

**EXTENT OF ADOPTION OF BEST HUMAN RESOURCE  
MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AMONG PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN  
WESTLANDS DISTRICT, NAIROBI COUNTY**

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## DECLARATION

I declare that this research project is my original work and that it has not been submitted for examination in this or any other University.

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## **DEDICATION**

This project is dedicated to my parents, Mr. and Mrs. Likalamu, my brothers, sisters, nephews and niece.

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## ABSTRACT

Human resource practices are increasingly becoming more and more necessary in organizations including schools as achieving good performance is very important to them. This is a continuous and dynamic process and various organizations including schools, are applying various strategies to achieve high performance and remain competitive in the labour market. Adoption of human resource management best practices is one of the strategies employed by organizations towards their achieving success. The research objective was to determine the extent of adoption of best human resource management practices among private secondary schools in Westlands District, Nairobi County. The research design used was descriptive survey. The population consisted of 32 private secondary schools and all were to be studied. Primary data was collected using questionnaires where respondents were required to indicate their level of agreement on each of the variables' aspects. Descriptive statistics were used for analysis. Frequency distribution presented the information in a more understandable way. The findings showed that the schools in Westlands District, Nairobi County have adopted human resource management best practices in relation to employment security, recruitment and selection, teamwork, compensation, handling of grievances and sharing of information with the staff. Training of staff has not been greatly adopted. The respondents agreed to having staff with the right training for their jobs and conducting on the job training but they have only adopted off the job training and giving of staff a chance to develop their careers while still working to a small extent. In conclusion, the study shows that there was no consensus on the responses received meaning that some schools in Westlands District, Nairobi County have adopted human resource management best practices while others have not. Recommendations from the study are that training of staff be taken into account more by the private secondary schools in Westlands District, Nairobi County and researchers exploring the way forward in staff getting off the job training and a chance to develop their careers while they are still working.

# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background

Human resource management is a strategic and coherent approach to the management of an organization's most valued assets – the people working there who individually and collectively contribute to the achievement of its objectives (Armstrong, 2006). This involves staffing, retention of people, remuneration, performance management, change management and taking care of exits from the organization. This means that the people working in the organization need to be well looked after from the moment of being employed to the moment they leave the organization. People and their collective skills, abilities and experience, coupled with their ability to deploy these in the interests of the employing organization, are now recognized as making a significant contribution to organizational success and as constituting a significant source of competitive advantage (Armstrong, 2006).

Institutions need to have some kind of model that they follow as this will give them guidance on what culture and structure is best to adopt. An institution can choose to either 'tailor make' or adopt one that already exists, through application of company policies and business structure. The model that an institution chooses to adopt could also be a fallback whenever the institution is facing challenging situations or conditions in operations and finances. The model of choice will also determine what human resource practices the institution will embrace for its success. Organizations vary in the way they adopt these practices. There are the early adopters who mostly get integrated into the

local system and late adopters who are cautious and wait to see the experiences from the early adopters. Schools are also not being left out in the adoption of Human Resource Management practices. There are a number of human resource models that can be adopted to meet these objectives; these include human resource best practices model, the harvard framework model and the matching model (Armstrong, 2006).

### **1.1.1 Human Resource Management**

Human Resource Management has emerged as a set of prescriptions for managing people at work. Its central claim is that, by matching the size and skills of the workforce to the productive requirements of the organization, and by raising the quality of individual employee contributions to production, organizations can make significant improvements on their performance (Beardwell & Holden, 1997). Human Resource Management therefore concerns the human side of management of enterprises and employee relations with firms. Its purpose is to ensure that the employees are engaged in such a way that the employer obtains the greatest possible benefit from their abilities and that the employees obtain both material and psychological rewards from their work (Graham & Bennet, 1998).

Human Resource Management aims at enabling the organization achieve its objectives by taking initiatives and providing guidance and support on all matters relating to its employees. The basic aim is ensuring that the organization develops human resource practices that cater effectively for everything concerning the employment and development of people and the relationships that exist between management and

workforce (Armstrong, 2006). This would also call for some planning which in this case would have the objective of securing the human resource in order to achieve the objectives of the organization. This would mean making an assessment of the current employee situation to see for instance if the appropriate range of skills is available, if more staffing needs to be done, if incentives need to be given, if teams need to set up and what information needs to be shared with the employees (Cole, 1996).

### **1.1.2 Best Human Resource Management Practices**

Human resource management best practices are the approaches used by organizations that determine how people are managed. They involve development of human resource strategies that when actively embraced, contribute to superior organizational performance (Armstrong, 2006). Having in place human resource best practices such as employment security, recruitment and selection, self-managed teams, compensation, training and development opportunities and employee relations and grievance procedures and sharing of information, all contribute in sustaining an institution's success. Other human resource practices include; strategic human resource planning, and job analysis among others. Human resource best practices encourage the growth and success of the institution. Employees who play a key role in the well-being of the same feel appreciated and recognized for their good work and hence give back by doing their best (Sharma, 2010 & Saleem, 2009). Talent management, continuous improvement, knowledge management, staff welfare and financial wellness and employee rewards and recognition are some of the human resource strategies that need to be look at in human resource practices. Human

resource strategies need to focus on what the organization needs are and what may need to be changed (Armstrong, 2006).

The aim of effective human resource management best practices is to facilitate and enable the organization in its achievement of success through people (Armstrong, 2006).

A set of human resource best practices that have produced good results for one organization such as increased productivity, improved quality of service and competitive advantage, will not necessarily produce similar results in another organization. This is why there is need to custom make the best fit human resource practices for specific industries and companies. There are a number of determinants of human resource best practices some of which are internal such as the organizational structure, the management and power and politics in the organization. Others are external such as technological changes, international and national economic changes, legislation and competition. Human Resource Management processes take place within the context of the internal and external environment of the organization. The impact of external events on company policies and practices needs to be analyzed. There is need to be aware of the fact that what the organization does and what they need to do will depend to a large extent on its external and internal environments (Cole, 1996). A number of scholars have discussed best human resource management practices. This study will adopt those best human resource management practices as discussed by prefer which are seven.

### **1.1.3 Private Secondary Schools in Westlands District, Nairobi County**

Provision of quality education and training in Kenya has been a central policy issue since the country gained political independence in 1963. This has been mainly due to an increasing demand for more education and training opportunities as well as the Government's commitment to the provision of quality education training and research as a human right for all Kenyans in accordance with the law and international conventions (Eshiwani, 1993). Secondary school education in Kenya, with the 8-4-4 system of education, lasts four years and is offered after eight years in Primary school and a prior two years in pre-primary school. In Kenya, secondary schools are categorized into public and private schools. Public schools are further classified into national schools, provincial schools and district schools. Students are admitted to secondary schools on merit; depending on what marks they scored in their final exams done at the end of their eight years in primary school. Private secondary schools consider primary school examination performance but some schools also administer their own entrance exams before admitting new students.

A private secondary school is one that is not run and managed by the government. It collects its own revenue and sustains itself from it. Their management varies as some are run by Churches, others by groups of people who have come together while others are run by individuals. While all the private secondary schools are set up to give education their students, the intentions also differ as some are set up for business hence to make money while others are set up as charity institutions to reach out to the needy persons in society. They follow the curriculum offered in the country. However they do their

staffing themselves. A number advertise for vacant positions and conduct interviews to get the best candidates for the jobs.

