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Talent Acquisition Strategies on Employee Retention in Kisii County, Kenya

Dr. Henry Motongwa Omosa
Department of Business Administration, Kisii University, Kisii, Kenya

* Corresponding Author: **Dr. Henry Motongwa Omosa**

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Abstract
Employee retention remains a critical challenge for organizations worldwide, particularly in regions where businesses struggle to attract and maintain skilled talent. In Kisii County, Kenya, organizations face unique challenges in talent acquisition and retention, yet limited research exists on the specific factors influencing workforce stability in the region. This study seeks to assess talent acquisition practices in Kisii County, with a particular focus on employee retention. The objectives of this research were to: Examine the talent acquisition strategies employed by organizations in Kisii County, identify the key factors influencing employee retention in the region, evaluate the challenges organizations face in retaining employees, and analyze the effectiveness of current retention strategies. The study is grounded in several theoretical frameworks, including the Human Capital Theory, which emphasizes investing in employees to enhance organizational performance, and the Social Exchange Theory. Descriptive research design was employed, combining both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The target population included HR professionals, business managers, and employees from various industries in Kisii County. A sample size of 50 respondents was selected using stratified and purposive sampling techniques. Data collection involved surveys, structured interviews, and case studies to gather comprehensive insights. The collected data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Including: Frequency distributions, correlation analysis and thematic content analysis for qualitative data. The findings of this study will provide valuable insights for HR practitioners, policymakers, and business leaders in Kisii County. In Kisii County, the majority of employees fall within the 36–45 age group, with internal recruitment emerging as the preferred hiring strategy among employers. Academic qualifications are highly prioritized during the hiring process, reflecting their importance in employment decisions. Furthermore, compensation and benefits play a critical role in influencing employee retention. Notably, there is a positive correlation between employer branding and employee retention, with regression analysis confirming that employer branding has a significant impact on retaining employees.

Keywords: Talent Acquisition, Employee Retention, Recruitment Strategies, Employer Branding, Employee Compensation and Benefits, Human Capital Management

1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the study

Talent acquisition practices play a crucial role in attracting, recruiting, and retaining skilled employees within an organization. In today's competitive business environment, organizations are increasingly recognizing the need to not only hire qualified employees but also retain them to ensure continued growth, stability, and competitiveness. Employee retention is a critical factor for long-term organizational success, as high turnover rates can result in increased recruitment and training costs, operational

disruptions, and the loss of valuable institutional knowledge (Collings & Mellahi, 2009).

Globally, talent acquisition has evolved significantly, with organizations leveraging technology, data analytics, and strategic workforce planning to attract and retain employees (Phillips & Gully, 2015). In developed economies, companies employ sophisticated recruitment practices, such as employer branding, artificial intelligence (AI)-driven recruitment tools, and competitive compensation packages, to secure top talent (Sparrow, Scullion, & Tarique, 2014). Moreover, multinational corporations (MNCs) emphasize diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives as part of their talent management strategies to create a more engaged and innovative workforce (Brewster, Chung, & Sparrow, 2016).

Regionally, African countries face unique challenges in talent acquisition due to economic constraints, skills mismatches, and brain drain, where highly skilled professionals seek employment opportunities abroad (Ashton, 2017). Many organizations in Sub-Saharan Africa have adopted localized talent acquisition strategies, such as skills development programs, employer- sponsored education, and internal promotions, to address these challenges (Kamoche, 2011). Countries like South Africa and Nigeria have made strides in strengthening their talent pipelines by investing in education and professional development programs to meet labor market demands (Horwitz, 2013).

In Kenya, talent acquisition practices vary across industries, with large corporations, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and public institutions employing different approaches to attract and retain employees. The country has seen a rise in the use of digital recruitment platforms, employer branding, and skills-based hiring to bridge the gap between labor supply and demand (Ngure & Waithaka, 2016). However, challenges such as unemployment, skills shortages, and workplace culture issues continue to impact effective talent management (Njoroge & Yazdanifard, 2014).

1.1.1. Employee Retention

Specifically, in Kisii County, located in the southwestern region of Kenya, employee retention dynamics are influenced by various factors, including the local labor market, socio-economic conditions, organizational cultures, and employee expectations. Kisii County has experienced significant growth in key sectors such as agriculture, education, healthcare, and trade. However, many organizations in Kisii county struggle to retain employees due to challenges such as limited career advancement opportunities, inadequate compensation, and a lack of effective talent management practices (Ongori, 2007). As the demand for skilled employees continues to rise in Kisii County, employers must develop innovative talent acquisition strategies that not only attract top talent but also ensure that employees remain committed and satisfied within their roles. While there is existing research on talent acquisition and employee retention globally and regionally, the specific context of Kisii County remains underexplored. Thus, this study seeks to examine the various talent acquisition strategies employed by organizations in Kisii County and their impact on employee retention.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Effective talent acquisition practices are pivotal in enhancing employee retention within organizations. By strategically attracting and selecting individuals whose skills and values align with organizational goals, companies can foster a committed and productive workforce. This alignment not only reduces turnover rates but also cultivates a sense of loyalty and job satisfaction among employees, leading to sustained organizational success. According to Wekesa and Were (2018), organizations that implement structured talent acquisition strategies experience lower employee turnover and increased productivity.

