Work-life Balance and Employee Retention in County Government of Meru

Table 4.11 provides results on the relationship between work-life balance and worker retention in the County Government of Meru.

Table 4.11

Correlation between work life influence and employee retention

		Work – Life Balance	Employee retention in County Government of Meru
Work - Life Balance	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N	51	51
Employee retention in County Government of Meru	Pearson Correlation	.612**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	
	N	51	51

Results from Table 4.11 above revealed that a moderately strong constructive association between work – life balance and worker retention exists in the county government of meru. This positive association between the two concepts is denoted by a 0.612 correlation coefficient. The significance of the recorded correlation is validated by the p value of 0.0000.

The findings imply that increase in work-life balance is associated with increase in employee retention in the county government of Meru. This means that efforts by the county management to promote work-life balance would also be accompanied by increase in employee retention.

4.10.3 Compensation and Employee Retention in County Government of Meru

Table 4.12 provides outcome on the correlation between compensation and worker retention in the county government of Meru.

Table 4.12

Correlation between compensation and employee retention

		Compensations	Employee retention in County Government of Meru
Compensations	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N	51	51
Employee retention in County Government of Meru	Pearson Correlation	.728**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	
	N	51	51

Results from Table 4.12 above reveals that a there is a solid positive relationship exists between compensations and worker retention in the county government of Meru. This is as reflected by a score of 0.728 correlation coefficient. A p value of 0.0000 validates the observed correlation as significant.

The findings imply that increase in compensation is associated with increase in employee retention in the county government of Meru. This denotes that efforts by the county management to improve compensation of employees would also be accompanied by increase in their retention.

4.10.4 Employee Recognition and Employee Retention in County Government of Meru

Table 4.13 provides results on the relationship between employee recognition and retention of employees in the county government of Meru.

Table 4.13

Correlation between employee recognition and employee retention

		Recognition	Employee retention in County Government of Meru
Recognition	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N	51	51
Employee retention in County Government of Meru	Pearson Correlation	.596**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	
	N	51	51

Results from Table 4.13 above revealed presence of a constructive relationship between worker recognition and worker retention in the county government of Meru. This is

demonstrated by a correlation coefficient score of 0.596; and the importance of the observed correlation validated by a p value of 0.0000.

The findings imply that increase in recognition is associated with increase in employee retention in the county government of Meru. This means that efforts by the county management to improve employee recognition would also be accompanied by increase in employee retention.

4.11 Results on Overall Model: Rewards Management Practices and Employee Retention

Diagnostic tests were carried out before applying multiple regressions to test the overall model. The specific tests done are highlighted below.

4.11.1 Multicollinearity results

According to Gliem (2015) a correlation of more than 0.8 indicates serious multicollinearity. The study recorded a correlation between reward management strategies and worker retention in county government of Meru of less than 0.8. This implies that multicollinearity was not a serious issue.

4.11.2 Normality test

A normality test determines if a population significantly differs from a normal distribution. In order to ensure that the study's model generates correct estimates, a normality of regression residuals is crucial (Zahediasl, 2012).

Table 4.14

Normality Test

Measure	Value
Skewness	-1.304
Std. Error of Skewness	.3333
Kurtosis	1.342
Std. Error of Kurtosis	.656

From Table 4.14 above, the recorded skewness value of -1.304 shows that the data is normally distributed. Normality test was also checked by looking at normality plots. As seen in Appendix II shows that the observed values fitted well along the expected normal curve.

4.12 Results on Regression Analysis

The study aimed at investigating the interrelatedness between reward management practices and employee retention in the County government of Meru, Kenya. The dependent variable was employee retention in the County government of Meru.

Table 4.15 provides result on the model summary. Insights into the general influence of the predictor variable on the dependent variable revealed that the regression model goodness of fit was satisfactory. This is as reflected by the constructive correlation of 0.788 and a coefficient of determination (R Square) of 0.621. An R Square of 0.621 implies that the study's analytical variables can explain up to 62.1% of the variations in employee retention in the County Government of Meru.

Table 4.15***Model Summary - reward management practices and employee retention***

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.788 ^a	.621	.054	0.4034

Further, combined consequence of the predictor variables on the dependent variable of the study were presented from the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). From Table 4.16, predictor variables significantly influenced the dependent variable since $p < 0.05$. This implies that reward management practices are good predictors of retention of employees.

Table 4.16***ANOVA analysis - reward management practices and employee retention***

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	135.783	30	4.526	1.094	.000 ^b
Residual	82.727	20	4.136		
Total	218.510	50			

Dependent Variable: Employee retention in County Government of Meru

Predictors: Career development, work-life balance, compensation and employee recognition.

