

**CHALLENGES FACING HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
FUNCTION AT KENYATTA NATIONAL HOSPITAL**

BY:

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DECLARATION

I declare that this project is my original work and has never been presented for academic purposes in any other University.

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This research project has been submitted for examination with my approval as the University Supervisor.

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I dedicate this research project to my daughter Lydiah Juliet who has been loving, patient, tolerant and understanding. Who has suffered most from my absence from home to attend evening class and sit in the library for long hours. However, she never complained but earnestly urged me on to complete my studies and to especially finish the research project, and she is now more than ever before motivated to work hard and be successful in life.

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ABSTRACT

Human resource management functions involve the management and development of people in organizations, formulation and implementation of human resource practices and policies. It is fundamentally about matching human resources to the strategic and operational needs of the organization and ensuring full utilization of those human resources. The human resource managers play a major part in the creation of an environment that enables people to make the best use of their capacities, to realize their potential to the benefit of both the organization and themselves and by improving the quality of working life to achieve satisfaction through their work. The aim of this study was to establish challenges facing the human resource management function at Kenyatta National Hospital.

The methodology employed in this research was a case study design. The tool used was an interview guide. Respondents were drawn from the human resource department and two line managers were interviewed. The respondents were well versed with the human resource management function and had knowledge and understanding of Kenyatta National Hospital's operations.

Results from the study established that human resource managers at Kenyatta National Hospital experience challenges of policies and procedures that curtail recruitment such as delayed information from line managers on staffing requirements for departments. Influential people canvass for positions leading to a compromised selection process. There is increased demand for specialized health care at Kenyatta Hospital and also inadequate

financial resources to meet these demands, resulting in cutting costs and hence understaffing. Human resource managers at Kenyatta National Hospital experience challenges related to training and development due to differing training needs, preferences and learning potential of various cadres of staff. Lack of employee satisfaction, poor working conditions are also challenges which cause staff grievances. Managing diversity at Kenyatta Hospital is a challenge especially due to the large number of employees from different backgrounds, ethnicities and diverse social and economic situations of employees. Powerful subcultures based on occupation and specialization cause differences, managing these differences and orientations is a challenge to the human resource managers. Other challenges at Kenyatta Hospital facing human resource managers include low staff morale and poor working environment, restricted financial allocations from the government and staff persistently engaging in industrial action. There is limited capacity and authority of the human resource department to mitigate challenges. Lack of a proper system for performance evaluation reportedly limited the human resource managers' ability to evaluate competencies and performance of staff.

In conclusion the study is of importance to the management of Kenyatta National Hospital, and the government. It will help the hospital's management in managing its human resources and also aid in addressing the myriad challenges facing the human resource managers. The study will also be of importance to other public health institutions, as it will provide insight on some of the challenges being faced by the human resource managers and aid the management in improving their human resource management policies.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Human resource management is changing very rapidly. Constant environmental changes mean that human resource managers face constant challenges. Human resource managers must respond by taking advantage of gradual yet profound changes in the nature of the field, current practices, and overall human resource management policies, mission and vision. The amount and rate of change are unprecedented (Idalberto, 2001). Organizations that will not adapt to meet environmental challenges will experience strategic problems (Thathi, 2008). Contemporary human resource managers need to learn to be competent professionals as the challenges posed by the new millennium are very complex, for example, from the industrial age to the information age, work performed in factories by machines is being replaced by work in offices or at computer terminals, and instead of working with things; people increasingly work with ideas and concepts (Idalberto, 2001).

Human resource management functions are concerned with the management and development of people in organizations. They are involved in the development and implementation of human resource strategies and policies and some or all of the following people management activities: organization development, human resource planning, talent management, knowledge management, recruitment and selection, learning, health and safety, welfare, human resource administration, fulfillment of statutory requirements, equal opportunity and diversity issues, and any other matters related to the employment relationship (Armstrong, 2008). Further, as indicated by

Dessler G. (2003) human resource management is the process of acquiring, training, appraising and compensating employees, and attending to their labour relations, health, safety and fairness concepts.

1.1.1 Human Resource Function

According to Armstrong (2006) human resource function are concerned with the management and development of people in organizations. It is fundamentally about matching human resources to the strategic and operational needs of the organization and ensuring the full utilization of those resources. It is concerned not only with obtaining and keeping the number and quality of staff required but also with selecting and promoting people who fit the culture and the strategic requirement of the organization (Armstrong, 2008).