In Kisii County, Kenya, employee retention challenges are evident across various sectors. For instance, a study focusing on public secondary school teachers revealed that over 800 educators have left their positions to pursue other opportunities, significantly impacting service delivery in the region's schools (European Journal of Research, 2023). Similarly, microfinance institutions in Kisii County have experienced high turnover rates, with reward management practices identified as a key determinant in employee retention (Owuor, 2020). These statistics underscore the pressing need for effective talent acquisition and retention strategies to address the ongoing workforce instability in the county.

Empirical studies have demonstrated a positive relationship between talent acquisition practices and employee retention. Research conducted in Kenyan state corporations found that talent management, encompassing competencies mapping, employee engagement, performance management, and career development, significantly enhances employee retention (Wambui, 2015). Given the documented challenges in Kisii County, there is a critical need to investigate how tailored talent acquisition practices can improve employee retention rates in this specific context. Such a study would provide valuable insights for organizations aiming to stabilize their workforce and enhance overall performance.

1.2.1. General Objective

To find out the impact of talent acquisition strategies on employee retention in Kisii county, Kenya.

1.2.2. Specific Objectives

This study aims to achieve the following specific objectives:

1. To examine the influence of recruitment strategies on employee retention in Kisii County, Kenya.
2. To assess the effect of compensation and benefits on employee retention in Kisii County, Kenya.
3. To evaluate the impact of training and skill development on employee retention in Kisii County, Kenya.

1.3. Research Hypotheses

H_{01}: Recruitment strategies have no statistically significant effect on employee retention in Kisii county, Kenya.

H_{02}: Compensation and benefits do not have a significant effect on employee retention in Kisii County, Kenya.

H_{03}: Training and skill development do not have a significant impact on employee retention in Kisii County, Kenya.

1.4. Scope of the Study

This study aims to explore the relationship between talent acquisition practices and employee retention, with a focus on several key variables: recruitment strategies, organizational fit, recruitment technology, and employee retention outcomes. Recruitment strategies encompass methods such as internal and external hiring, screening processes, and candidate selection techniques. Organizational fit refers to

the alignment between an employee's values and the organizational culture, while recruitment technology includes the use of AI, automation, and data analytics in hiring processes. Employee retention will be measured in terms of turnover rates, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, engagement levels, and length of service. Geographically, the research will be conducted in a global context, focusing on organizations in the United States, Europe, and select Asian countries. This broad scope allows for comparative insights into how different cultural, economic, and labor market conditions influence recruitment and retention strategies. The target population includes human resource managers responsible for talent acquisition, recruitment professionals (both internal and external), and employees who were hired within the last two years, offering both professional and employee perspectives on hiring effectiveness and retention. The study will investigate recruitment practices implemented over the past five years to capture current trends and technological advancements, analyzing both short- term (1–2 years) and long-term (3–5 years) retention outcomes. This scope ensures a comprehensive understanding of how modern recruitment strategies impact employee tenure across different industries and regions.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Theoretical Framework

2.1.1. Human Capital Theory

Human Capital Theory provides a strong theoretical foundation for examining the relationship between talent acquisition practices and employee retention in Kisii County, Kenya. Originally advanced by Becker (1964) [4], the theory posits that employees' skills, knowledge, experience, and abilities constitute critical organizational assets that contribute to productivity and long-term performance. Contemporary studies affirm that effective talent acquisition is a strategic investment rather than a routine administrative function, as organizations that deliberately recruit competent employees are better positioned to enhance commitment and reduce turnover (Aboramadan *et al*., 2020; Mensah, 2023).

In the context of Kisii County, where organizations often experience challenges related to skills shortages and employee mobility, Human Capital Theory emphasizes the importance of recruiting individuals whose competencies align with organizational goals. Empirical evidence indicates that talent acquisition practices such as competitive compensation, merit-based recruitment, and alignment between job requirements and employee qualifications significantly influence employees' decisions to remain with their organizations (Kim & Ployhart, 2022; Njoroge & Kinyua, 2021). When employees perceive fairness and value in recruitment and reward systems, their organizational attachment and retention levels tend to increase.

Human Capital Theory further highlights continuous employee development as a key mechanism for enhancing retention. Studies conducted in developing economies demonstrate that organizations that invest in training, mentorship, and career development experience lower turnover intentions among employees (Aguinis *et al*., 2021; Otoo & Mishra, 2022). In Kisii County, where opportunities for professional growth may be limited, organizational support for skill development enhances job satisfaction and fosters loyalty, as employees recognize long-term personal and career benefits associated with remaining in the organization (Wambugu & Ombui, 2020).

