

## **THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STAFF RETENTION POLICIES AND THEIR IMPLEMENTATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN CENTRAL EQUATORIAL STATE SOUTH SUDAN**

**Jacob Dut Atem Malek**

*PhD (Candidate) Scholar, Registrar School of Business and Management, University of Juba, South Sudan*

### **ABSTRACT**

*The study examines the relationship between staff retention policies and their implementation in secondary schools in the Central Equatorial State. The relationship between employee retention and organizational performance in secondary schools in the Central Equatorial State appears strong ( $r = .543$ ;  $p$ -value  $< .000$ ) in the presence of the working environment. Otherwise, the relationship between employee retention and organizational performance ( $r = .223$ ;  $p$ -value  $< .000$ ) is not significant. It was concluded that the staff retention and organizational performance of secondary schools in Central Equatorial State. One of the objectives of the study was to understand the employee retention strategies used in the district. Employee compensation was found to be the most used employee retention strategy in the state. Compensation was highly confirmed by the highly paid package, the attractive attention, and the bonus they earn for every overtime. While participants indicated being highly paid, the study did not establish the different salary scales that are paid to employees. Similarly, the study could not establish the dimensions of attractive packages that indeed motivate them to stay as employees in secondary schools in the Central Equatorial State. As a recommendation, secondary schools in Central Equatorial State should operate according to standard operations and procedures as laid out in different policy organs, like the Local Government Act, Public Service Standing Orders, Public Finance Management Act, etc. There should also be an independent study on the role of policy implementation in the attainment of organizational goals in local governments in South Sudan.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Human Resource Management, Employee Retention, Recruitment, Compensation, Performance Appraisal Employee Performance, Employee Efficiency*

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Globally, European Union member countries have the highest Human Development Index of over 90, which derives from their local self-government systems that exercise high public trust and deliver high-quality local public services (Nemec & Vries de, 2015). Only three countries in Sub-Saharan Africa rank in the top half of the global distribution of cross-border trading. Uganda's Country Policy and Institutional Assessment score, which measures economic management, structural policies, social equity and inclusion, and public sector management and institutions, indicates a decline from 3.6 in 2008 to 3.1 in 2017 (World Bank, 2017). A key factor that accounts for the increasing challenges in the service delivery of local government departments is the high employee turnover (Pieterse & Oni, 2014)

Studies by Schiuma and Lero (2008), Garnett, Marlowe, and Pandey (2008), and Green and Inman (2007) analyzed organizational effectiveness models and integrated employee retention measurements into three dimensions: financial performance, business performance, and organizational effectiveness. In particular, they matched employee attraction and retention with organizational effectiveness. From a companywide perspective, Zakari, Kofi, and Owusu-Ansah (2013) noted two very distinct types of performance yardstick, that is, those relating to financial and strategic performance. Achieving an acceptable level of financial results is crucial. They argued that without adequate profitability, a company's pursuit of its vision as well as its long-term health and ultimate survival is jeopardized.

In South Sudan, Kakumba and Fennell (2014) show that developing countries have challenges retaining talented employees. The authors show that the current expansion of local government administration units is not proportional to the effective retention of talent. Aupal (2017) shows that following the turn to parliament as the main approver of local government budgets, the management of local governments is becoming a problem. Lack of commitment at the local government level has been shown to affect service delivery, with evidence of irregular recruitment and promotions, unfair dismissals, victimization, and delayed salaries (Obedgiu, Bagire, & Mafabi, 2017). Local governments in developing countries lack public confidence and trust due to poor implementation of performance management (Zakaria, 2014). Consequently, local governments fail to address the interests of multiple stakeholders.

The current study is built on the job embeddedness theory, which was posited by Mitchel, Holtom, Lee, Sablinski, and Erez (2001). The theory rests on the assumption that several factors influence an employee's decision to leave or stick to their jobs. The theory asserts that there is a direct link between the factors that influence embeddedness (links, fit, and sacrifice) and the contexts within the organization. Employees will stay in their jobs if they enjoy relationships with their colleagues (link), their skills fit with the job demands (fit) and have engagements with the community (sacrifice) (Mitchel, Holtom, Lee, Sablinski, & Erez, 2001; Ozcelik & Cencki, 2014). In local governments, employees work to contribute to the organization's long-term goals of providing goods, works, and services to the community. With this kind of engagement, which employees have built, it becomes difficult to merely exit their jobs. Employees who have good relationships with their colleagues are likely to keep with their current jobs, which is likely to help the organization in reaching its target groups, and rightly use institutional resources for the benefit of the community.