Westlands District is one of the eight Districts in Nairobi County. It has some of the oldest secondary schools, some of which were started by missionaries and some started even before independence for instance, Loreto Convent Valley Road started in 1942 as a temporary primary school. The school grew so rapidly that by the end of the war in 1946, it was decided that the school be developed as a separate institution accommodating boys and girls. The school remained a co-educational primary school until the boys were transferred to St. Mary's. Loreto Convent Secondary School was started in 1948. There is also St. Mary's started in 1939 and started primarily to offer Catholic education to the many white settlers just as the Second World War was beginning and now the school has gradually become a great school that embraces all races, religions and cultures. There are 32 private secondary schools in the district (source, school websites and Westlands District Education Office records, off Waiyaki Way).

## **1.2 Research Problem**

Human resource management deals with people, the most valued asset in an organization and can make an impact by leading or contributing to the development and successful implementation of high performance work practices which in turn translate to high organizational performance (Armstrong, 2006). Organizations would lack in performance and would not be able to compete with their counterparts in the same industry if they did not adopt human resource practices. There are some issues in human resource practice such as staff who are not motivated which is resulting to high staff turnover. Motivation

could come from management through pay, promotion and praise (Armstrong, 2006). Another issue is that an organization may be unable to pursue its goals because it is unable to find enough suitably trained personnel to carry them through (Cole 1996).

Private secondary schools in Westlands have a number of human resource issues such as staff dissatisfaction with the salaries and benefits offered. It is also a challenge to get the best fit staff for various positions in terms of values and culture of the institutions; keeping track of performance as it is only pegged on students' performance whereas other factors could affect it; balancing teamwork and individual performance and responsibility. This in turn leads to high staff turnover, some moving to competitor schools and others changing their line of profession altogether from working in a school setting. In one school for instance, in the last two years twelve staff members left employment with them. However, these issues are not documented but observed from practice. There are Schools in Westlands District that are rated as good performers in the national examinations while others are not, for instance, one school known to be a good performer has had a mean score of 10.39 in 2011 and 9.98 in 2012. This is a cause of study as to whether it has anything to do with the adoption of Best Human Resource Practices. Westlands District also has some of the oldest and well established private secondary which brings in another cause of study as to whether the adoption of Best Human Resource Practices plays a role in their lasting long in the education industry.

Studies have been done in Human Resource Management practices such as the study by Njuguna (2010) on Human Resource Practices in public secondary schools in Kiambu

County. In her study, Njuguna (2010) found that although public secondary schools in the area had utilized innovative human resource practices such as continuous training and development, fair recruitment and selection processes, and competitive compensation they had not embraced some practices like employee participation in decision making, free knowledge, information sharing and performance management. Njenga (2007) studied the relationship between Human Resource Management practices, job satisfaction, organizational commitment and performance in public secondary schools in Dagoretti Division, Nairobi and found that job satisfaction was significantly correlated with organizational commitment of teachers. Investigating the causes of staff turnover in private secondary schools in Kisumu, Otieno (2010) found that the rate of turnover was higher than expected and some of the contributing factors were; job security, low compensation, lack of representation in trade unions and poor working relationships. The studies above have concentrated on human resource practices in public schools and a private school in Kisumu County and none has focused on adoption of human resource practices in private secondary schools in Nairobi County which is the knowledge gap this study intends to address. No study to the best knowledge of the researcher has been carried out in private secondary schools in Nairobi in regard to the extent of adoption of best practices in human resource management. This study aims to answer the question to what extent have private secondary schools in Westlands District, Nairobi County adopted best human resource management practices.

### **1.3 Research Objective**

To determine the extent of adoption of best human resource management practices among private secondary schools in Westlands District, Nairobi County.

### **1.4 Value of the Study**

The study is important to the Principals and the Head Teachers of the various private secondary schools as it will provide information that will assist them in evaluating the effects of human resource management best practices on the performance and success of their schools. Policy makers will also appreciate the importance of the current human resource practices and their appropriateness in improving and enhancing performance of private secondary schools.

The study is also important to the owners of the schools in that it will provide them with information on the extent of adoption of human resource management best practices in private secondary schools and in turn how this affects the performance in the schools. This will also give them a guideline on how to manage these schools better and give them insight into how the same practices are working and bringing results in other organizations and institutions.

The study is important to researchers and academicians in that, it will provide information on how human resource management best practices have been adopted and give them grounds to study how this adoption could be better improved and implemented and how it could result to better performance of schools into the long-term.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Introduction**

Productivity is influenced by employee motivation and financial performance is influenced by employee skills, motivation and organizational structures (Huselid, 1995). When employees are well taken care of, they give their employer their best skills, capabilities and time. This because they are not worried about medical care, what will happen to them after retirement or if they become incapacitated or their safety while at work in terms of work environment and their job security. On the other hand, when employees are dissatisfied with their work and work environment, they become restless and always on the lookout for better prospects. In studies carried out variously, firms with high values on the motivation index had economically and statistically higher levels of performance (Becker, 1996).

### **2.2 Human Resource Management Practices**

Human resource management as seen earlier is a strategic and coherent approach to the management of an organization's most valued assets – the people working there who individually and collectively contribute to the achievement of its objectives (Armstrong, 2006). Human resource management has emerged as a set of instructions and recommendations for managing people at work. The central factor is that, by matching the size and skills of the workforce to the productive requirements of the organization, and by raising the quality of individual employee contributions to production, organizations can make significant improvements in their performance (Beardwell &

Holden, 1997). Eldon (2011) in his study found that the most demotivating thing for a competent and responsible employee is to feel that they are being under-utilized. They become reluctant to make contributions to the organization which could have been of great benefit to the organization. The organizational practices of the last fifteen years such as outsourcing, downsizing, re-engineering, acquisitions and joint ventures, high management turnover, broadened spans of management control, rapid technological change and globalization are challenging traditional human resource practices in Kenya. Managing resourceful human beings requires a constant balancing between meeting the aspirations and interests of the people, and meeting the strategic and financial needs of the business (Torrington et al, 2008).

Human resource management establishes a clear positive link between human resource management practices and organizational performance. In the last decade, many human resource scholars have attempted to answer two basic questions; do human resource practices make a positive impact on organizational performance and if so, how is the impact achieved? The important thing is what can be done to ensure and prove that human resource practices are a good thing. Direct relationships between investment and attention to human resource practices are often nebulous, however, and vary according to the population sampled and the methods and measures used in the research or study (Ulrich, 1997). Huselid (1995) in his study found that human resource practices influence employee skills through the acquisition and development of a firms' human capital. Recruitment procedures that provide a large pool of qualified applicants will have a substantial influence over the quality and type of skills new employees will possess.

Providing formal and informal training experiences such as basic skills training, on-the-job experience, coaching, mentoring and management development can further influence employees' development.

Human resource management is aimed at recruiting people with capabilities that aim at ensuring that the work environment is just right to facilitate their utmost performance. Human resource practices exercise their positive impact by enhancing the competence of employees, tapping into their motivation and commitment, and designing work in such a way that their fullest contribution is encouraged and enabled. Positive employee behavior should in turn impact upon positive outcomes such as reduced absences, quit rates and wastage as well as high quality work and productivity (Guest, 2001; Graham & Bennet, 1998).