- **Social exchange theory**

Social Exchange Theory was introduced by George Homans in 1958 and later expanded by Blau in 1964. The theory explains social relationships as exchanges in which individuals seek to maximize benefits while minimizing costs. In organizational settings, employer employee relationships are viewed as reciprocal interactions where employees evaluate rewards such as pay, recognition, career development, and job security against their contributions in terms of effort, time, and skills (Homans, 1958; Blau, 1964; Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2021).

When applied to talent acquisition and employee retention in Kisii County, Kenya, Social Exchange Theory suggests that organizations that provide attractive employment benefits are more likely to retain skilled employees. Empirical studies indicate that competitive compensation, transparent recruitment processes, job security, and career advancement opportunities foster employee commitment and reduce turnover intentions (Aboramadan *et al*., 2020; Kim and Ployhart, 2022). For organizations operating in Kisii County, where talent mobility and labor market constraints may exist, balanced exchange relationships are essential for sustaining employee loyalty.

The theory further emphasizes the role of trust and perceived organizational support in shaping employee retention. Employees who feel valued and fairly treated are more likely to reciprocate through increased commitment and long-term organizational attachment (Cropanzano *et al*., 2017; Eisenberger *et al*., 2020). Evidence from developing economies shows that fairness in recruitment and reward systems significantly improves employee retention, particularly in regions with limited alternative employment opportunities (Mensah, 2023; Mwangi and Njuguna, 2023).

Despite its relevance, Social Exchange Theory has limitations. One criticism is that it oversimplifies human behavior by assuming that relationships are primarily transactional. Research demonstrates that emotional attachment, organizational culture, and personal values also strongly influence employee retention beyond material rewards (Gould Williams and Davies, 2021; Boxall *et al*., 2023). In Kisii County, community ties and social networks may shape employee decisions to stay or leave, factors not fully explained by exchange mechanisms.

Additionally, the theory assumes rational decision making and complete information on the part of employees. In practice, employees may misinterpret the value of rewards or remain with organizations due to non-material factors such as belongingness and interpersonal relationships (Homans, 1958; Blau, 1964; Newman *et al*., 2022). These limitations suggest that Social Exchange Theory should be used alongside complementary theories when explaining employee retention in Kisii County.

Nevertheless, Social Exchange Theory remains a useful framework for understanding how talent acquisition practices influence employee retention. Organizations in Kisii County that emphasize fairness, recognition, and mutual benefit in recruitment and employment relationships are more likely to foster employee loyalty and reduce turnover, contributing to long term organizational success (Collings *et al*., 2021; Mensah, 2023).

- **Person Environment Fit Theory**

Person Environment Fit Theory was advanced by Kristof

Brown in 1996, building on earlier work by Locke and other scholars. The theory focuses on the compatibility between an individual's values, skills, and personality and the work environment, including job demands and organizational culture. Kristof Brown (1996) [9] defines person environment fit as the degree to which individual characteristics align with the characteristics of the work environment, influencing job satisfaction and retention (Kristof Brown, 1996; Schneider *et al*., 2022).

In the context of talent acquisition and employee retention in Kisii County, the theory emphasizes the importance of recruiting employees whose competencies and values align with both job requirements and organizational culture. Empirical studies indicate that employees who experience a strong sense of fit demonstrate higher job satisfaction, stronger commitment, and lower turnover intentions (Kristof Brown *et al*., 2021; Kim and Beehr, 2022). This is particularly important in Kisii County, where mismatches during recruitment may lead to persistent retention challenges.

Person Environment Fit Theory distinguishes between person job fit and person organization fit. Person job fit refers to the alignment between an employee's abilities and job demands, while person organization fit refers to the alignment between individual values and organizational culture and goals. Research shows that organizations that integrate both dimensions into their recruitment strategies achieve better retention outcomes and improved employee engagement (Ployhart *et al*., 2021; Mwangi and Karanja, 2023).

Despite its wide acceptance, the theory has limitations. One limitation is the assumption that individuals can accurately assess fit during recruitment. Studies suggest that incomplete information and changes in personal or organizational circumstances over time may reduce perceived fit, negatively affecting retention (Cable and DeRue, 2021; Newman *et al*., 2022). Nonetheless, emphasizing person environment alignment during talent acquisition remains an effective approach for improving employee retention in Kisii County. culture.

2.1.2. Herzberg's Two Factor Theory

Herzberg's Two Factor Theory was developed by Frederick Herzberg in 1959 following his study on workplace motivation. The theory categorizes job related factors into hygiene factors and motivators. Hygiene factors include salary, working conditions, job security, and company policies, which prevent dissatisfaction but do not necessarily promote motivation. Motivators include recognition, achievement, responsibility, career advancement, and meaningful work, which enhance job satisfaction and retention (Herzberg *et al*., 1959; Alshmemri *et al*., 2017) [7].

