

The Effect of Employee Welfare on Employee Commitment at Judicial Service of Kenya

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Abstract

Employee's commitment is a major problem facing many organizations worldwide. Many organizations are therefore employing various human resource management practices as measure to improve the level of employee commitment. In Kenya the level of employee commitment in constitutional offices have been on declining trend. At Judicial Service Commission, discontent has been expressed in the area of remuneration characterized by discrimination in rewards; inadequate pay vis-à-vis the work load. The objective of this study was thus to evaluate the effect of employee welfare on employee commitment at Judicial Service Commission. A descriptive research design was adopted for this study. The population of interest was the 412 employees of Judicial Service Commission across various functions and divisions. Using a stratified random sampling technique, a sample size of 213 respondents was picked. A questionnaire was used to collect data for the study while descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were used to analyze collected data. The study findings indicated that 98% of the variation on employee commitment at judicial service commission in Kenya is determined by employee welfare. The study concluded that employee welfare in an organization is an important factor in the determination of employee commitment. The study recommended that Judicial Service Commission should design and implement an effective welfare policy for their employee.

Key Words: Employee Welfare, Employee Commitment, Judicial Service Commission

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Introduction

The concept of commitment in the workplace remains a much-researched topic and an intriguing trait of employee behavior. Studies in this area have also affected the conceptualization of commitment towards the job, occupation, the workgroup, representative employee bodies, and work itself (Aneet, 2010). Success in today's competitive market depends less on advantages associated with economies of scale, technology, patents but are more derived from organizational human resources and high involvement of human resource management practices (Masood, 2010). For an organization to be more effective it should have skillful and innovative employees to work and should also try to retain them. There is not a single HR Practice which a company aspires to retain its employees. There are different HR Practices which a company combines to manage its HR system. A company should always combine "Number of Best HR Practices" which they should implement for the survival and sustainability of the organization. However, "Best practices" in HR are subjective and transitory. Best human resources practices are said to enhance internal capabilities of an organization to deal with current or future challenges to be faced by an organization. Good HRM practices also energize people working in the organization. The commitment and motivation built through good HRM practices can lead to hard work. The culture built can also help create a sustainable and lasting capability of the organization to manage itself and not only cope with the external turbulence (Aneet, 2010). In essence, outstanding Human Resource Management (HRM) practices lead to high organizational commitment and different researches in USA and now Britain justify this assertion (Marchington & Wilkinson, 2005). Thus, many researches show that organizational commitment of employees plays a very important role in the increased efficiency of employees and organization. There are different HR Practices for organizations to adopt which should contribute to the organization bottom line, areas such as recruitment, selection, training, development and performance appraisal which should be consistent, integrated and strategically focused. Firms as well as organizations need to build long-term commitment to retain their work force. Good employees are supposed to have such characteristics as high satisfaction with their jobs, high commitment towards the organization, high motivation to serve the public and strong intentions to work for the organization willingly and devotedly (Sangmook, 2008).

Employee's operational performance depends on four intervening factors: Competence, Teamwork, Organizational Commitment and Customer Orientation. Individual performance and organizational effectiveness cannot be achieved without organizational commitment that is readiness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization (Beck and Wilson, 2008). Organizational behavior and economic researchers have been trying to find out the relationship between job satisfaction and different human resource practices for last many years. They have analyzed the effect of various determinants like promotion, career goals, job design and nature of work on job satisfaction. They have found out varying degree of impact of these human resource practices on job satisfaction. In as much as the existing literature links job satisfaction with the demographic characteristics of employees, some of them relate it with nature of work while other examine job satisfaction with respect to working conditions offered by the organization, it does not emphasize on the role of human resource management practices on employee commitment. The Judicial Service Commission is a constitutional body established under Article 171(1) of the Constitution of Kenya. The constitution has conferred upon the commission an expansive and liberal mandate in the discharge of its functions. The mandate of the commission as provided for under Article 172 (1) of the constitution is to promote and facilitate the independence and accountability of the Judiciary and the efficient, effective and transparent administration of justice.