The function ensures that human resource strategies, policies and practices are introduced and maintained that cater for everything concerning employment, development and well-being of people and the relationship that exist between management and the workforce. It plays a major part in the creation of an environment that enables people to make the best use of their capacities, to realize their potential to the benefit of both the organization and themselves and, by improving the quality of working life, to achieve satisfaction through their work (Armstrong, 2009). The role of the human resource function is to enable the organization achieve its objectives by taking initiatives and providing guidance and support on all matters relating to its employees. The basic aim is to ensure that the organization develops human resource strategies, policies and practices that cater effectively for everything concerning the

employment of people and the relationships that exist between management and the workforce (Armstrong, 2008).

1.1.2 Challenges Facing Human Resource Management Function

A challenge is an obstacle which prevents a given policy instrument being implemented, or limits the way in which it can be implemented. In the extreme, such barriers may lead to certain policy instruments being overlooked and the resulting strategies being less effective (Kamuri, 2010). Challenges emanate both from within the hospital and external issues from the environment. These include inadequate finances, poor communication, ill defined accountabilities, organizational cultural challenges; failure to empower or give people more freedom and authority to execute policy. Challenges also emanate from the specialized nature of health care services provision, conditions of work including health and safety concerns, societal constraints, prejudice and adverse cultures.

Organizations must identify and analyze environmental characteristics and develop strategies to meet changing trends (Chang & Huang, 2005). The external environment is quite complex and influences the human resource practices to a large extent; it includes the prevailing political and legal requirements and the labour market. Torrington D. et al., (2008) has indicated that the labour market is the pool of available talent in which employers compete to recruit and subsequently retain staff. Owing to a rapid expansion of the education system, the supply of educated labour has increased over time (Banda, 2006). Diversity, increased female participation in the workforce has been some of the most significant trends over recent decades. Another challenge is

the changing occupational structure leading to a greater demand for skilled staff (Torrington D. et al., 2008). Managing resistance to change represents a particular challenge for personnel management staff, as this expertise has generally not been a consistent area of focus for training and development of human resource professionals (Armstrong, 2008).

1.1.3 Kenyatta National Hospital

Kenya's public health infrastructure has grown rapidly since independence and presently the Ministry of Health has built an impressive pyramidal health referral system. At the Apex are Kenyatta National Hospital (KNH) and Moi Referral Hospital which are the national referral hospitals (Banda, 2006).

Kenyatta National Hospital (KNH) is the oldest hospital in the country having been founded in 1901 as a Native Civil Hospital by King George VI, a British colonist (KNH, 2005). In 1987, the hospital was established as a State Corporation through Legal Notice No. 109. It is currently the largest national teaching, referral and research hospital in Kenya. Its major services include: accident and emergency services, HIV/AIDS comprehensive care services, laboratory and mausoleum services, medical specialties, medicines and poisons information management, nutrition and patient support, obstetrics and gynecology, occupational therapy, paediatric, pharmaceutical care, physiotherapy, radiotherapy and cancer treatment, specialized care and surgical units.

The Human Resource Department is located in the western wing of the hospital's main administration block. Its mission is to attract and retain competent human resource,

facilitate need-driven training and development programmes, institute performance management systems and reward employees competitively. The hospital's current staff population constitutes 58% technical and 42% administrative staff. Due to the large size of the hospital its human resource management function experiences major challenges because of large staff specializations, greater professionalization and the need for higher technical qualification in different areas and because of the complexity of its services.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In Kenya, as in many other countries, public hospitals consume large portions of scarce health sector resources and do not always use them effectively or efficiently. Faced with difficulties in funding health services, some governments have granted greater autonomy to some hospitals to facilitate management improvements, which are expected to lead to better quality of care, increased revenue generation, and/or reduced cost (Meme et al., 1996). Hospitals offer life saving services and the requirement of human resources is of critical importance not just in numbers but also in terms of high level knowledge, positive attitude and problem solving skills. Ensuring that there is a high caliber staff at all times is key to the success of health care institutions (Evans, 1992). Health care is such an essential national security need that must be offered by qualified and competent staff. Hospitals must continuously reassess their capacity to deliver service. The size and competency of staff that they employ is a determinant for success (Githua, 2006).