In relation to talent acquisition and employee retention in Kisii County, Herzberg's theory suggests that organizations must address both hygiene factors and motivators to retain employees. Empirical evidence shows that while adequate pay and safe working conditions reduce dissatisfaction, opportunities for growth, recognition, and meaningful work play a stronger role in fostering long term commitment (Aguinis *et al*., 2021; Mensah, 2023). Organizations in Kisii County that focus solely on compensation without addressing intrinsic motivators are likely to experience higher turnover.

Herzberg's findings revealed that satisfied employees often attribute satisfaction to motivators, whereas dissatisfaction is largely linked to poor hygiene factors. Subsequent studies across different sectors have confirmed that a balanced approach combining both categories leads to improved retention and performance (Alshmemri *et al*., 2017; Boxall *et al*., 2023). This has important implications for recruitment strategies that emphasize holistic employment value propositions.

However, Herzberg's Two Factor Theory has limitations. Critics argue that the distinction between hygiene factors and motivators is not always clear, as some factors such as salary and recognition may function as both depending on individual perceptions and contextual conditions (Sachau, 2020; Newman *et al*., 2022). Additionally, Herzberg's original study focused on professionals in developed economies, which may limit its generalizability to contexts such as Kisii County with diverse workforce needs.

Despite these limitations, Herzberg's Two Factor Theory remains a valuable framework for understanding employee retention. Organizations in Kisii County that ensure fair compensation, supportive working conditions, opportunities for advancement, and recognition are more likely to enhance job satisfaction, reduce turnover, and achieve sustainable organizational performance (Aguinis *et al*., 2021; Mensah, 2023)

2.2. Empirical Literature Review

2.2.1. Recruitment Practices and Employee Retention

Empirical evidence strongly supports the link between effective human resource practices and improved employee retention outcomes. Recruitment strategies are fundamental in shaping employee retention from the very start of the employment cycle. Abassi and Hollman (2000) argue that organizations that employ structured and strategic recruitment approaches such as targeted talent sourcing, job-person fit assessments, and comprehensive onboarding programs are more successful in retaining their staff. This is because employees who feel well-matched to their roles and organizational culture tend to be more satisfied and less likely to leave. Gberevbie (2010) [6] confirms these findings in the Nigerian public sector, noting that when valid and reliable selection tools are used, retention rates improve due to better alignment between employee expectations and job realities.

In the context of Kisii County, recruitment strategies that are sensitive to local labor conditions are particularly important. Research by Mumford *et al*. (2011) [10] highlights the effectiveness of locally adapted methods, such as partnering with community-based recruitment agencies, aligning job descriptions with real job responsibilities, and ensuring transparent hiring procedures. These
strategies increase the chances of hiring individuals who understand the local environment, feel connected to the organization, and are thus more likely to stay.

Compensation and benefits also play a critical role in retaining employees. According to Boushey and Glynn (2012), organizations that offer competitive wages, performance-based bonuses, and meaningful non-monetary benefits (such as recognition programs and work-life balance policies) experience lower turnover rates. Milkovich and Newman (2004) reinforce this idea by emphasizing the importance of holistic compensation packages that include health insurance, retirement benefits, paid leave, and other perks that demonstrate organizational investment in employee well-being. In Kisii County, where economic alternatives may be limited and inflation affects real incomes, well-structured compensation packages can significantly

enhance job satisfaction and loyalty, making employees less likely to seek opportunities elsewhere.

Lastly, training and skill development are vital in creating long-term commitment among employees. Noe (2010) explains that ongoing training programs not only improve employee competencies but also send a strong signal that the organization values its people and is committed to their growth. This sense of investment fosters greater emotional attachment and loyalty to the organization. Armstrong (2012) echoes this, noting that employees are more likely to remain where they see opportunities for personal and professional advancement. In Kisii County, organizations that provide upskilling and continuous learning opportunities—whether through formal workshops, mentoring, or online learning platforms—are better positioned to retain talent, especially in dynamic sectors where skills can quickly become outdated.

In summary, the literature confirms that effective recruitment strategies, attractive compensation and benefits, and robust training and skill development initiatives are not only individually important but collectively essential in driving employee retention. When these practices are tailored to the local context, as in Kisii County, their impact is even more pronounced.

2.2.2. Effect of Compensation and Benefits on Retention

Several studies have highlighted the importance of competitive compensation and benefits as a significant factor influencing employee retention. Bhuvanaiah and Raya (2015) [5] found that salary, benefits, and incentives are key components of employee satisfaction, particularly in the context of retention. Employees who perceive their compensation as fair and competitive are more likely to stay with an organization. A similar study in Kenya by Munyoki (2018) [11] indicated that employees in the public and private sectors of Kenya value benefits such as healthcare, job security, and retirement plans, which, when adequately addressed during recruitment, can enhance retention.

In Kisii County, where cost-of-living considerations may differ from urban areas, competitive compensation packages may play a significant role in both attracting and retaining employees. Companies that offer attractive benefits packages, including health insurance and bonuses, may experience lower turnover.