The commission comprise of diverse membership which is spelt out under Article 171(2). The Commission has been in existence since independence. Under the former constitution of Kenya, the functions were limited to advising the president on the appointment of judges and disciplinary control over the registrar of the high court, magistrates, Kadhis and other employees of the Judiciary. In regard to the composition, the commission comprised the Chief Justice as Chairperson, the Attorney General, a Judge of the Court of Appeal, a puisne Judge and the Chairperson of the Public Service Commission. However, as pointed out by various judiciary reports, the original commission's functions, composition and practices did not satisfy international best practices and standards. The membership of the commission did not have the wider representation as is currently constituted. Further, the members were direct appointees of the President and this created the perception that the commission was not independent. As a result, the membership of the commission which was reconstituted as provided for under Article 171 (2) of the Constitution. This was mainly done to ensure inclusivity of key stakeholders in the justice system. Contrary to the integral role that employees play in constitutional offices such as Judicial Service Commission, there has been numerous complains raised by its employees. A number of challenges facing the commission have been raised. One of the concerns has been on the employee welfare issues ranging from poor working conditions, lack of work-life balance and concern for employees personal life. Thus, this study sought to evaluate the effect of employee welfare on employee commitment at Judicial Service Commission in Kenya.

Literature Review

Adams (2012) conducted a study on strategic human resource management practices in UK firms, using a survey research design and a sample of 1300 employees in judicial firms. The study findings indicated that that employee's welfare was key factor that affected employee level of work commitment. The study proposed the improvement of the employee welfare programs in terms of health benefits and retirement plans and insurance plans. Stephen (2014) did a study on role of employee welfare on employee commitment in USA judicial institutions. The study utilized a descriptive survey approach using a sample population of 360 senior judicial staff. The study findings indicated that in USA many judicial organizations with better employee welfare programs such as housing, health benefits and good insurance plans experiences a high rate of employees commitment which led to increased rate of employee retention. However, these studies failed to examine the effect of employee welfare on employee commitment at Judicial Service Commission, a case of JSC, Kenya.

In addition, Okpara (2014) conducted a study in Nigeria on effect of employee welfare on employee commitment in public organizations. The study applied a descriptive survey research design and sample population was drawn from public corporations. The study findings indicated lack of good employee welfare programs in terms of health benefits and retirement plans lowered the level of employee work motivation and this negatively led to declined level of employee commitment. The study concluded that employee welfare programs in terms of health benefits, housing benefits and retirement plans played a key role in improvement of the level of employee commitment in many organizations. However, the study findings did not explain the effect of management style on employee commitment at Kenya Judicial Service Commission as the study scope was limited within the UK context. A study by Okalo (2012) on effect of employee welfare programs on employee commitment in Kenya public sector organizations using descriptive research design revealed that, lack of better employees welfare programs in many Kenyan state corporations was major reason that led to low level of employee commitment and declined rate of employee retention.

A study by Kinuthia (2013) on effect of employee welfare programs on employee commitment in Kenya public sector organizations using a case design, also identified that many Kenyan state corporations lacked better employee welfare programs and this led to poor employees and employer relations, a situation that led to cases of industrial strikes and declined rate of employee retention which negatively impacted on the level of employee commitment. A study by Okumu (2012) on role of employee welfare on employee commitment in health sector using a survey design, identified that lack of good employee welfare programs in terms of housing, health benefits, insurance plans and retirement plans lowered the level of employee job satisfaction and this negatively led to declined level of employee commitment. However these studies findings did not explain the effect of management style on employee commitment at Kenya Judicial Service Commission. Employee welfare includes everything, such as facilities, benefits and services that an employer provides or does to ensure comfort of the employees (Hiltrop, 2006). It also means anything done for intellectual, physical, moral and economic betterment of employees by employers, government or other agencies. These welfare services may be classified into Intramural and Extramural. In Intramural services are provided within establishment and in Extramural services are provided outside the establishment. Good welfare helps to increase employee's productivity, morale, industrial relation, and goodwill among other aspects. Providing good welfare to employees may be a costly decision, but the long-term benefits are immense. It is one way of complying with the law, thus ensuring that an employer avoids legal issues. It allows a company to retain its good and skilled employees for long periods of time. Employees work well in workplaces where they are treated well and respected. Good welfare also helps to create a good company image for a particular employer. It is therefore the responsibility of the management to ensure that employee welfare initiatives are not ignored (Storey, 2007). This calls for the slicing of the cost of the organization to make it a viable environment that could retain employees. However, even though the company needs to adopt a balanced approach in such a situation, cutting down on all the benefits is also dangerous and taking no action is also equally dangerous from the sustainability point of view. Organizations need to earn employee goodwill and loyalty, particularly at a time when the rate of attrition is at all-time low.