Employee retention refers to policies and practices companies use to prevent valuable employees from leaving their jobs. How to retain valuable employees is one of the biggest problems that plague companies in the competitive marketplace (Ongori, 2007). Employee retention plays a vital role in bridging the gap between macro strategies and micro behavior in organizations. This is because it ensures stability and connects the experiences of individuals in organizations continuously to the critical measures of success factors in the organization (Shaw, Gupta, & Delery, 2005). Therefore, the acquisition, development, and retention of talent form the basis for developing competitive advantage in many industries and countries. Increasing retention means that employees stay in service longer and the longer they stay in the organization, the more experienced staff they become (Whitt, 2005).

### **Problem Statement**

Even though schools in South Sudan develop policies and strategies to cultivate a working environment that supports employees to stick to their current positions so that factors of production can be easily arranged, In Central Equatorial State, institutional indicators of building a formidable workforce, such as employee performance appraisals, staff training, facilitation of workshops, and job advertisements, exist. However, the staffing gap seems to be increasing, which has

affected budget implementation in the district and, consequently, low service delivery (Auditor General, 2017). Therefore, the current study delved deep into the intensity of employee retention and its effect on organizational performance and recommended strategies to retain employees.

### **The study objectively concentrated on**

To examine the nature of staff retention in the Central Equatorial State, To examine the level of employee performance in the Central Equatorial State, and To examine the effect of staff retention on organization performance in the Central Equatorial State

### **Research Questions**

What is the nature of staff retention in Central Equatorial State?

What is the level of employee performance in Central Equatorial State?

What is the effect of staff retention on organizational performance in Central Equatorial State?

### **Hypothesis**

H<sub>1</sub>: There is a relationship between employee retention and organizational performance

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no relationship between employee retention and organizational performance

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Theoretical Review**

Job embeddedness theory assumes that there are very strong factors that influence an employee to stick to his/her current job. Mitchel et al. (2001) define job embeddedness as a new construct examining an employee's link with his workmates, his fit with the demands of the job, and his beliefs on the sacrifices he is likely to make when he leaves the current job. The important characteristics of job embeddedness include the extent to which the job relates to society, the extent to which the employee relates with other colleagues in the organization and the sacrifice the employee is willing to make if he/she changes her job (Khattak et al., 2012). The employer must provide a work environment that allows the employee to leverage community engagements and interpersonal relations.

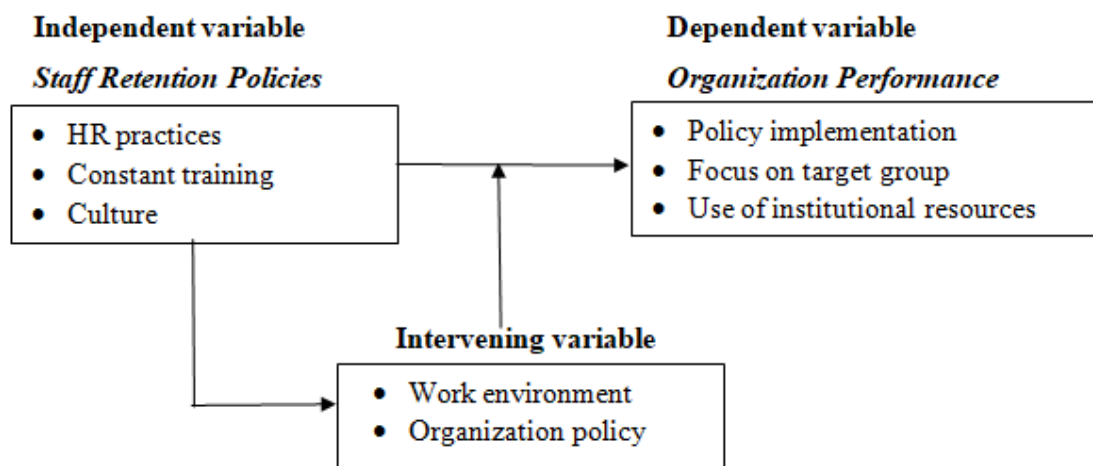
Young (2012) defines links as the connection between the employee and the people he works with. These might be the managers, the supervisors, and the wider community. The interconnectedness is further influenced by demographic characteristics like age, marital status, community activities, etc. Fit refers to the extent an employee's values, goals, and personal views are reflected in the culture of the organization where he/she works. The closer the views of the employee are to those of the organization, the higher the likelihood of the employee to stick to the same organization. On the other hand, sacrifices can be defined as the material and immaterial benefits the employee might miss out on in case he loses his current job.