2.2.3. Training and Development Opportunities

Nguyen *et al*. (2019) [12] identified that organizations that invest in employee development through training, mentorship, and continuous professional growth opportunities see higher retention rates. Employees are more likely to stay with an organization if they feel they are developing their skills and advancing in their careers. A study by Ahsan *et al*. (2009) [2] on the banking sector in Pakistan also found that training and career development were key factors in employee retention, as employees who felt that they had opportunities to grow were more likely to remain loyal to the organization.

In Kisii County, where local businesses may have fewer resources for employee development programs, organizations that can offer training, skills development, and clear career paths may foster greater loyalty among them employees. By investing in these opportunities, organizations can not only improve retention but also increase employee productivity and morale.

2.3. Summary of Gaps

The proposed study on Talent acquisition practices on employee retention in Kisii county, Kenya seeks to address critical gaps in the existing literature and practice. These gaps include:

Most existing studies on talent acquisition and employee retention in Kenya concentrate on major urban centers such as Nairobi and Mombasa, resulting in a limited understanding of smaller regions like Kisii County. This geographical bias overlooks the unique labor market dynamics and cultural factors that influence recruitment and retention practices in Kisii. Given the region's distinct economic conditions and cultural values, it is essential to explore how these local factors shape talent acquisition strategies, as findings from urban contexts may not be directly applicable to rural or semi-urban settings like Kisii.

There is an evident gap in the literature regarding industry-specific analysis of talent acquisition and retention challenges within Kisii County. Most studies do not sufficiently examine which sectors such as agriculture, education, healthcare, and others face the most significant difficulties in attracting and retaining employees. Each of these industries has unique operational demands and workforce expectations that require tailored recruitment and retention strategies. Furthermore, there is a lack of comparative analysis on employee retention rates across different sectors in the county, making it difficult to identify where interventions are most needed or which practices are most effective in specific contexts.

Many existing studies on talent acquisition and employee retention rely predominantly on quantitative data, which, while useful for identifying trends, often lack the depth and nuance that qualitative insights from employees and employers can provide. This creates a methodological gap, as important contextual factors and personal experiences that influence retention decisions are often overlooked. Additionally, there is a need for longitudinal studies that track retention patterns over extended periods to capture changes and long-term effects of recruitment strategies. The limited use of mixed-method approaches further restricts a comprehensive understanding of both statistical trends and the underlying motivations behind employee retention or turnover, highlighting the need for more integrated research designs.

2.5. Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is a structured plan or system of concepts, assumptions, and theories that guide research or a project. It provides a foundation for understanding how different variables interact and influence each other. (Abassi, S. M., & Hollman, K. W. (2000). Title: Turnover: The Real Bottom Line.Journal: Public Personnel Management, 29(3), 333–342.)

Independent Variables (Talent Acquisition Practices)