Table 4.17***Regression Coefficients - reward management practices and employee retention***

Model	Unstandardized		Standardized		t	Sig.
	Coefficients		Coefficients			
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
(Constant)	1.205	2.192			.322	.752
Career Development	.301	.125	.251		1.323	.119
Work-Life Balance	.434	.136	.232		1.525	.093
compensation	1.131	.144	.267		2.310	.048
Employee recognition	2.216	.161	.211		2.139	.043

Dependent Variable: Employee retention in County Government of Meru

Reward Management best practices

Employee retention = 1.205+0.301 Career Development + 0.434 Work-Life Balance + 1.131 Compensations + 2.216 Employee Recognition.

The regression findings in Table 4.17 revealed that career growth had a positive although insignificant effect on employee retention ($\beta= 0.301$, $P = .119$), work life balance had a positive although insignificant effect on employee retention ($\beta= 0.434$, $P = .093$), compensation had a affirmative and significant influence on employee retention ($\beta= 1.131$, $P = .048$), and employee appreciation had an affirmative and vital effect on employee retention ($\beta= 2.216$, $P = .043$).

The above findings indicate that compensation and employee recognition exhibit a direct and significant consequence on employee retention. The implication is that improvement in compensation and employee recognition would result to significant increase in

employee retention in the county government of Meru. From the above the findings, employee recognition had the greatest effect on employee retention, followed by compensation, then work-life balance and lastly career growth.

4.13 Testing of Hypothesis

This research sought to establish the connection between reward management practices and retention of employees in the County government of Meru, Kenya. This section concerns testing the study's four alternative hypotheses based on correlation results in Tables 4.10, 4.11, 4.12, and 4.13.

Ha1: A positive and significant association exists between career growth and retention of employees in the county government of Meru. The reported p value of 0.000 was below the conventional p value of 0.05, therefore, Ha1 was not rejected implying that there is a positive and significant connection between career growth and worker retention in the county government of Meru.

Ha2: Work-life balance has a positive and substantial effect on employee retention in county government of Meru. The researcher found out that a p value of 0.000 was lower than the conventional p value of 0.05, therefore, Ha2 was not rejected implying that a positive and significant relationship exists between work life balance and retention of employees in the county government of Meru.

Ha3: Compensation possesses a positive and substantial effect on employee retention in county government of Meru. The reported p value of 0.000 was lower than the conventional p value of 0.05, therefore, Ha3 was not rejected implying existence of a positive and significant connection between compensation and worker retention in the county government of Meru.

Ha4: A positive and significant connection exists between employee recognition and retention of employees in county government of Meru. The observed p value of 0.000 was lower than the conventional p value of 0.05; therefore, Ha4 was not rejected implying that a positive and significant correlation exists between employee recognition and retention of employee in the county government of Meru.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter summarizes the findings, gives the conclusions drawn from the findings and presents the recommendations. It also highlights possible areas for further research. The aim of the study was to determine the relationship between reward management practices on worker retention at the County Government of Meru.

5.2 Summary of the Findings

A summary of the key results realized observed in chapter four are presented in this section. This summary is given with regard to the study objectives.

5.2.1 Career Development and Employee Retention in the County Government of Meru

The first objective of the study was to establish ways in which career development influence retention of employees in the county Government of Meru. Descriptive results indicated majority of the employees agreed there was on job-training, coaching, job rotation, mentorship program and use of technology in the institution. Correlation analysis revealed an affirmative and substantial association between career development and employee retention in the county government of Meru. The hypothesis that there exists a constructive and substantial relationship between career development and worker retention in the county government of Meru was accepted.

5.2.2 Work-Life Balance and Employee Retention in the County Government of Meru

The study, in the second objective, sought to explore the influence of work-life balance on employee retention in the county government of Meru. Descriptive results revealed that majority of employees agreed that they enjoyed annual leaves, presence of organizational insurance policy and workplace flexibility. Correlation analysis revealed an affirmative and substantial association between work-life balance and worker retention in the county government of Meru. The alternative hypothesis that work-life balance has a constructive and substantial influence on retention of employees in the county government of Meru was accepted.

5.2.3 Compensation and Employee Retention in the County Government of Meru

The third objective of the study was to determine the influence of compensation on retention of employees in the County Government of Meru. Descriptive results indicated that majority of employees pointed out monthly salary and paid holidays as essential aspects of compensation that can enhance employee retention. Correlation analysis revealed an affirmative and noteworthy association between compensation and worker retention in the county government of Meru. Further, regression findings showed that compensation had a positive and noteworthy effect on worker retention in the county government of Meru. The hypothesis a positive and substantial effect exists between compensation and employee retention in county government of Meru compensation was therefore accepted.