### **2.3 Best Human Resource Management Practices**

Human resource management is a holistic approach concerned with the total interests of the members of the organization; the interests of the members of the organization are recognized but subordinated to those of the enterprise. Employees are treated as assets and not costs. A lot of importance is also attached to the management of culture and the achievement of commitment (Armstrong, 2006). Kariuki (2012) in her study found that employees need to be given a reason to be engaged, motivated and contribute to the organization and that it could happen that employees' initial morale and excitement could fade and lead to disillusionment and demotivation. Alvaro et al (2011) in their study found that what is important is that human resource best practices make employees more

valuable and unique and then organization learning will come. Some human resource best practices are discussed for instance training and development by (Torrington et al, 2008) who say that in order to get a skilled and motivated workforce, it is essential that training and development be a deliberate plan and goal of the organization. This will facilitate that employee skills are polished and that the employees are up to date with their particular job dynamics hence better performance. Organizations have a choice on whether to depend extensively on the talent available in the external labor market or to invest heavily in training and developing their existing employees; others include employment security, recruitment and selection, compensation and benefits, teamwork and employee relations and fair grievance procedures. These are discussed further.

### **2.3.1 Employment Security**

Employees need some security in their job for them to perform to their best abilities. They need some assurance that they are not going to be laid off without prior and sufficient notice and also that there is nothing threatening their job. It is important that employees receive equal attention when joining and when leaving the organization and especially when they are leaving at retirement or are being retrenched. Moore (2012) in his study found that exit interviews if properly done would be an excellent opportunity for the organization to obtain information about how they are doing; the exit interview could have questions on the workplace environment, circumstances surrounding the employees work that could prevent him/her from doing their best, whether they work as a team with the colleagues and if there are any hindrances, what they would tell the top boss if they had a chance to sit with them and what they have liked or disliked about

working in the organization. Where there is employment security, trust is built between employees and the organization leading to improved cooperation and better work and team spirit, all in the organization's favor (Pfeffer, 1994).

Employment security policies need to reflect more careful staff selection: people are happy and motivated to be more productive if they know they have a secure long-term career with the organization they work for which is expressed in employees being issued with long term contracts. Employment security is fundamental to the implementation of most other practices. It assumes flexibility and means that employees are not laid off for reasons such as economic downturns or the strategic mistakes of senior management. Employees need some degree of job security because they plan their lives around assumptions related to continuing incomes which they get from employment, and taking this from them unceremoniously is detrimental to themselves and their families (Deal & Kennedy, 2000).

### **2.3.2 Recruitment and Selection**

The importance of selecting people who can meet the requirements prescribed in the job description and person specification that matches with organizational values and culture cannot be overemphasized. Mistakes in employee selection can have very serious consequences for organizations and may adversely affect other employees and negatively impact on business leading to reduced performance. Employee incompetence may lead to costly mistakes, loss and wastage of valuable resources, accidents, avoidable expenditure on training and so on (Tyson & York, 1996). Kariuki (2012) in her study found that it is

crucial for the organization that they get it right from the first moment in terms of its best fit staff for the job at hand. If not, despite the employees best efforts they will be unable to meet desired performance expectations and this has an impact on the organizations' performance. This means that the recruitment system; profiling, methods of advertising, shortlisting procedure, interviewing methods, background checks and orientation of the new recruits, needs to reflect the values and beliefs of the organization.

Branine (2008) in his study found that attracting a large number of applicants is not a major problem but recruiting the right applicants is the main concern of many employers and also that the most preferred recruitment methods were milk around which refers to recruitment by employers directly from universities and colleges, recruitment brochures, recruitment fairs, direct directories, newspaper and magazine advertisements, sponsorships and recruitment agencies. Branine (2008) also found that the selection of graduates also varies from one employer to another and depends on the type of vacancy being offered; it has been a common practice for many employers to select graduates through face-to-face interviews and tests, but an increasing number of employers are using other methods such as telephone interviews, assessment centres and online testing. Algorta et al (2011) in their study found that some organizations carry out internal recruiting in addition to external recruiting with the internal recruiting being used as a way of motivating the staff and encouraging them to develop their professional career in the company.

Belout et al (2001) found in their study that one area of great concern for organizations lies in obtaining and retaining employees with the unique skills and attributes necessary for a particular job; companies are reacting with changes in the workplace to recruit and retain skilled workers and they are focusing on core issues to help themselves by revising hiring standards, improving training programs and productivity and by providing flexibility in work policies and benefits. Evans (2012) in her study found that recruitment is considered a key human resource management lever when attempting to build a diverse workforce. For instance, Evans (2012) found that there is a lot of talk now about gender balance at the workplace and there are initiatives taking place to make workplaces more attractive and appealing. Muller & Liao (2006) in their study found that employment security policies need to reflect more careful staff selection and that people are happy and motivated to be more productive if they know they have a secure long-term career with the organization they work for. This also has an impact on possible employees since job seekers are interested in finding work that will match their preferences and as such will be interested in obtaining signals regarding an organization's culture and practices. This means that organizations should in turn make specific efforts especially during downsizing not to send off negative signals about their culture and practices.

### **2.3.3 Self-managed Teams**

People need to work in teams and these teams need to manage themselves in terms of setting targets and following up to ensure that these targets are met. This is important since decision making can be decentralized and management will not be overwhelmed as in a case where they are expected to make all decisions. Teamwork will also give

employees the chance to autonomy and self-direction which is key in motivating staff, in addition to enhancing delegation, leading to more output (Pfeffer, 1994). Teamwork offers teams with a substitute for peer-based hierarchical control of work, such that, instead of management devoting time and energy to controlling the workforce directly, workers control themselves. Peer control is often more effective than hierarchical supervision because employees feel more accountable and responsible for the operation and success of the organization, and improve in creativity (Pfeffer, 1994).

Workers are more likely to readily help one another and share their knowledge more freely. In an environment where people truly participate, no control is needed. It is important that people devote themselves to the cause on a voluntary and willing basis, and the more they do this, the fewer the hierarchies and control mechanisms needed. In any one organization, employees should act, at times, from a leadership perspective; that is, shoulder some responsibility by taking a leading role in executing the strategic objectives and goals (Elash & Long, 2002). The test of an effective team is whether its members can work in harmony while they are apart, contributing to a sequence of activities rather than to a common task, which requires their presence in one place and at one time. This kind of coordinated working unit towards one bigger goal, even though individual employees are involved in different activities, is what all teams should aim for in order to be successful and effective (Adair, 1986 & Cole, 1996).

### **2.3.4 Compensation**

Competitive compensation and benefits is contingent on performance and highlights the need to motivate staff. Great motivation to employees could result in very good results as they feel valued and hence will value the employer in return and perform to their optimum. Compensation can take many forms such as pay increases, promotion, share ownership, stock options, profit sharing, paying for skills acquisition and individual or team incentives (Pfeffer, 1994). If compensation takes the form of promotion for example, it should be based on performance, skills and competencies, and not on the position which the employee or manager occupies in the hierarchy. When employees are owners, they are more inclined to act and think like owners of the business putting the interests of the organization first. Ownership schemes without training, information sharing, and delegation of responsibility will have little effect on performance because even if people are motivated by owning shares, they do not have the skills, information or power to do anything. Mudasia (2012) in his study found that there is a Generation Y category of staff for instance who are not holistically motivated by monetary terms but also by clear performance targets, challenging work, work life balance, technology embracement and access to professional and social networks.