Talent Acquisition Practices Employee Retention

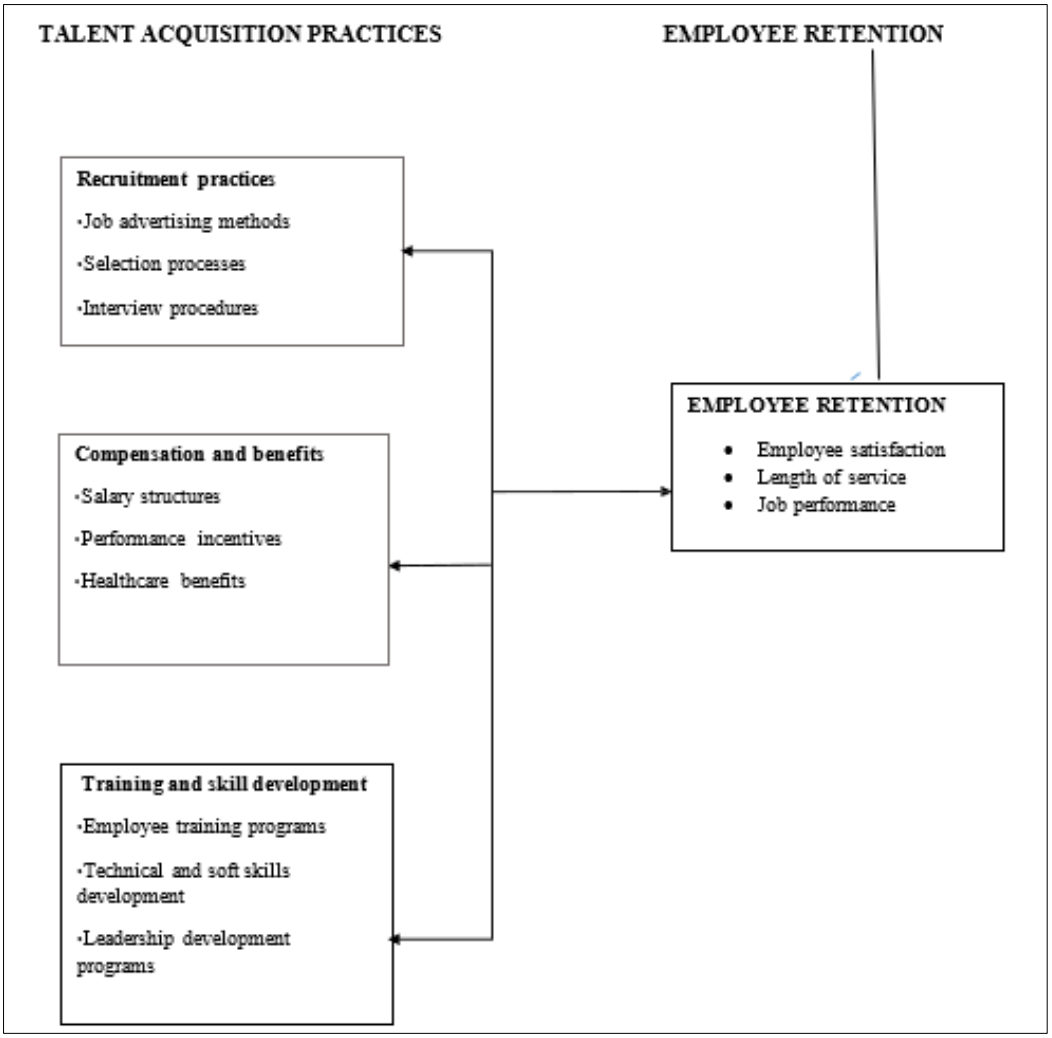


Fig 1: Conceptual Framework

Recruitment practices involve the process of attracting, selecting, and hiring candidates who are well-suited for specific roles within an organization. When recruitment is strategically aligned with organizational goals and emphasizes the right job-person fit, it enhances job satisfaction and increases the likelihood that employees will remain with the organization over the long term.

Compensation and benefits refer to the total rewards offered to employees in exchange for their work, including salaries, bonuses, health insurance, retirement plans, and paid leave. Offering competitive and fair compensation packages serves as a strong motivator, enhances employee satisfaction, and fosters a sense of loyalty and commitment to the organization.

Training and skill development focus on improving employees' knowledge, competencies, and performance through activities such as workshops, seminars, and professional courses. Providing opportunities for continuous learning and career advancement not only equips employees with the necessary tools to perform effectively but also increases their engagement and encourages long- term retention within the organization.

3. Research Methodology

This study adopted a mixed methods approach using descriptive and correlational research designs to examine talent acquisition practices and their relationship with employee retention in Kisii County, Kenya. The study area was Kisii County, located in south western Kenya in the former Nyanza Province, bordering Nyamira, Homabay, and Migori counties and approximately 306 kilometres from Nairobi. The target population comprised individuals directly or indirectly involved in talent acquisition processes, including human resource managers, recruitment officers, and employees within medium to large organizations, particularly the Kisii County Government. The study employed purposive sampling to select key human resource professionals and stratified and cluster sampling techniques to select employees across departments, resulting in a sample of 50 respondents. Primary data were collected using structured questionnaires to generate quantitative data and semi structured interviews and focus group discussions to obtain qualitative insights, while secondary data were obtained from organizational records and labor market reports. Data collection followed a systematic procedure involving tool pretesting, ethical clearance, informed

consent, and strict confidentiality measures. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, including frequencies, means, percentages, correlation, and regression analysis with the aid of statistical software, while qualitative data were analyzed thematically to identify key patterns and emerging themes. Findings from both quantitative and qualitative analyses were triangulated to enhance validity and reliability. Ethical considerations such as voluntary participation, anonymity, confidentiality, and secure data handling were observed throughout the study. The outcomes of the research were expected to identify effective talent acquisition practices, explain their influence on employee retention, and provide practical recommendations for human resource practitioners in Kisii County.

4. Results and Discussions

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of data collected on the influence of talent acquisition practices on employee retention in Kisii County, Kenya. The data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics to derive meaningful insights. The findings are presented through tables, graphs, and narrative explanations

4.1. Response Rate

The study targeted a sample of 150 employees from the Kisii County government and HR practitioners across various organizations in Kisii County. Out of the distributed questionnaires, 120 were completed and returned, representing a response rate of 80%. This response rate is considered adequate for analysis and provides reliable insights into the research problem

4.2. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The study analyzed respondents' demographic characteristics, including gender, age, education level, and years of experience in the organization, to understand the profile of participants.

4.2.1. Gender Distribution

Table 1: Presents the gender distribution of respondents.

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	97	65
Female	53	35
Total	150	100

The results indicate that the majority of respondents were male (65%), suggesting that most organizations in Kisii County have a male-dominated workforce.

4.2.2 Age Distribution

Table 2: Shows the age distribution of respondents.

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
18–25	30	20%
26–35	35	23%
36–45	60	40%
Above 45	25	17%
Total	150	100%

The results suggest that most employees in Kisii County are in the 36 - 45 age bracket, which indicates that this age group represents mature and experienced employees, indicating that the organization prioritizes recruiting individuals with significant work experience rather than fresh graduates. Employees within this age bracket are likely to seek job stability, which aligns with the organization's talent acquisition practices focused on long-term retention.