There have been a number of studies on various aspects of managing human resources, especially studies on the link between human resources practices and organizational performance as noted by Khatri (2000). Human resources are a vital aspect of the firms' strengths and hence the need to procure and retain the required competent employees. As Chang & Huang (2005) have indicated in their research, human resource is an invisible asset that creates value when it is embedded in the operational system in a manner that enhances firm ability to deal with a turbulent environment. Thathi (2008) did a study on human resource management challenges facing Kenya Pipeline Company in the implementation of enterprise resource planning in which she recommended the need to include stakeholders including junior staff so that they can appreciate the system. Karuri (2008) conducted a research on challenges of human resources planning faced by airline firms in Kenya. Her findings were that there were challenges in forecasting employee needs. Banda (2006) did a study on the challenge of competition and competitive strategies used by public health institutions in Kenya. In which she discovered that public health institutions were facing challenges and competition from the private health institutions. Githua (2006) carried out a study on the human resource planning process in private hospitals in Nairobi in which she noted that hospitals should have a specialized human resource unit which can coordinate all human resource practices.

As observed above, the studies conducted in human resources practices have not addressed the challenges faced by the human resource management function in public hospitals. it is important to understand the challenges that human resource

management function in hospitals face and understand how they plan their staffing requirements and the programs that they prepare to ensure that these needs are delivered as and when necessary (Githua, 2006). This can only be established through an empirical study. The research study sought to identify the challenges facing the human resource management function at Kenyatta National Hospital.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objective of the study was to establish the challenges facing the human resource management function at Kenyatta National Hospital.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The study will be important to the management of Kenyatta National Hospital as it endeavors to manage its human resource function. It will enable the decision makers to come up with better policies and decisions that provide an enabling environment for the provision of quality health care.

It will also be important to management and staff of other public health institutions as it will provide insight on some of the challenges being faced by the human resource function and how they can deal with or avoid them. It will help human resource professionals sharpen their focus on challenges that are being experienced globally and locally and thereby provide a rationale for changes that can be adopted within their own institutions to overcome these challenges.

Scholars will also find it important as the study will increase the body of knowledge in the area of human resource management especially on challenges being encountered by the human resource function.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on literature in human resource management functions that include human resource planning, recruitment and selection, reward management, development and training, employee relations and performance management. The chapter also seeks to identify the challenges faced by the human resource management function.

2.2 Human Resource Management Function

Armstrong (2008) has noted that human resource functions are concerned with the management and development of people in organizations. They are involved in the development and implementation of human resource strategies and policies and some or all of the following people management activities: organization development, human resource planning, talent management, knowledge management, recruitment and selection, learning, health and safety, welfare, human resource administration, fulfillment of statutory requirements, equal opportunity and diversity issues, and any other matters related to the employment relationship. The main human resource functions that are practiced in public hospitals are enumerated.

Kenyatta National Hospital's human resource management's mission is to attract and retain competent Human Resource, facilitate need-driven training and development programmes, institute performance management systems and reward employees competitively. Deriving from its human resource mission, the following are some of the human resource management functions.

2.2.1 Human Resource Planning

Human resource planning is the systematic and continuing process of analyzing an organization's human resource needs under changing conditions and developing appropriate responses to attain the longer-term effectiveness of the organization (Sing & Nzuve, 1992). It is an integral part of corporate planning and budgeting procedures since human resources costs and forecasts both affect and are affected by longer-term corporate plans. It is the process of identification of the organization's demand for human resource and eventually devising a means to ensure that a sufficient supply of labour is available to meet the demand. Armstrong (2006) has pointed out that organizations operating in turbulent environments in which future activity levels are difficult to predict may rely on ad hoc and short term measures to recruit and keep people/ However, even these businesses may benefit from those aspects of human resource planning which are concerned with policies for attracting and retaining key staff. Aosa (2006) argues that with the increase in competition, locally or globally, organizations must become more adaptable, resilient, agile, and customer-focused to succeed. In general, the focus of today's human resource manager is on planning strategic personnel, retention and talents development.

Rahman and Eldridge (1998) indicate that modern human resources planning dates from the 1940s when it was used to allocate staff and to develop structures in conditions of acute shortage of skills. The corporate view of human resource planning is that it is complementary to organizational strategy. Bowey's (1975) conceptual framework involves the subdivision of human resource planning into three broad categories of

activity. First, there is an assessment of future labour requirements, which ought to be derived from projected business expectations. Second, is an assessment of organization's ability to retain its current workforce and any replacements which may be necessary. Finally, there are predictions that have to be made about the ability of the organization to acquire or attract different kinds of staff from the external labour market. Branham's (1975) concept of human resource planning comprises four main activities - investigating, forecasting, planning and utilizing. The investigation period provides an analysis of the external environment, a review of the external labour market, and an audit of the internal labour market. Forecasting refers to future and projects requirement and the potential supply of labour from within and outside the organization. Planning involves turning forecasts into personnel and development of policies for recruitment, training and development, absence control, motivation and reward. The final activity, utilization, requires the human resource plans to be compared against defined and important measures of organizational success such as customer satisfaction and product quality.