Hiltrop, (2006) asserts: "team spirits and collaboration should be encouraged among employees. Initiatives like celebrating success/achievements in small ways go a long way in raising the confidence and morale of employee". When a company is forced to take cost cutting measures, it should be taken in a manner that direct impact on employees is kept to a minimum, as during tough times it becomes all the more important to keep sentiments of employees high and nothing should hurt their morale. It is important to have a long-term perspective of things to ensure that good employees do not leave the organization when mostly needed. Amit Garg believes in the need to look beyond short-term profits and ensure employee welfare. He asserts that organizations which want to do business even after the downturn is over would need to continuously create and maintain the bond between it and the employees' goals and welfare. In fact, employees would gladly accept cost cutting measures and would even contribute to it. Albeit, they need to be very clear about strategic importance of the tough measures. They need to be reassured constantly that their welfare is being considered important (Campbell, 2009).

Methodology

The adopted a descriptive research design. A descriptive study is generally based on making findings concerning questions of; who, what, where, when, or how much and is very effective in giving the actual scenario in the organization. Descriptive studies are always handled with clearly defined investigative questions and they serve a number of objectives in the study (Cooper and Schindler, 2011). The researcher finds it appropriate to use a descriptive research design for this study because this study is concerned with finding out how human resource management practices influence employee commitment and these are more qualitative in nature. Factors under study are the independent variables whereas the dependent variable is employee commitment. Descriptive survey also enabled the researcher to have a systematic collection and presentation of data in order to determine the effect of the dependent variable on the set of independent variables suggested by the study.

The study's target population was the 412 employees who were of Judicial Service Commission of Kenya. The sampling frame for this study was the list of the 412 employees in the judicial service commission as at December 2019 obtained from the Human Resource Department. The study adopted a stratified random sampling procedure to select the sample size for the study. Using the formula by Cochran a sample size of 213 respondents was drawn for participation in the study. The study used a five-point likert scale questionnaire to collect the data. The instrument was developed so as to contain all the items that aid in achieving the objectives of the research study. The study adopted a method of pick and drop later to administer questionnaires to the respondents. Descriptive data analysis was employed and results presented using the measures of central tendencies, such as mean, median, standard deviation, mode, cross-tabulations, frequencies and percentages. Inferential statistics was undertaken where Linear Regression model and Analysis Of Variance (ANOVA) were applied to test the hypotheses.

Results and Discussion

The objective was to examine the effect of employee welfare on employee commitment at Judicial Service Commission, a case of JSC, Kenya. Table 1 presents that majority of the respondents agreed that they are assured of a stress free work environment as indicated by a mean score of 4.280 and standard deviation of 0.8787. Respondents agreed that they are entitled to annual leave days as scheduled as indicated by a mean score of 4.219 and standard deviation of 0.8465. Respondents agreed that their working environment is conducive as indicated by a mean score of 4.146 and standard deviation of 0.7390. Respondents agreed that there are mechanisms to express employee discontent and concerns as indicated by a mean score of 4.304 and standard deviation of 0.8416. Respondents agreed that there is a framework in place to resolve misunderstanding with my seniors/supervisors as indicated by a mean score of 4.365 and standard deviation of 0.7288. Respondents agreed that there are other benefits that employee access besides the salary (insurance, social service schemes) as indicated by a mean score of 4.2927 and standard deviation of 0.95272. Respondents agreed that organization values the safety of the employees as indicated by a mean score of 4.2683 and standard deviation of 0.90735. Respondents agreed that organization promotes team work and achievement as indicated by a mean score of 4.1951 and standard deviation of 0.95851. These findings indicates that employee welfare terms of health benefits and retirement plans affects employee commitment in the organization.

