

ABSTRACT

It is purported that the apparent shortage of academic staff in Kenyan Universities is the main cause of universities' failure to retain quality academic staff. Kenyan universities are operating in a highly competitive environment where supply of qualified teaching staff is in deficit. One of the challenges these universities face is academic staff retention. This study sought to establish the influence of human resource management practices on academic staff retention in universities: A comparative analysis of Public and Private Universities. The study was guided by the following objectives: to establish the influence of recruitment practices, to determine the influence of selection practices, to assess the influence of reward and to establish the influence of workload on academic staff retention in Universities in Kenya. The study was conducted in four public and four private universities and data was collected for the time scope of 2008 to 2016. The study was guided by the human capital theory and expectancy theory. The study employed qualitative and quantitative research designs. The target population was 2,768 teaching staff from 8 (4 public and 4 private) universities out of which a sample size of 284 (276 departmental academic staff plus 8 (HR) registrars) was drawn using Mugenda and Mugenda formular. Data was collected using questionnaire and interview schedule. The validity of the research instruments was ascertained through content validity testing using experts and an index of 0.8 was attained. Reliability of the questionnaire was measured using Cronbach's alpha and a correlation coefficient of 0.87 was achieved. Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis were used to analyze quantitative data while qualitative data was analyzed and presented thematically. The study used multiple regressions to test hypothesis and the findings revealed that there was a significant relationship between recruitment, selection and reward Practices on academic staff retention. From the findings, it was evident that Reward Practices had a higher degree of determination of staff retention of 94% in public and 46% in private universities. However, workload management practices did not have a significant effect on academic staff retention on both private and public universities. The overall conclusion of this study was that HR practices had significance influence on academic staff retention in universities in Kenya, but the effect was more pronounced in public universities than in private universities. The study recommended that universities should review and implement their HR practices on reward, recruitment and selection so as to help them to achieve and enhance academic staff retention. Additionally, universities should make a constant review of HR practices and retention of academic staff a priority in order to guarantee quality products and services.