In addition to the above, some recent approaches to human resource planning include - reprofiling, which is the process of identifying the characteristics of the workforce, such as skills, profession, age, gender, grades, numbers, costs and layering them to arrive at a profile that will meet the organization's need for providing cost effective services (Kariuki, 2008). There are four basic methods of reprofiling - task analysis, activity sampling, zero based method and the combined approach. As Baven et al (1991)

explains, the approach focuses on ensuring the optimal distribution of skills among the workforce, so that cost effective service delivery is achieved.

2.2.2 Recruitment and Selection

Recruitment is the process of finding and engaging the people the organization needs. Selection is that part of the recruitment process concerned with deciding which applicants or candidates should be appointed to jobs. The four stages of recruitment and selection are defining requirements which involve preparing role profiles and person specifications; deciding terms and conditions of employment. The second one is planning recruitment campaigns. Third stage is attracting candidates, reviewing and evaluating alternative sources of applicants, inside and outside the company. Finally, selecting candidates by sifting applications, interviewing, testing, assessing candidates, and offering employment (Armstrong, 2009).

Hodgetts & Hegar (2008) view selection of personnel as one of the current global relations challenge facing organizations in choosing the appropriate personnel. Global companies are finding that pre-employment screenings are critical. The human resource professionals handling the recruitment function of the organization are constantly facing new challenges. The biggest challenge is to source or recruit the best people or potential candidates for the organization. In the last few years, the job market has undergone some fundamental changes in terms of technologies, sources of recruitment and competition in the job market. In an already saturated job market, where practices like favouritism and nepotism are gaining momentum, human resource professionals are

constantly facing new challenges in one of the most important function. They have to face and conquer these challenges to find the best candidates for the organization.

Underutilizing of strategic human resource approaches in the recruitment and selection process is common, whereby institutions rarely use employment tests and give little emphasis if any to the validity of selection instruments. The most common approach to selection is the use of unstructured interviews which have very low validities if any. Traditional concerns and orientations of the human resource function do not respond adequately to fundamental environmental changes (Chang & Huang, 2005).

The human resource professionals are expected and required to keep in tune with the changing times that is the changes taking place across the globe. Human resource should maintain timeliness of the process. The old local regional vision is giving way to a new global economic order and business vision. The new demand is think globally and act locally, Armstrong (2008). Hodgetts & Hegar (2008) observes that, this means working closely with local authorities, local managers and local customers and giving more authority to local operations. The recruitment process should be flexible, adaptive and responsive to the immediate requirements. The process should also be cost effective (Holland P., 2009).

2.2.3 Reward Management

Reward management is concerned with the formulation and implementation of strategies and policies in order to reward people fairly, equitably and consistently in accordance with their value to the organization. It deals with the development of

reward strategies and the design, implementation and maintenance of reward systems which aim to meet the needs of both the organization and its stakeholders. Reward can be regarded as the fundamental expression of the employment relationships (Armstrong, 2009). Pay is an important feature of human resource management; it is the main reason why people work. It is a sensitive and controversial area that has been extensively debated at both practical and theoretical levels. Compensation is a term used to encompass everything received by an employed individual in return for work (Allan Price, 2007). Employees may see compensation as a return in exchange between their employer and themselves, as an entitlement for being an employee of the company, or as a reward for a job well done (Milcovich, 2001). The compensation that people receive for their contribution to an organization includes monetary and non-monetary components. Remuneration does not simply compensate employees for their efforts; it also has an impact on the recruitment and retention of talented people (Price, 2007).

Torrington et al., (2008) has indicated that compensation is central to the employment relationship. While there are plenty of people who enjoy working and who claim that they would not stop working even if they were to win a large sum in a lottery, most of us work in large part because it is our only means of earning the money we need. How much we are paid and in what form is therefore an issue which matters hugely to us. Both salaries, benefits and other forms of reward typically accounts for a large part of an organization's total cost.