4.3. Talent Acquisition Practices in Kisii County

The study examined key talent acquisition practices in Kisii County, focusing on recruitment methods, selection criteria, and employer branding, to understand how these practices influence employee retention.

4.3.1. Recruitment Methods

Respondents were asked to indicate the most common recruitment methods used in their organizations.

Table 3: Recruitment Methods

Recruitment Method	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Internal Recruitment	64	43%
External Recruitment	35	23%
Employee Referrals	31	21%
Online Job Portals	20	13%
Total	150	100%

The findings indicate that internal recruitment is the dominant method used by organizations in Kisii County, accounting for 43% of responses. This preference for hiring from within provides employees with clear opportunities for career advancement and serves as a motivational tool. By promoting internal talent, organizations demonstrate that they value employee contributions and loyalty, which enhances job satisfaction and significantly improves retention.

4.3.2. Selection Criteria

Respondents were also asked to indicate the key criteria used in selecting employees within their organizations.

Table 4: Selection Criteria

Selection Criteria	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Academic Qualifications	70	47%
Work Experience	35	23%
Skills and Competencies	24	16%
Cultural Fit	21	14%
Total	150	100%

The results indicate that academic qualifications were the most emphasized factor, accounting for 47% of responses. This suggests that employers prioritize formal education and relevant training when hiring, signaling that the organization values competence and aims to maintain high standards of work output by recruiting well-qualified employees. Prioritizing qualifications ensures that the workforce possesses the necessary knowledge and technical skills to perform effectively, which can contribute to overall organizational performance and retention. Employee Retention Factors.

The study also analyzed key factors influencing employee retention, including career development, compensation, work environment, and organizational culture.

4.3.3.Career Development Opportunities

Career development opportunities are a key factor in enhancing employee skills, motivation, and long-term retention. Career development refers to structured programs and initiatives that enable employees to improve their competencies, receive guidance, and progress in their professional journey (Noe, 2020; Armstrong & Taylor, 2020). Such opportunities include training programs, mentorship, coaching, and promotion pathways, all of which contribute to employee satisfaction, engagement, and commitment to the organization.

In Kisii County, understanding the impact of career development on retention is essential for organizations aiming to maintain a skilled and motivated workforce. Table presents respondents' views on the influence of career development opportunities on employee retention.

Table 5: Career Development Opportunities

Career Development Factor	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Training Programs	75	50%
Mentorship and Coaching	35	23%
Promotion Opportunities	40	27%
Total	150	100%

The findings indicate that training programs were the most significant factor, with 50% of respondents highlighting their role in retaining employees. Promotion opportunities influenced 27% of respondents, while mentorship and coaching contributed to retention for 23%. These results suggest that organizations in Kisii County that prioritize structured career development initiatives, particularly training programs, are more likely to retain skilled employees and foster long-term organizational commitment.

4.3.4. Compensation and Benefits

Compensation and benefits are critical components of talent management that influence employee motivation, satisfaction, and retention. Compensation refers to the monetary rewards provided to employees, including salaries, bonuses, and incentives, while benefits encompass non-monetary rewards such as health insurance, retirement plans, and other perks (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020; Milkovich *et al*., 2021). Effective compensation and benefits packages not only attract skilled employees but also encourage them to remain committed to the organization, reducing turnover and enhancing overall organizational performance.

In the context of Kisii County, understanding employees' perceptions of compensation and benefits is essential for designing retention strategies that align with workforce expectations. Table 4.6 presents respondents' views on the role of compensation in employee retention.

Table 6: Respondents' Views on Compensation and Benefits

Compensation Factor	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Competitive Salaries	65	43%
Health Benefits	27	18%
Bonuses and Incentives	58	39%
Total	150	100%

The findings indicate that competitive salaries were the most influential factor in retaining employees, accounting for 43% of responses. Bonuses and incentives were also significant, influencing 39% of respondents, while health benefits contributed to retention for 18% of respondents. These results suggest that organizations in Kisii County should prioritize comprehensive compensation packages that combine both financial and non-financial benefits to enhance employee retention and satisfaction.

4.4. Correlation Analysis

A correlation analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between talent acquisition practices and employee retention.

Table 7: Correlation Analysis between Talent Acquisition Practices and Employee Retention

Variable Comparison	Correlation Coefficient (r)	p-value
Recruitment Methods vs. Retention	0.72	0.001
Selection Criteria vs. Retention	0.55	0.05
Employer Branding vs. Retention	0.80	0.0001

The results presented in Table 4.7 show that recruitment methods had a strong positive relationship with employee retention, as indicated by a correlation coefficient of 0.72 and a statistically significant p value of 0.001. This implies that effective recruitment methods were associated with higher levels of employee retention, suggesting that organizations that adopt structured and transparent recruitment processes are more likely to retain their employees.