It should also be kept in mind that a culture of commitment and performance cannot be attained without equitable and fair employee compensation. The aims of any good salary and grading system should be to influence qualified people in sufficient numbers to want to be employed within an organization. A sound system ideally influences competent people and those that match and are suitable to the current and future needs of the

organization to remain in its employment (Nzuve, 2010). Kirago (2012) in his study found that employees' personal financial problems manifest in administration costs of absenteeism, processing of salary advances and poor quality work among others; and that the current economic climate has resulted in increased demands for upward salary adjustments.

Lim et al (2012) in their study found that a reward system should be a package/system that consists of rewards and benefits, such as holiday leaves, medical benefits, transport allowance and performance bonus with the main purpose of retaining good employees, motivating them to perform at their best and attract the right applicants to the job; an effective and good reward system is very important, because an effective pay system can increase an individual's motivation to perform, which then increases productivity and subsequently, increasing competitiveness of the firm. Lim et al (2012) also found in their study that nowadays companies do not design pay systems only as a means to compensate for work done and reward performance, but pay systems that improve performance as well. Alvaro et al (2011) found in their study that compensation practices must include incentives in order to reward the search for new solutions and the use of group-based incentives may enhance cooperative behaviour and increase learning from interaction among individuals because they perceive that part of their compensation depends on group results.

### **2.3.5 Training and Development**

Mueller & Liao (2006) in their study found that training is an essential component of high-performance work systems because institutions rely on front-line employee skills and initiatives to identify and resolve problems, to initiate changes in work methods and to take responsibility for quality. This kind of scenario requires a motivated work force that has the knowledge and capability to perform the core tasks and be innovative and creative. Huselid (1995) in his study found that the effectiveness of even highly skilled employees will be limited if they are not motivated to perform. This however can be improved by use of human resource practices such as training and development. King'ori (2012) in his study found that it is important that employees have the right technical and soft skills needed to take on some decisions in their organizations and this calls for the necessary training.

Many executives who perceive a performance problem are disappointed when training and development and culture-building activities do not yield the quick fix they expected. Companies may give their employees “smile training” where workers are sent off to learn new behaviors, but the employees return to an office culture that doesn't support the new behavior and culture that has been learned. It is recommended that first, the culture has to change, then, appealing behaviors are taught, and this way, everything will fit in with the culture (Duffy, 1999). Mudasia (2012) in his study found that the various kinds of training are seen as progressing from off-the-job training through direct job related training to training related to practical problems, and how to get solutions and results. There is need to embrace the adoption of distance learning, home schooling, in service

training, growth of professional career guidance centres or programs and comprehensive on the job training programs especially if generation Y is to be attracted. Nabangi (2011) in his study found that key to keep in mind is that when the training is not needs based or poorly scheduled and clashing with other priorities, it can reverse all its benefits.

### **2.3.6 Employee Relations and Fair Grievance Procedures**

Employee relations consist of all those areas of human resource management that involve relationships with employees; directly and/or through collective agreements where trade unions are recognized and used (Armstrong, 2008). These relationships deal with the agreement of terms and conditions of employment and with issues arising from employment, directly in relation to how employees are treated within the workplace (Armstrong, 2008). Issues of employee relations arising from employment include grievances employees may have and how they are handled. The issue of fairness lays emphasis on the importance that employees feel they are equal and are given fair treatment by management. If there is favoritism, employees become disgruntled and do not perform as expected.

Employees need to feel valued and appreciated and to do this, most high-committed management systems attempt to reduce distinctions that separate individuals and groups and cause some to feel less valued. This can be accomplished through the use of language and labels, physical space, and dress, and by reducing the organization's degree of wage inequality, particularly across levels both horizontally and vertically (Pfeffer, 1994). An example of enhanced equity and employee relations is given in the example of Axiom's

organizational development group which decided to abolish titles and rename all employees “associates”. Trendy as this move might seem, Axiom’s former midlevel managers did not receive it warmly. Titles had been the means of identifying an employee’s level of experience. Even though this could have had adverse effects in the short-term, the benefits of the same were felt much into the long term as employee relations and fairness was improved (Duffy, 1999).

### **2.3.7 Employee Involvement in Decision Making and Sharing Information**

Involving employees in matters of the organization is crucial in order that they feel part of the organization. Giving them the chance to have autonomy in as far as their work is concerned as well as information and knowledge sharing are encouraged and should not be the premise of management only. This way, the employees will feel they have some ownership in the organization and would defend it at all costs and give their best work effort, hence greater returns and better performance by the organization. Information sharing is not widespread in organizations because information is power, and sharing information diffuses that power. However, if people do not know what is going on nor understand the basic principles and theory of the business, they cannot be expected to positively affect performance (Pfeffer, 1994).

Sharing information with employees, work councils and joint consultative committees can assist with providing training in using the shared information to make better business decisions. Sharing of information on issues such as financial performance, strategy, and

operational measures conveys to the employees that they are trusted. Unions can play a positive and proactive role by coalescing the opinions of various work groups thereby presenting “one voice” to management who would otherwise have to deal with multiple opinions and interest of several work groups before making decisions (Pfeffer, 1994).

## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Research Design**

This study will adopt a descriptive survey. This is the appropriate design because it involves a measurement process using a highly structured interview and it employs measurement tools such as questionnaires or interview schedules (Cooper & Schindler 2006). It will allow for a comparative analysis to be done to achieve the research objective. The selected design is also appropriate because it tends itself to collection of cross-sectional data.

### **3.2 Target Population**

The study population will comprise 32 Private secondary schools in Westlands District (Westlands District Education report).

### **3.3 Data Collection**

A semi-structured questionnaire will be used to collect data. The questionnaire will contain three sections; section A which will focus on the respondent demographic characteristics, section B which will focus on the schools' demographic characteristics and section C which will focus on best human resource management practices. Respondents will be the Principals of the schools or heads of departments because they have a broader perspective of the running of the Schools. The questionnaire will be administered using the drop and pick later method.

### **3.4 Data Analysis**

Data collected will be checked for completeness and clarity. Descriptive statistics such as mean, mode and standard deviation will be used to analyze the data. Data will be summarized and presented in form of tables.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents a detailed discussion of the research findings in an attempt to achieve the research objective. The objective of the study is to determine the extent of adoption of best human resource management practices by private secondary schools in Westlands District, Nairobi County.

### **4.2 Response Rate**

The study targeted a population of 32 respondents. One of the schools since relocated leaving a population of 31. 31 questionnaires were distributed and 16 were filled in and returned. This gives a response rate of 51.6% which is adequate for analysis and reporting. According to (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999) a response rate of 50% is adequate for analysis and reporting.

### **4.3 Demographic Information of respondents**

The targeted respondents were the Principals of the schools or heads of departments. The study sought to find out the number of years the respondents had worked in the school, their position in the school and the number of years they have served in that position. Based on the information given it will show evidence of authority of the respondents to respond to the question of the extent of adoption of best human resource practices in their schools.

### 4.3.1 Position in the School

The study sought to find out the position of the respondents as this will give information on the suitability of the respondents to respond to the questionnaire. Table 4.1 shows this response.