Ringl (2013) applied the job embeddedness theory to explain the choices employees make to stay in their current organizations. He shows that organizational embeddedness has a significant relationship with work engagement. In practice, employees who recognize a fit and a link with the current organization are likely to demonstrate high work engagement compared to those who lack both the fit and the links. Moses (2012) applied the job embeddedness theory to understanding the importance of organizational identification. The author shows that job embeddedness helps employees

develop several different social and human capital. He, however, shows that different organizations offer different opportunities to employees to develop their identity with the organization.

The current study applied the job embeddedness theory to show how employee retention relates to organizational performance. Job embeddedness characteristics such as links and fit explain employee retention in local governments. Employees who feel satisfied with the work teams and groups in local governments, and are engaged to the wider community find it would be a loss if they left the local government. Additionally, employees who find that their goals (serving the public) match with the local government's constitutional goals, find it would be a loss if they left the local government. This is because, if they as employees are engrained to serving the community, and find the local government with the same goals, they (employees) find themselves as fitting in the organizational wider context of service delivery.

These four areas of employee retention policy can be translated into the four variables of the current study as shall be stated in detail in chapter two.



**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework.**

**Source:** Literature review

Staff retention policies were an independent variable; organization performance was a dependent variable. Implementation procedures and the workplace environment are mediating variables. Several factors have been identified as contributing to the staff retention policy. For this study, they are categorized into HR practices, constant training, and culture. While organization performance is the outcome variable of interest, the study is concerned with determining factors leading to its variation in secondary schools in the Central Equatorial State.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

The study was conducted using a combination of research designs particularly surveys and case studies. Surveys present an oriented methodology used to investigate populations by selecting samples to analyze and discover occurrences". Survey design was used for its economy, rapid data collection, and ability to understand a population from a part (Oso and Onen, 2008)

### **Population of the Study**

The study population of this study was the administrators, heads of department employees, and the informants of the selected local governments. A total of 60 respondents were considered as the study population. A total of 52 respondents were considered as the sample size.

### **Sampling Techniques**

The researcher employed purposive sampling techniques in selecting the respondents with the option of replacing those who did not wish to respond to the researcher's plea. Purposive sampling is where the researcher consciously decides who to include in the sample. It was used simply because the study was targeting custodians of staff retention. It also ensured that people with relevant information were sampled.

### **Data Collection Techniques**

The researcher used a combination of structured questionnaires and interviews. According to Oso and Onen, (2008), the questionnaire is a data collection technique in which a respondent responds to several items in writing. The questionnaire was chosen simply because of time limitations and partly because the research was dealing with the elite community (respondents) Interviews were the other data collection technique used by the researcher. They were used as a way of supplementing the questionnaire already filled, but at the same time, they would enable the researcher to probe further into the responses given to the questionnaire, especially given the importance of the research and the specialized nature of the topic under study.

### **Data Analysis and Presentation**

The data was analyzed by both statistical and narrative methods. Narrative analysis was used to explain the qualitative results of the survey. The statistical method was used to analyze the background of the respondent, the functionality of staff retention as well as the level of organization performance.

## **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

To find out the relationship between staff retention policy and Organization Performance, a model summary, Anova, and coefficients was developed as indicated below:

**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.848 <sup>a</sup>	.720	.691	.321

a. Predictors: (Constant), HR practices, constant training, culture

The results show that staff retention policy, i.e., HR practices, constant training, and culture, have exemplary power on employee performance in South Sudan, as they accounted for 69% of its variability (R square = 0.848) on Model 2, hence the model was a good fit for the data. This implied that there was a moderately positive relationship between staff retention policy and organizational performance in South Sudan.

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	7.647	3	2.549	24.808	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	2.980	29	.103		
	Total	10.627	32			
a. Dependent Variable: Organizational performance						
b. Predictors: (Constant), HR practices, constant training, culture						

The P-value calculated of 0.000 which was below 0.05 explains that the regression relationship was noteworthy in predicting the HR practices, constant training, and culture on Organization performance in Secondary schools of the Central Equatorial state. The calculated F (24.808) was significantly bigger than the critical value of F= 2.549. Moreover, the findings further indicate that the model was fit for the study.