5.2.4 Employee Recognition and Employee Retention in the County Government of Meru

Finally, the fourth objective sought to determine the influence of employee recognition on retention of employees in the County Government of Meru. Descriptive results indicated that majority of employees were in agreement that receiving of retirement benefits, opportunities for team leadership and job appreciation for job well done are the main drivers of employee recognition for employee retention. Correlation analysis revealed an affirmative and noteworthy association between employee recognition and worker retention in the county government of Meru. Further, regression findings showed that employee recognition had a affirmative and noteworthy effect on worker retention in the county government of Meru. The alternative hypothesis that there exists an affirmative and significant relationship between employee recognition and retention of employees in the county government of Meru was accepted.

5.3 Conclusion

Based on the results of this study, the following conclusions were drawn: Career development was found to be significant. It was established that offering on – job training, job coaching, job rotation practices and presence of mentorship programs are key contributors in career development that can affect employee retention in the County Government of Meru.

Work- life balance was the second independent variable of this research. The study concluded that work – life balance moderately influences employee retention in the county government of Meru. Presence of a health insurance was found to be a major contributor to employee retention. Factors including workplace flexibility, paid offs, provision of

financial support if need be and time for social life are all factors that affect employee retention at the county government of Meru.

The notion of compensation was the third independent variable of the research. The study confirmed the existence of a strong association between compensation and employee retention in the county government of Meru. Having a monthly salary, receiving stock pay where necessary, subsidized hours pay and work on call being paid were identified crucial for enhanced employee retention.

Employee recognition constituted the final independent variable of the study. A significant association was recorded between employee recognition and employee retention at the County Government of Meru. It was found out that through receiving retirement benefits, appreciation of job well done, existing opportunities for team leadership and holding events to recognize employees can lead to enhanced employee retention in the county government of Meru.

5.4 Recommendations

So as to ensure retention of employees in the County Government of Meru, this study recommends the following measures; on career development, the county government of Meru should enhance training of employees. This could be done through facilitations to take senior management courses and funding further studies.

The study also recommends on development of flexible working condition, formation of employee welfare association and regular performance review. This is recommended in pursuit of enhancing work – life balance that was discovered to substantially influence employee retention in the county government of Meru.

Considering the extent of influence compensation has on employee retention, the study recommends on increased monthly salary, field work facilitations and timely reimbursements of out-of-pocket expensed.

Finally, development of a reward system is recommended for enhanced employee retention in the county government of Meru. Additionally, team building exercises are also recommended in order to bridge the gap between senior staff and junior staff. This would enable employee recognition in turn increasing employee retention in the County Government of Meru.

5.5 Recommendations for Further Study

The study examined the link between reward management practices and worker retention at the county government of Meru, Kenya. It specifically focused on four aspects: career development, work-life balance, and compensation and employee recognition. These aspects accounted for 62.1 percent of variations in employee retention. This means that there exists other influences to retention of employees, and future studies could focus on them. Additionally, the study focused on the county government of Meru. Future studies could consider other County Governments for the purpose of comparison.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Questionnaire

This questionnaire is to collect data for purely academic purposes. All information will be treated with utmost confidentiality. Do not put any name or identification on this questionnaire. Answer all questions as indicated by either filling in the blank or ticking the option that applies. There is no right or wrong answer that the researcher is looking for.

SECTION A: Preliminary Information

1. Age Bracket

Under 20years []

21-30 years []

31-40 years []

41-50 years []

51-60 years []

Over 60 years []

2. Gender

Male []

Female []

3. Years of service at the County Government of Meru

Below 5 years []

6-10 years []

11-15 years []

16-20 years []

21-25 years []

26-30 years []

Above 30 years

Part B: Study Variables

SECTION A: Career Development

1. To what extent do you agree with the following aspects of career development in your department? (Where: 5=Strongly agree, 4=Agree, 3=Neutral, 2=Disagree, 1=Strongly disagree)

	Strongly Disagree [1]	Disagree [2]	Neutral [3]	Agree [4]	Strongly Agree [5]
My employer offers on-job training					
Employees go for overseas assignments					
There is job rotation					
Coaching is done					
There is mentorship program					
Employees are trained on new technology					

2. Mention any suggestions on career development in your department

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SECTION B: WORKLIFE BALANCE

1. To what extent do you agree with the following aspects of work life balance in your department? (Where: 5=Strongly agree, 4=Agree, 3=Neutral, 2=Disagree, 1=Strongly disagree)