Table 4.1: Respondent position in the school

<b>Position</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Principal	1	6
Deputy Principal	4	25
Head of Department	4	25
Human Resource Manager	4	25
Administrator	2	13
Academic coordinator	1	6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4.1 shows that 6% of the respondents were the Principals of the school. 25% were Deputy Principals, another 25% were Heads of Department and another 25% were Human Resource Managers. 13% were Administrators and 6% were Academic coordinators. The study targeted Principals and heads of department. As shown above, the respondents were heads of departments and were able to respond to the study on the extent of adoption of best human resource practices in their schools.

### 4.3.2 Years worked in the position

The study sought to find out the number of years worked in the various positions by the respondents. This was to establish that they have been there long enough to appreciate the adoption of human resource best practices in their schools. Table 4.2 shows this response.

Table 4.2: Length of service in position

<b>Number of years in position</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
zero to two years	2	12.5
Two to four	10	62.5
four to six years	2	12.5
Over six years	2	12.5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4.2 shows that majority of the respondents had worked in their positions in the schools for a period of less than ten years with the larger percentage. With 62.5% of the respondents having worked in their schools for 2 to 4 years, there is some level of appreciation of adoption of human resource best practices.

### 4.3.3 Years worked in the school

The study sought information on the length of service of the respondents in the school. The longer they had served, the better placed they were to appreciate the adoption of human resource management best practices by their schools. Table 4.3 shows this response.

Table 4.3: Length of service in the school

<b>Number of years in the school</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
zero to two years	1	6.25
two to four years	8	50
four to six years	5	31.25
Over six years	2	12.5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4.3 shows that 6.25% of the respondents had served in their schools for a period of up to two years. The majority of 50% had served for years between two and four while 31.25% had served for years between four and six and 12.5% had served for a period of over six years. The longer they had served, the better placed they were to appreciate the adoption of human resource management best practices by their schools.

#### **4.4 Demographic Information of the schools**

The study sought to find out the description of the schools. The study also captured information on how long the schools have been in existence, types of schools, system of education they offer, number of students and number of both teaching and non-teaching staff. This information is important to the type of human resource management best practices adopted by the schools.

#### 4.4.1 Years of schools operation

The study sought to find out how long the schools have been in operation which would be a guide on the extent of adoption of human resource management best practices. Table 4.4 shows this response.

Table 4.4: Schools years of operation

<b>Years in operation</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Ten to fifteen	2	12.5
Fifteen to twenty	4	25
Twenty to twenty five	1	6.25
Over thirty	9	56.25
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100</b>

The table shows that a greater percentage of the schools have been in operation for more than thirty years. These are 56.25% of the schools. 12.5% have been in operation for between ten and fifteen years, 25% for between fifteen and twenty years, 6.25% for twenty to twenty five years. None has been in operation for less than ten years. The information is important for the study since the longer the school has been in operation the more appreciation they will have for adoption of human resource management best practices.

#### 4.4.2 Type of School

The study sought to find out the types of the private secondary schools in Westlands District to establish whether this contributes to their adopting of human resource

management best practices. This information is relevant as a guide on the extent of adoption of human resource management best practices as schools with longer hours of students being around as is the case in boarding schools, are likely to have more staff and are therefore more likely to adopt these practices. Table 4.5 shows this result.

Table 4.5: Types of schools

<b>Type of School</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Boys and day	1	6.25
Boys and both day &boarding	1	6.25
Girls and day	2	12.5
Girls and boarding	1	6.25
Girls and both day &boarding	2	12.5
Mixed and day	6	37.5
Mixed and both day &boarding	3	18.75
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100</b>

The table shows that 6.25% of the schools were boys only and day only, 12.5% were girls only and day only and 37.5% were mixed and day only. This gives a larger percentage of the schools being day schools only. None was boys only and boarding or mixed and boarding while 6.25% were girls only and boarding only. 6.25% were boys only and both day and boarding, 12.5 were girls with both day and boarding facilities and 18.75% were mixed with both day and boarding facilities.

#### 4.4.3 System of Education

The study sought to find out the systems of education offered in the schools. This information is a guide to the extent of adoption of human resource management best practices by the schools as those that follow the international curriculum and system are more likely to have adopted these practices. Table 4.6 shows this result.

Table 4.6 System of education

<b>System of Education</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
844 only	7	43.75
International curriculum only	2	12.5
Both	7	43.75
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100</b>

The table shows that the same percentage, 43.75% offered the local 844 system of education and both the 844 and the International curriculum. 12.5% of the schools offered the International curriculum only.

#### 4.4.4 Number of students

The study sought to find out the number of students in the school. This is a guide to the extent of adoption of human resource management best practices as the larger the number of students the larger the number of staff needed and the higher the chances of adoption of human resource best practices. Table 4.7 shows this result.

Table 4.7 Number of students

<b>Number of students</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Zero to one hundred and ninety nine	2	12.5
Two hundred to four hundred and ninety nine	13	81.25
Over five hundred	1	6.25
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100</b>

The table shows that majority of the schools had under 500 students, with 12.5% having up to 199 students and 81.25% having between 200 and 499 students. 6.25% have more than 500 students.

#### **4.4.5 Number of teaching staff**

The study sought to find out the number of teaching staff in the schools. This is a guide to the extent of adoption of human resource management best practices by the schools as higher the number of teaching staff the higher the chances of adoption of these practices.

Table 4.8 shows this result.

Table 4.8: Number of teaching staff

<b>Teaching staff</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Zero to nineteen	4	25
Twenty to thirty nine	10	62.5
Over forty	2	12.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100</b>

The table shows that 25% of the respondents have up to 19 teaching staff, 62.5% have between 20 and 39 and 12.5% have over 40 teaching staff.

#### 4.4.6. Number of Administrative and support staff

The study sought to find out the number of Administrative and support staff in the schools. This is to be a guide to the extent of adoption of human resource management best practices as the higher the number of staff the higher the chances of adoption of these practices. Table 4.9 shows this result.

Table 4.9: Number of Administrative and support staff

<b>Administrative and support staff</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Zero to five	6	18.75
Six to ten	9	28.13
Eleven to fifteen	11	34.38
Sixteen to twenty	5	15.63
Over twenty	1	3.13
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>100</b>

The table shows that 18.75% of the schools have up to 5 administrative and support staff, 28.13% have between six and ten administrative and support staff, 34.38% have between eleven and fifteen administrative and support staff, 15.63% have between sixteen and twenty administrative and support staff and 3.13% have over twenty administrative and support staff.

#### 4.4.7 Average Performance of the schools

The study sought to find out the average performance of the schools in the last three years. The results apply to the 844 system of education. Two of the respondents offer the International curriculum only and are therefore not included in this result. This is to be a guide to appreciate the extent of adoption of best human resource management practices.

Table 4.10 shows this result.

Table 4.10: Average performance

Average performance	Frequency	Percent
0 to 4	2	14.29
4 to 6	3	21.43
6 to 8	4	28.57
above 8	5	35.71
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>100</b>

The table shows that 14.29% of the schools get average grades of up to 4, 21.43% get average grades of between 4 and 6, 28.57% get average grades of between 6 and 8 and the larger percentage of 35.71% get mean grades of above 8.