Selection criteria exhibited a moderate positive relationship with employee retention, with a correlation coefficient of 0.55 and a p value of 0.05. This finding suggests that the criteria used in selecting employees influenced retention to a moderate extent, indicating that hiring employees whose skills and qualifications align with job requirements may improve their likelihood of staying with the organization.

Employer branding showed the strongest positive relationship with employee retention, with a correlation coefficient of 0.80 and a highly significant p value of 0.0001. This suggests that a strong employer brand greatly enhanced employee retention, implying that organizations perceived as attractive employers were more successful in retaining their workforce. Overall, the findings indicate that talent acquisition practices were positively and significantly related to employee retention, with employer branding emerging as the most influential factor.

4.4.1. Regression Analysis

A regression analysis was conducted to determine the predictive power of talent acquisition practices on employee retention. The regression model results are presented in Table 4.8.

Table 8: Regression Model for Talent Acquisition Practices and Employee Retention

Predictor Variable	Beta Coefficient (β)	t-value	p-value
Recruitment Methods	0.45	2.35	0.021
Selection Criteria	0.30	1.95	0.057
Employer Branding	0.60	3.50	0.002
Dependent Variable: Employee Retention			

The results in Table 4.8 indicate that recruitment methods had a positive and statistically significant effect on employee retention, with a beta coefficient of 0.45, a t value of 2.35, and a p value of 0.021. This implies that an improvement in recruitment methods was associated with an increase in employee retention, and the relationship was statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

Selection criteria exhibited a moderate positive effect on employee retention, as reflected by a beta coefficient of 0.30 and a t value of 1.95. However, the p value of 0.057 was slightly above the conventional 0.05 significance threshold, indicating that the effect of selection criteria on employee retention was not statistically significant. Nevertheless, the closeness of the p value to the threshold suggests that selection criteria may still have a marginal influence on retention and could warrant further investigation.

Employer branding recorded the strongest positive and statistically significant effect on employee retention, with a beta coefficient of 0.60, a t value of 3.50, and a p value of 0.002. This finding indicates that strengthening employer branding substantially increased employee retention, making it the most influential predictor in the regression model.

Based on the regression results in Table 4.8, the multiple linear regression equation for predicting employee retention from talent acquisition practices is expressed as:

$$\text{Employee Retention} = \beta 0 + 0.45X1 + 0.30\ X2 + 0.60\ X3 + \varepsilon$$

Where:

Employee Retention is the dependent variable

β_0 is the regression constant or intercept

Recruitment Methods, Selection Criteria, and Employer Branding are the independent variables

ε is the error term

This equation indicates that, holding other factors constant, a one-unit improvement in recruitment methods leads to an expected increase of 0.45 units in employee retention, while a one-unit improvement in selection criteria leads to an increase of 0.30 units in retention. Employer branding has the largest effect, where a one-unit improvement results in an increase of 0.60 units in employee retention. This confirms that employer branding is the strongest predictor of employee retention among the talent acquisition practices examined.

The hypotheses were tested using regression analysis at a 0.05 level of significance. The decision rule was to reject the null hypothesis if the p value was less than 0.05 and fail to reject the null hypothesis if the p value was greater than 0.05. The summary of hypotheses testing is presented in Table 4.9.

Table 9: Summary of Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis	Statement	Test Statistic	p-value	Decision
H01	Recruitment methods have no significant effect on employee retention.	β = 0.45, t = 2.35	0.021	Rejected
H02	Selection criteria have no significant effect on employee retention.	β = 0.30, t = 1.95	0.057	Failed to Reject
H03	Employer branding has no significant effect on employee retention.	β = 0.60, t = 3.50	0.002	Rejected

The results indicate that recruitment methods and employer branding significantly influenced employee retention, leading to the rejection of their respective null hypotheses. However, the null hypothesis relating to selection criteria was not rejected, as its effect on employee retention was not statistically significant at the 0.05 level. These findings suggest that employer branding and recruitment methods are key predictors of employee retention in Kisii County.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1. Conclusions

The study concludes that talent acquisition practices significantly influence employee retention in Kisii County. Structured recruitment and selection processes improve retention, while selection criteria emphasizing skills, competencies, and cultural fit reduce turnover. Employer branding is critical, as employees are more likely to stay in organizations that provide career growth opportunities, competitive pay, and a supportive work environment. Effective retention strategies should focus on career development, fair compensation, and work-life balance, ultimately enhancing productivity and reducing recruitment costs for organizations in the county.

5.2. Recommendations

To improve employee retention, organizations in Kisii County should adopt structured, transparent, and merit-based recruitment processes, combining internal promotions and referrals with external recruitment to balance fresh skills and internal experience. Selection criteria should prioritize skills, competencies, and cultural fit, incorporating technical assessments and behavioral interviews. Strengthening employer branding by offering competitive salaries, career development programs, and supportive work environments is essential. Organizations should also implement employee engagement initiatives to enhance morale and job satisfaction. Finally, career development should be promoted through training, mentorship, and clear promotion pathways, fostering long-term retention and organizational commitment.

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