Table 1 Employee Welfare Descriptive Results

Employee welfare Statements	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
a) I am assured of a stress free work environment	164	4.280	.8787	.772
b) I am entitled to annual leave days as scheduled	164	4.219	.8465	.717
c) My working environment is conducive	164	4.146	.7390	.546
d) There are mechanisms to express my discontent and concerns	164	4.304	.8416	.708
e) There is a framework in place to resolve misunderstanding with my seniors/supervisors	164	4.365	.7288	.531
f) There are other benefits that I access besides my salary (insurance, social service schemes)	164	4.2927	.95272	.908
g) My organization values the safety of the employees	164	4.2683	.90735	.823
h) My organization promotes team work and achievement	164	4.1951	.95851	.919
Valid N (listwise)	164			

The findings indicated that existence of a stress free work environment, entitlement to annual leave days, provision of conducive work environment, provision of mechanisms to express employee discontent and concerns, availability of a framework in place to resolve misunderstanding, provision of benefits other than salary, much emphasis on organization values the safety of the employees and promotion of team work and achievement contributes towards realization on increased level of employee commitment. These findings are in line with findings by Nyanjom (2010) where he found out that good employee welfare that leads to increased level of employee commitment in characterized by existence of a stress free work environment, provision of conducive work environment, provision of mechanisms to express employee discontent and concerns, availability of a framework in place to resolve misunderstanding, provision of benefits other than salary. According to Okumu (2012) high value on the safety of the employees by management and promotion of team work and achievement promotes employee welfare and this contributes towards realization on increased level of employee commitment.

As presented in Table 2, the coefficient of determination (R square) was found to be 0.9893 and R was 0.995. This indicates that 98.93% of the variation on employee commitment is explained by the variation in employee welfare. Since the R square was high a good model fit was confirmed. The Adjusted R square is 0.9895 was higher than the R square. This implies that there is still possibility of improving the model fit by adding another factor influencing the dependent variable to the model. An additional independent variable would increase the R Square to the value of the adjusted R square.

Table 2: Regression Model Summary, Employee Welfare

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.995 ^a	0.98983	0.98952	0.14059

In addition, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) results presented in Table 3 confirmed that the model was statistically significant. The value of the F statistic was found to be 3212.67 which is less than 0.05 confidence interval. This implies that the predictor coefficient is at least not equal to zero and goodness of fit of the model was confirmed.

Table 3: ANOVA, Employee welfare

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	63.4995	1	63.4995	3212.67	.000 ^b
Residual	0.65225	33	0.01977		
Total	64.1517	34			

Table 4 below presents the beta coefficient for employee welfare on employee commitment at the Judicial service commission of Kenya. The beta coefficient for employee welfare was 0.9215 indicating that a unit change in employee welfare leads to 0.9215 variation in employee commitment at the Judicial service commission of Kenya. Since the beta coefficient was positive, employee welfare was found to have a positive effect on employee commitment at the Judicial service commission of Kenya. The p value of the t statistic was less than 0.05 hence confirming that employee welfare has a statistical significant effect on employee commitment at the Judicial service commission of Kenya at 95% confidence level.

Table 4 Beta Coefficients, Employee Welfare

	B	Std. Error	T	Sig.
(Constant)	0.0496	0.07372	0.6729	0.002
Employee welfare	0.9215	0.01626	56.6805	0.001

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_3 X_3 + e$$

$$Y = 0.496 + 0.9215X_3 + e$$

Conclusion

The study aimed to examine the effect of employee welfare on employee commitment at Judicial Service Commission, a case of JSC, Kenya. The study found out that employee welfare played a significant role towards determination of the level of employee commitment in the organization. The study established that employee welfare in terms of health benefits and retirement plans affects employee commitment in the organization. The study concluded that that existence of a stress free work environment, entitlement to annual leave days, provision of conducive work environment, provision of mechanisms to express employee discontent and concerns, availability of a framework in place to resolve misunderstanding, provision of benefits other than salary, much emphasis on organization values the safety of the employees and promotion of team work and achievement contributed towards realization on increased level of employee commitment in the organization.

Recommendation

The Judicial Service Commission should improve on employee welfare in terms of health benefits and retirement plans. The organization management should improve on work environment, provide employees with annual leave

days, provide mechanisms to express employee discontent and concerns provide an effective framework to resolve employees misunderstanding, provide employees with benefits other than salary, improve on occupational health and safety and promote team work t in the organization. The Judicial Service Commission should improve should also improve on employee work life balance, by providing all employees with more flexible working hours, increase on offering of family leave schemes, provide more team building activities and provide child care services

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