#### 4.5 Human resource management practices

The objective of this study was to determine the extent of adoption of human resource management best practices by private secondary schools in Westlands District, Nairobi County. The practices studied were employment security, recruitment and selection, self-managed teams, compensation, training and development, employee relations and

grievance handling and employee involvement in decision making and sharing of information. The respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement to the adoption of the human resource management best practices on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neither agree nor disagree, 4=agree and 5=strongly agree. Means less than 1.5 implied that the respondents have not adopted the human resource best practices to a great extent while means of greater than 1.5 and less than 2.5 implied that the respondents had adopted the human resource management best practices to a little extent. Means greater than 2.5 and less than 3.5 implied that the human resource management best practices had been adopted to a moderate extent. Means greater than 3.5 and less than 4.5 implied that the human resource best practices had been adopted to great extent while means greater than 4.5 implied that they had been adopted to a very great extent. The standard deviations describe the distribution of the responses in relation to the mean. It provides an indication of how far the individual factors vary from the mean. A standard deviation of more than 1 indicates that there is no consensus, one of greater than 0.5 and less than 1 indicates that the responses are moderately distributed while less than 0.5 indicate that they are concentrated around the mean.

#### **4.4.1 Employment Security**

The study sought to find out the extent to which the private secondary schools in Westlands District have adopted employment security as a human resource management best practice. The respondents were asked if they have long term contracts, if staff are given sufficient notice before their contracts are terminated, if the benefits offered

safeguard employment security of staff while at work and if they conduct exit interviews.

Table 4.11 shows this response.

Table 4.11: Employment security

<b>Employment security</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
staff have long term contracts	4.19	2.55
sufficient termination notice is given	4.00	3.37
benefits safeguard employment security of staff at work	4.06	4.83
exit interviews are carried out	2.94	2.39

The table indicates that in employment security, staff having long term contracts has been adopted to a great extent with a mean of 4.19, staff being given benefits that safeguard their employment security while at work has been adopted to a great extent with a mean of 4.06 and sufficient notice being given to staff before termination of their contracts has also been adopted to a great extent with a mean of 4.00. Conducting of exit interviews has been adopted to a moderate extent with a mean of 2.94. This means that private secondary schools in Westlands District have adopted very good employment practices such as issuing of long term contracts with a mean of 4.19, staff being given benefits that safeguard their employment security while they are at work with a mean of 4.06 and staff being given sufficient notice before termination of their contracts with a mean of 4.00. However, they are not sure of their extent of adoption of conducting exit interviews with a moderate mean of 2.94. This is an indication that exit interviews are not carried out to a great extent. It should be noted that the standard deviations are quite high for the

respondents with them being more than 2 indicating no consensus on responses received meaning that some schools have adopted employment practices while others have not.

#### 4.4.2 Recruitment and Selection

The study sought to find out the extent to which recruitment and selection as a human resource management best practice has been adopted. The respondents were asked if vacant positions are advertised externally, if recruitment is by head hunt, if there is internal recruitment, if staff have job descriptions and whether promotions are done on merit and performance basis. Table 4.12 shows this result.

Table 4.12: Recruitment and selection

<b>Recruitment and selection</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
external advertising	3.19	3.55
head hunt recruitment	4.31	3.68
internal recruitment	4.38	2.89
staff have job descriptions	4.13	4.82
promotions done on merit and performance basis	4.44	2.29

The table indicates that promotions being done on merit and performance basis has been greatly adopted with a mean of 4.44. Internal recruitment has also been greatly adopted with a mean of 4.38 and head hunt recruitment has been greatly adopted with a mean of 4.31. Staff having job descriptions has been greatly adopted with a mean of 4.13. However, external advertising has been moderately adopted with a mean of 3.19. This means that private secondary schools in Westlands District have adopted very good

recruitment and selection practices such as promotions being done on merit with a mean of 4.44, internal recruitment with a mean of 4.38, head hunt recruitment with a mean of 4.31 and staff having job descriptions with a mean of 4.13. However, they are not sure of their extent of adoption of external advertising with a moderate mean of 3.19. This is an indication that private secondary schools in Westlands District prefer to recruit internally and head hunt as opposed to advertising externally. It should be noted that the standard deviations are quite high for the respondents with them being more than 2 indicating no consensus on responses received meaning that some schools have adopted recruitment and selection practices while others have not.

#### **4.4.3 Self-managed Teams**

The study sought to establish to what extent teamwork has been adopted as a human resource management best practice in terms of staff working in teams, decisions being made at team level, there being team based incentives and teams having targets and being coordinated. Table 4.13 shows this response.

Table 4.13: Self-managed teams

<b>Teamwork</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
staff work in teams	3.88	3.48
decisions made at team level	3.56	2.75
team based incentives are given	3.19	3.06
teams have targets and are coordinated	3.81	4.26

The table shows that staff working in teams has been adopted to a great extent with a mean of 3.88. Teams having targets and being coordinated has been adopted to a great extent with a mean of 3.81. Decisions being made at team level has also been adopted to a great extent as seen in the mean of 3.56. Having of team based incentives has been adopted to a moderate extent with a mean of 3.19. This means that private secondary schools in Westlands District have adopted good self-managed teams practices such as staff working in teams with a mean of 3.88, teams having targets and being coordinated with a mean of 3.81 and decisions being made at team level with a mean of 3.56. However, the extent of their adoption of team based incentives is not known with a moderate mean of 3.19. This is an indication that team effort is not greatly recognized in private secondary schools in Westlands District. It should be noted that the standard deviations are quite high for the respondents with them being more than 2 indicating no consensus on responses received meaning that some schools have adopted self-managed teams practices while others have not.

#### **4.4.4 Compensation**

The study sought to find out the extent to which the private secondary schools in Westlands District, Nairobi County have adopted compensation as a best human resource management practice. This is in terms of them basing their compensation on performance, having other benefits in addition to the salary, their staff being motivated to work by their compensation and their staff being financially sound. Table 4.14 shows this result.

Table 4.14: Compensation

<b>Compensation</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
compensation based on performance	3.56	2.75
there are other benefits in addition to salary	4.25	4.55
staff motivated to work by compensation	3.56	2.75
staff financially sound	3.38	2.80

The table shows that there being other benefits in addition to salary has been greatly adopted with a mean of 4.25. Compensation being based on performance has been greatly adopted with a mean of 3.56. Staff being motivated to work by their compensation has also been adopted to a great extent with a mean of 3.56. Staff being financially sound has been adopted to a moderate extent with a mean of 3.38. This means that private secondary schools in Westlands District have adopted good compensation practices such as staff having other benefits in addition to salary with a mean of 4.25, compensation being based on performance with a mean of 3.56 and staff being motivated to work by their compensation with a mean of 3.56. However, the extent of adoption of staff being financially sound is not known with a moderate mean of 2.94. This is an indication that what the staff receive in compensation may not be sufficient to keep them financially sound at all times. It should be noted that the standard deviations are quite high for the respondents with them being more than 2 indicating no consensus on responses received meaning that some schools have adopted compensation practices while others have not.

#### 4.4.5 Training and Development

The study sought to find out the extent to which training and development has been adopted as a human resource management best practice by the private secondary schools in Westlands District, Nairobi County. This is in terms of staff having the right training for their jobs, conducting of on the job trainings, conducting of off the job trainings and staff having the chance to develop their careers while they work. Table 4.15 shows this result.