	Strongly Disagree [1]	Disagree [2]	Neutral [3]	Agree [4]	Strongly Agree [5]
My employer offers time for social life					
There is workplace flexibility					
Employees are given paid offs					
Employees are given unpaid offs					
There is a health insurance in my organization					

Employees are given financial support if need be					
We have an insurance policy in our organization					
Employees are entitled to annual leave					

2. Mention any other suggestions on worklife balance in your organization?

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SECTION C: COMPENSATION

1. To what extent do you agree with the following aspects of compensation in your department? (Where: 5=Strongly agree, 4=Agree, 3=Neutral, 2=Disagree, 1=Strongly disagree)

	Strongly Disagree [1]	Disagree [2]	Neutral [3]	Agree [4]	Strongly Agree [5]
Employees have a monthly salary					
Commission is given on piece rate					
Work on call is paid					

There is holiday pay where earned					
Employees receive stock pay where necessary					
There is subsidized hours pay					

2. In your own view, what are your suggestions on compensation in your department?

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SECTION D: Employee Recognition

1. To what extent do you agree with the following aspects of employee recognition in your organization? (Where: 5=Strongly agree, 4=Agree, 3=Neutral, 2=Disagree, 1=Strongly disagree)

	Strongly Disagree [1]	Disagree [2]	Neutral [3]	Agree [4]	Strongly Agree [5]
Employees are entitled to service awards					

Employees receive retirement benefit					
Employees are appreciated for job well done					
There are opportunities for team leadership					
My organization holds events to recognize employees					

2. In your opinion, give a suggestion how employee recognition can be realized in your organization

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SECTION E: Employee Retention

1. To what extent do you agree with the following aspects of employee retention in your department? (Where: 5=Strongly agree, 4=Agree, 3=Neutral, 2=Disagree, 1=Strongly disagree)

	Strongly Disagree [1]	Disagree [2]	Neutral [3]	Agree [4]	Strongly Agree [5]
Employees are engaged in various issues affecting the organization					
There is effective feedback channel in my organization					
There is effective communication within the organization					
Appraisals are fair and just in the organization					
There is an effective evaluation policy in the organization					

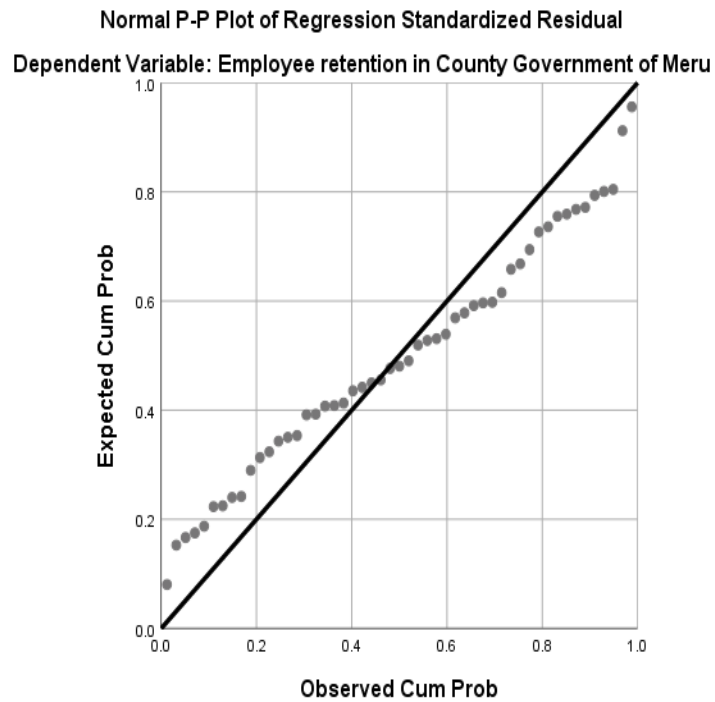
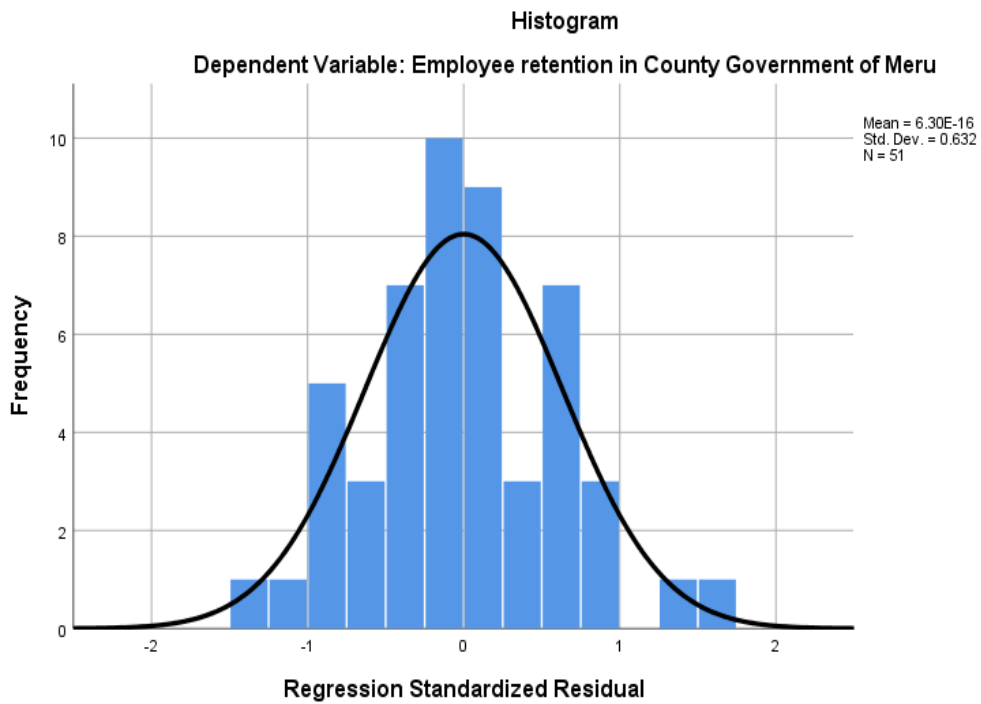
2. In your opinion, give a suggestion how employee retention can be realized in your organization

