

**ASSESSMENT OF PRACTICES USED IN RETENTION OF
KNOWLEDGE WORKERS IN SUGAR COMPANIES IN
WESTERN KENYA**

BY

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BHR/G/11/06

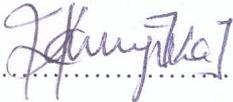
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DECLARATION

Declaration by the candidate

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Declaration by the supervisors

This thesis has been submitted for examination with our approval as University Supervisors.



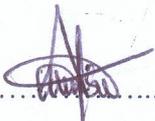


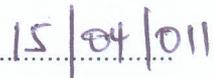
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ABSTRACT

Whereas firms have retention strategies, the turnover rates keep escalating and the failure to keep or retain knowledge workers may undermine the competitive capability, intellectual capital, cultural fabric, image building and institutional memory of such firms and thus the need for this study. The purpose of this study was to establish the effectiveness of practices used by sugar industries in retention of knowledge workers as a way of building their competitive advantage. The specific objectives of this study were to: determine the effectiveness of rewards on retention of knowledge workers, establish the influence of training and development on retention of knowledge workers, ascertain the influence of management style on retention of knowledge workers, find out the impact of opportunities for professional growth on retention of knowledge workers and lastly to establish the effectiveness of working environment on retention of knowledge workers. The study is hinged on a conceptual framework where the envisaged retention strategies form the independent variable while the expected outcomes (both positive and negative ones) form the dependent variable. The interplay of the said variables is regulated by an intervening variable hinged on transparency, equity and fairness. The study utilised the descriptive survey design and was carried out in Sugar companies located in Western Kenya. The following companies were selected for this study: Mumias Sugar Company Limited, Nzoia Sugar Company Limited and Chemelil Sugar Company. The study population included human resource managers, H.O.Ds and knowledge workers (employees who engage in specialised work and who also possess specialised training, skills and experience) drawn from the following departments within each selected company: finance, agriculture, production, marketing and IT. Both probability and non-probability sampling were used to select respondents who gave the required information within the study location. There were 146 respondents: 2 HR managers, 14 H.O.Ds and 130 knowledge workers. Besides reviewing secondary data on pertinent issues, the information was sourced using questionnaires and scheduled interviews. The raw data was then analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively by a statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) and M.S Excel for means and percentages. The analysed data was presented in tables, pie charts and bar graphs. The study found out that the rewards the sugar companies were offering were not competitive enough to retain their knowledge workers. Training and development programmes were evident but preference was given to workshops and seminars at the expense of professional certification and as such training and development programmes hardly motivated the knowledge