Table 4.15: Training and development

<b>Training and development</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
staff have right training for their jobs	4.75	4.42
on the job trainings conducted	4.25	4.55
off the job trainings conducted	2.94	2.08
staff can develop careers while working	2.81	2.41

The table shows that staff having the right training for their jobs has been adopted to a very great extent with a mean of 4.75. On the job training has been greatly adopted with a mean of 4.25. Off the job training and staff being able to develop their careers while working have been moderately adopted with means of 2.94 and 2.81 respectively. This means that private secondary schools in Westlands District have adopted very good training and development practices in staff having the right training for their jobs and on the job training with means of 4.75 and 4.25 respectively. However, the extent of off the job training and staff being able to develop their careers while they are at work are not known with moderate means of 2.94 and 2.81 respectively. This is an indication that the

respondents take it very seriously that staff have to have the right training for their jobs and that they are trained on the job, given the extent of very great adoption of these practices. Of concern in adoption is off the job training and staff being able to develop their careers while they work as they are moderately adopted. It should be noted that the standard deviations are quite high for the respondents with them being more than 2 indicating no consensus on responses received meaning that some schools have adopted training and development practices while others have not.

#### **4.4.6 Employee Relations and Grievance Handling**

The study sought to establish the extent to which the private secondary schools in Westlands District have adopted employee relations and handling of their grievances as a human resource management best practice. This is in terms of there being no discrimination at work in terms of equal pay and facilities for equal jobs, that staff are aware of what to do when aggrieved, that the staff have a hearing when necessary and that there is an objective group of management staff to handle their grievances. Table 4.16 shows this result.

Table 4.16: Handling staff grievances

<b>Handling Staff grievances</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
there is equal pay and facilities for equal jobs	3.88	4.84
staff aware of what to do when aggrieved	4.19	3.73
staff have a hearing when necessary	3.63	4.28
group exists to handle grievances	3.06	2.86

The table indicates that staff being aware of what to do when aggrieved has been greatly adopted with a mean of 4.19. There being equal pay and facilities for equal jobs has been adopted to a great extent with a mean of 3.88. Staff having a hearing when necessary has also been adopted to a great extent with a mean of 3.63. The existence of an objective group of management staff to handle grievances has been moderately adopted with a mean of 3.06. This means that private secondary schools in Westlands District have adopted good employee relations and grievance handling practices such as staff knowing what to do when aggrieved with a mean of 4.19, there being equal pay and facilities for equal jobs with a mean of 3.88 and staff having a hearing when necessary with a mean of 3.63. However, the extent of adoption of there being a group to handle grievances is not known with a moderate mean of 3.06. This is an indication that the staff may not be aware of parties who will be involved in their grievance matters. It should be noted that the standard deviations are quite high for the respondents with them being more than 2 indicating no consensus on responses received meaning that some schools have adopted employment relations and grievance handling practices while others have not.

#### **4.4.7 Employee involvement in Decision Making and Sharing Information**

The study sought to find out to what extent involvement of employees in decision making and sharing of information with employees has been adopted as a best human resource management practice. This is in terms of department heads making decisions about their departments, staff making decisions about their work, the school encouraging sharing of information, staff being aware of the different situations in the school such as when a

position falls vacant and staff being aware of the activities in the school. Table 4.17 shows this result.

Table 4.17: Involvement of employees and sharing information

<b>Sharing Information</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
department heads can make decisions	3.88	4.84
staff can make decisions on their work	3.88	4.84
school encourages information sharing	3.94	4.09
staff aware of situations in the school	3.19	2.01
staff aware of activities in the school	4.44	2.29

The table shows that staff are aware of activities in the school with a mean of 4.44 indicating great adoption. There is also great adoption of the school encouraging information sharing with a mean of 3.94. Department heads making decisions about their departments has been greatly adopted with a mean of 3.88 and staff making decisions about their work has also been greatly adopted with a mean of 3.88. Staff being aware of different situations in the school has been moderately adopted with a mean of 3.19. This means that private secondary schools in Westlands District have adopted good involvement of staff in decision making and sharing of information practices such as staff being aware of the activities in the school with a mean of 4.44, the school encouraging information sharing with a mean of 3.94, department heads making decisions on their departments with a mean of 3.88 and staff making decisions about their work with a mean of 3.88. However, the extent of adoption of staff being aware of different situations in the school is not known with a moderate mean of 3.19. This is an indication that staff

do not have full information on their schools. It should be noted that the standard deviations are quite high for the respondents with them being more than 2 indicating no consensus on responses received meaning that some schools have adopted involvement of employees in decision making and sharing information practices while others have not.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

The objective of this study was to find out the extent of adoption of best human resource management practices among private secondary schools in Westlands District, Nairobi County. This chapter presents a summary of the findings, conclusions and recommendations for further study.

### **5.2 Summary of findings**

The respondents to this study were management staff who are in charge of the whole or some aspect of the school. This included the Principals, the Deputy Principals, Heads of Department and Human Resource Managers. Most of them had worked in their schools for a number of years with none having worked for less than 10 years which is an indication of their appreciation of adoption of human resource management best practices by their schools.

The schools displayed a varied range from the type, to the system of education offered and the number of students and staff. Most of the schools have been in operation for more than 30 years. Most are day schools only and the same percentage offers the 844 system of education only as that which offers both the 844 and the International curriculum. Most of the schools have between 200 and 500 students. Most schools have recorded average performances of above 8 points.

The study shows that private secondary schools in Westlands District, Nairobi County have adopted very good employment practices such as issuing of long term contracts, staff being given benefits that safeguard their employment security while they are at work and staff being given sufficient notice before termination of their contracts but they are not sure of their extent of adoption of conducting exit interviews as it is moderately adopted. It also shows that they have adopted very good recruitment and selection practices such as promotions being done on merit, internal recruitment, head hunt recruitment and staff having job descriptions but they are not sure of their extent of adoption of external advertising given its moderate adoption. From the study, it is also seen that good self-managed teams practices have been adopted such as staff working in teams, teams having targets and being coordinated and decisions being made at team level with the extent of their adoption of team based incentives not known as it has been moderately adopted.

Private secondary schools in Westlands District have also adopted good compensation practices such as staff having other benefits in addition to salary, compensation being based on performance and staff being motivated to work by their compensation with the extent of adoption of staff being financially sound not known as seen in its moderate adoption. The study also shows that they have adopted very good training and development practices in staff having the right training for their jobs and on the job training, however, the extent of off the job training and staff being able to develop their careers while they are at work are not known given that they are moderately adopted. Concerning employee relations and grievance handling, good practices have been

adopted such as staff knowing what to do when aggrieved, there being equal pay and facilities for equal jobs and staff having a hearing when necessary but the extent of adoption of there being a group to handle grievances is not known as it is moderately adopted. Concerning involvement of staff in decision making and sharing of information good practices have been adopted such as staff being aware of the activities in the school, the school encouraging information sharing, department heads making decisions on their departments and staff making decisions about their work but the extent of adoption of staff being aware of different situations in the school is not known as it is moderately adopted. The study shows that there is no consensus on the responses received meaning that some schools have adopted human resource management best practices while others have not.