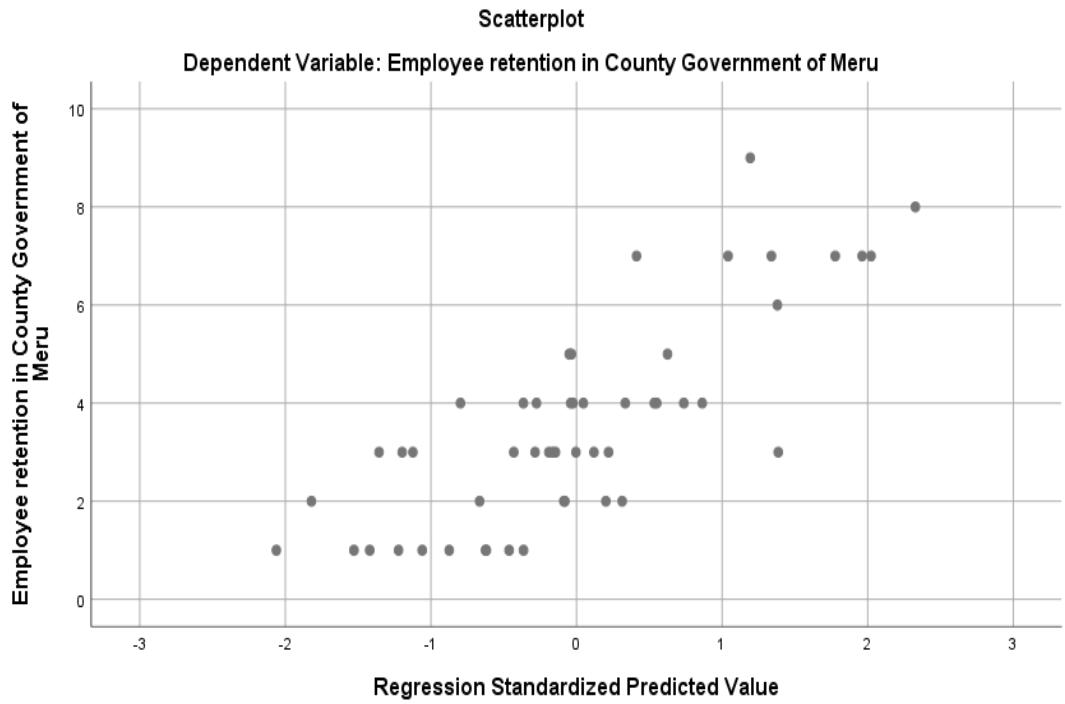
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Appendix II: Normality Plots and Scatter Plots






Appendix III: NACOSTI Research Permit


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Ref No: 53884 Date of Issue: 02 September 2019


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