Coefficients								
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
		1	(Constant)	1.301				
	HR practices	-.195	.094	-.223	-2.075	.047	-.387	-.003
	Constant training	.403	.087	.543	4.632	.000	.225	.581
	Culture	.424	.092	.515	4.588	.000	.235	.613

a. Dependent Variable: Organization Performance

Staff Retention Policy, i.e., HR practices, constant training, and culture. The results revealed that the explanatory power of Staff Retention Policy on the variability of HR practices (supported by  $\beta = -0.223$ , p-value=0.047) to HR practices (supported by  $\beta = 0.543$ , p-value=0.000) to culture (supported by  $\beta = 0.515$ , p-value=0.000) was statistically not significant in explaining Organization Performance in South Sudan. The relationship between employee retention and organizational performance in secondary schools in the Central Equatorial State appears strong ( $r = .543$ ; p-value < .000) in the presence of the working environment. Otherwise, the relationship between employee retention and organizational performance ( $r = .223$ ; p-value < .000) is not significant.

## CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the findings of the study underscore the critical importance of effective staff retention policies and their implementation in secondary schools in Central Equatorial State, South Sudan. The challenges and gaps identified in the current practices highlight the need for interventions to enhance staff satisfaction, motivation, and ultimately, retention rates.

Addressing issues such as inadequate resources, limited professional development opportunities, and poor communication between school administrators and teaching staff is crucial for creating a supportive and conducive work environment. By prioritizing resource allocation, strengthening professional development programs, improving communication, promoting work-life balance, and implementing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, schools can enhance their retention strategies and ultimately improve the quality of education for students.

School authorities, government bodies, and stakeholders must collaborate and invest in sustainable solutions that prioritize the well-being and professional growth of teachers. By doing so, secondary schools in Central Equatorial State, South Sudan, can achieve higher staff retention rates, foster a culture of continuous improvement, and ultimately contribute to the overall development of the education sector in the region.

In Central Equatorial State secondary schools, the study looked into organizational effectiveness and personnel retention. The main aim of the research was to comprehend the personnel retention tactics implemented in the state. The most popular method for keeping employees in the state government is pay increases, according to research. The attractive attention, the well-paid package, and the bonus they receive for each overtime worked all strongly suggested that they were being paid well. Although research participants reported high pay, it did not identify the various employee pay scales. Additionally, the study was unable to determine the specifics of alluring benefits packages that would encourage them to continue working as staff members in Central Equatorial State secondary schools.

Based on the findings of the study conducted in Central Equatorial State secondary schools, it is evident that personnel retention strategies play a vital role in organization. The research aimed to understand the tactics used to retain staff members within the state, with a particular focus on the impact of pay increases. The study revealed that offering pay raises is the most popular method employed by the state government to retain employees.

Participants in the research highlighted the attractiveness of the attention they receive, the competitive salary packages, and the bonuses earned for overtime work, indicating that they feel adequately compensated. However, the study does not delve into the specifics of the various pay scales for employees, thereby limiting a comprehensive understanding of the salary structures in place. Furthermore, the research was unable to uncover the specific details of enticing benefits packages that could further incentivize staff members to remain employed within Central Equatorial State secondary schools.

These findings underscore the importance of not only offering competitive salaries but also providing a transparent and well-structured pay scale that aligns with employee skills, expertise, and contributions. Additionally, educational institutions in Central Equatorial State must consider enhancing their benefits packages to encompass a broader range of incentives that cater to the diverse needs and preferences of their staff members. By addressing these aspects, schools can further improve their personnel retention strategies and bolster overall organizational effectiveness in the long run.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following recommendations are suggested to improve staff retention policies and their implementation in secondary schools in Central Equatorial State, South Sudan:

**Enhance resource allocation:** School authorities and government bodies should prioritize the allocation of resources to support staff retention initiatives, such as professional development opportunities, competitive salaries, and performance-based incentives.

**Strengthen professional development programs:** Schools should invest in regular training and capacity-building programs for teachers to enhance their skills and job satisfaction. This could include workshops, seminars, and mentoring programs.

Improve communication and transparency: School administrators should foster a culture of open communication and transparency to build trust and collaboration among staff members. Clear channels for feedback and grievances should be established to address concerns promptly.

Address work-life balance: Schools should promote a healthy work-life balance for teachers by providing adequate support services, flexible scheduling, and recognition of their well-being.

Monitor and evaluate policy effectiveness: Regular monitoring and evaluation mechanisms should be put in place to assess the impact of retention policies on staff satisfaction, motivation, and turnover rates. Feedback from teachers should be actively sought to refine and improve existing strategies.

By implementing these recommendations, secondary schools in Central Equatorial State, South Sudan, can enhance their staff retention policies and create a conducive work environment that fosters teacher satisfaction, and professionalism, and ultimately, improves the quality of education for students.

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