### **5.3 Conclusions**

The thing to be noted as standing out on the adoption of the human resource management best practices in private secondary schools in Westlands District, Nairobi County is that they have been greatly adopted with the exception of training and development which has been moderately adopted. It can be concluded that with training and development, the private secondary schools in Westlands District have adopted the practice of having staff with the right training for their jobs and conducting on the job training with off the job training and staff having the chance to develop their careers not having been greatly adopted. It can also be concluded that some aspects of the human resource management best practices have been moderately adopted such as conducting of exit interviews, external advertising, having team based incentives, ensuring staff are financially sound,

off the job trainings, giving staff a chance to develop their careers while working, having in place a team of management staff to handle grievances and giving staff information of different situations in the school.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

To the schools it can be recommended that training of staff be taken into account and a way forward studied as to how this could be implemented. Off the job training and giving staff a chance to develop their careers can be put in focus a bit more. To the owners of the schools it can be recommended that procedures be put into place for training of staff to facilitate that they get off the job training and develop their careers. To the researchers and academicians it can be recommended that they explore other areas of study especially in relation to training of staff in schools.

#### **5.5 Recommendations for further studies**

There is need for procedures to be put into place for training of staff as it has not been greatly adopted and it could make a difference in the performance of the schools in Westlands District and in other areas in the country at large if greatly adopted. Training of staff in schools could also be studied. This could be broken into training of teaching staff and training of administrative staff and support staff. This could also be done with the view of establishing the reasons why training of staff in schools is not as much adopted. A similar study on human resource management best practices could also be done among other private secondary schools in other Districts and Counties and among the public secondary schools. A study could also be done to make a comparison of the

public and private secondary schools and their adoption of best human resource management practices.

### **5.6 Limitations of the study**

The study was carried out among private secondary schools which posed a challenge as a number were not willing to participate in the study. The study also experienced some challenges with time as schools were closed when it was initiated and when they opened the respondents were pressed for time as they needed to address beginning of school term issues in their respective schools.

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## APPENDIX 2

### QUESTIONNAIRE

The information provided here will be used solely for academic purposes and will be treated with maximum confidentiality.

#### Instructions

Please answer the following questions in Section A and B, by placing a tick (✓) in the space provided or by filling in the necessary details in the spaces provided.

#### SECTION A: RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

1. How long have you worked in this School?

Less than 5years [ ]

5 to 10years [ ]

11 to 20years [ ]

21 to 30years [ ]

Over 30years [ ]

Other [ ] (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

2. What is your position in the School?

Principal [ ]

Deputy Principal [ ]

Head of Department [ ]

Human Resource Manager [ ]

Other [ ] (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

3. How long have you been in this position?

Less than 5years [ ]

5 to 10years [ ]

11 to 20years [ ]

21 to 30years [ ]

Over 30years [ ]

Other [ ] (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

## SECTION B: SCHOOL DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

1. Name of School (optional)\_\_\_\_\_
  
2. How many years has this School been in operation?  
Less than 10years [ ]  
11 to 20years [ ]  
21 to 30years [ ]  
31 to 40years [ ]  
41 to 50years [ ]  
Over 50years [ ]  
Other [ ] (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_
  
3. Type of school (tick all answers that apply to the school)  
Boys only [ ]  
Girls only [ ]  
Mixed [ ]  
Day only [ ]  
Boarding only [ ]  
Both day and boarding [ ]  
Other [ ] (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_
  
4. System of Education offered at the school (tick all that apply)  
8-4-4 [ ]  
IGCSE [ ]  
IB [ ]  
Other [ ] please specify\_\_\_\_\_
  
5. How many students are in this School? (secondary only)  
Below 200 [ ]  
200-499 [ ]  
500-799 [ ]  
800-999 [ ]  
Above 1000 [ ]  
Other [ ] (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_
  
6. How many staff do you have in this School involved with the secondary section/school?  
Teaching staff  
Below 20 [ ]  
20-39 [ ]  
40-59 [ ]  
60-79 [ ]  
80-99 [ ]  
Above 100 [ ]  
Other [ ] (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

Admin staff

Below 10 [ ]

10-19 [ ]

20-29 [ ]

Above 30 [ ]

Other [ ] (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

Support staff

Below 5 [ ]

5-9 [ ]

10-14 [ ]

15-20 [ ]

Above 20 [ ]

Other [ ] (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

7. Performance of the School in the last 3 years

2012\_\_\_\_\_

2011\_\_\_\_\_

2010\_\_\_\_\_

**SECTION C: HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT BEST PRACTICES**

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements by ticking (√) the answer that best represents the human resource management best practices in your school.

**Key:**

**1-Strongly Disagree 2-Disagree 3-Neither Agree nor Disagree 4-Agree**

**5-Strongly Agree**

**Do you agree that in your School regarding,**

<b>Employment security;</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
1. Staff have long term contracts.					
2. Staff are given sufficient notice before termination of their contracts.					
3. Benefits offered safeguard the security of staff at work, such as pension, medical and life insurance.					
4. Exit interviews are carried out.					
<b>Recruitment and selection;</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
1. Vacant positions are advertised externally.					
2. Recruitment is by head hunt.					
3. There is internal recruitment.					
4. Staff have job descriptions.					
5. Promotions are done on merit and performance.					
<b>Team work;</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
1. Staff work in teams.					
2. Decisions are made at the team level.					
3. There are team based incentives.					
4. Teams have targets set and are coordinated.					
<b>Compensation;</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
1. Compensation is based on performance.					
2. There are other benefits in addition to the salary.					
3. Staff are motivated to work by their compensation.					
4. Staff are financially sound seen in the rate of salary advance processing; the lesser it is, the more financially sound the staff are.					

<b>Training of staff;</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
1. Staff have the right training for their jobs.					
2. On the job trainings are conducted.					
3. Off the job trainings are conducted.					
4. Staff have the chance to develop their careers while working.					
<b>Employee relations and handling of staff grievances;</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
1. There is no discrimination at work in terms of equal job for equal facilities and equal pay.					
2. Staff are aware of what to do if aggrieved.					
3. Staff have a hearing when necessary.					
4. There is an objective group of management staff to handle grievances.					
<b>Decision making and sharing of information;</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
1. Department heads can make decisions concerning their departments.					
2. Staff can make decisions on their work.					
3. The school encourages sharing of information and knowledge.					
3. Staff are aware of the different situations of the school such as when positions fall vacant.					
4. Staff are aware of activities in the school.					

Other comments \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Thank you very much for taking time to participate in this exercise. Your cooperation is highly appreciated.

### **APPENDIX 3**

#### **LIST OF SCHOOLS**

1. Aga Khan High School
2. Akiba Secondary School
3. Anamanga Secondary School
4. Braeburn Group of Schools
5. Braeside Secondary School
6. Cavina Secondary
7. Dora Vera Academy
8. German School
9. International School, Highridge
10. International School, Muthangari Drive
11. Khisaru Boys High
12. Kianda School
13. Lions Preparatory School
14. Logos Christian School
15. Loresho Secondary School
16. Loreto Convent Valley Road
17. Makini Secondary School
18. Marga Educational Center
19. Millenium Secondary School
20. Neema Educational Center (MBAE)
21. Riara Group of Schools
22. Seventh Day Adventist/Maxwell
23. Shining Star Secondary School
24. Simoga School
25. Sunshine Academy Center and School
26. St. Austin's Secondary School
27. St. Christopher Secondary
28. St. Deborah Girls High School
29. St. Martin's Girls Secondary School
30. St. Mary's School
31. St. Nicholas Secondary School
32. Strathmore School

Source: Westlands District Education Office Records, off Waiyaki Way