2.2.4 Development and Training

The effective operation of any enterprise or system requires that the individuals involved learn to perform the functions of their current jobs at a satisfactory level of proficiency. An effective organization however, also requires that it has available within itself a pool of individuals who are qualified to accept increasing responsibilities to move into other higher level jobs with reasonable facility (Sing et al., 1992).

Development is a term that implies something that is ongoing and that progress is made over time, this fits with the emphasis nowadays on lifelong learning. As people work longer they need to continue to develop to improve their skills, knowledge or competencies (Foot M. et al., 2008). Human resource development is a strategic approach to investing in human capital. It draws on other human resource processes, including resourcing and performance assessment, to identify actual and potential talent. Human resource development provides a framework for self development, training programmes and career progression to meet an organization's future skill requirements (Price, 2007).

The principal elements of human resource development include; effective resourcing, induction and development of high quality people; identification and improvement of skills and motivation among existing and longer serving employees; regular job analysis in relation to organizational objectives and individual skills; reviewing the use of technology, in particular in replacing routine tasks; performance management and assessment through identification of key tasks; a focus on skills and general abilities

rather than paper qualifications; training needs identification; provision of training programmes to improve current performance and support career development; provision of opportunities for personal growth and self-development; helping people to manage their own careers and encouraging the acceptance of change as normal and as an opportunity (Thompson and Mabey, 1994).

If an organization is to encourage learning to occur, then it must develop a culture which recognizes that people learn in different ways and must provide a range of experiences from which they may learn. The challenge for human resource managers is thus to ensure that the organization develops in a way which facilitates the learning that the organization wants to occur, and that a suitable environment is created in which continuous improvement is actively encouraged (Foot M. et al., 2008). There seems to be general agreement that training and development is a good thing, and that it increases productivity, but the challenge is to determine by how much does it increase (Price, 2007).

Tha*hi (2008) has noted that there are many challenges related to training as each group in the organization has different needs, preferences and learning potential. Moreover, training is expensive and underestimating the needs and the requirements are some of the reasons for exceeding budgets. Skilled employees tend to switch their jobs and training of new employees will remain a continuous effort. Ignorance of some critical aspects of training and development, such as evaluation of training programmes,

training needs analysis and cost-benefit analysis poses a great challenge to the human resource management function.

2.2.5 Employee Relations

Employee relations is concerned with generally managing the employment relationship with particular references to terms and conditions of employment, issues arising from employment, providing employees with a voice and communicating with employees. Employees are dealt with either directly or through collective agreements where trade unions are recognized. Employee relations cover a wider spectrum of the employment relationship than industrial relations, which is essentially about what goes on between management and trade union representatives and officials. This recognizes the move away from collectivism towards individualism in the ways in which employees relate to their employers (Armstrong, 2009).

Price (2007) has noted that employee relations are not confined to unionized collective bargaining but encompass all employment relationships. It goes beyond the negotiation of pay and benefits to include the conduct of the power relationship between individual employees and their employers. The employment relationship is regarded as an exchange of labour for pay; it is a power relationship in which the employer has the formal authority to direct effort towards specific goals, whereas the employee can informally frustrate the achievement of those objectives. The employment relationship goes beyond money to include a number of secondary issues, such as working conditions, the length of the working day, holiday time, freedom to arrange one's work and measures of participation (Price, 2007).

From the 19th century, trade unions have fought for improved conditions for their members. Unions have been described as a mixture of movement and organization (Flanders, 1970). On the one hand, they met workers individual needs protecting them from exploitation, negotiating improved wages and conditions; developing career prospects. On the other, unions have a wider collective purpose which often extends into a political role. Braveman (1974) regarded the weakness of workers in the employment relationship as an inevitable consequence of the role of management. He concluded that managers owed a responsibility to the market, over and above their duties to shareholders and employees. The workforce held the key to survival through their creativity, imagination and problem solving abilities. However, these same qualities could be used to resist managers' aspiration for change and pose as a challenge to the human resource management function.

2.2.6 Performance Management

Armstrong (1999) advocates that performance management is an integrated approach to delivering sustained success to organizations by improving the performance of the people who work in them and by developing the capabilities of teams and individual contributors. The characteristic of an effective performance management system include: it communicates strategy, it measures performance in real time, it offers an integrated project management capability with all staff, which is so vital for linking individual commitment and activity to the attainment of organizations plans. This

¹ emotional contracting is commonly overlooked by organizations and then they wonder why the people failed to do what the organization expected and asked them to do

(Thompson et. al. 2007). Enthusiasts for performance assessment argue that it serves a key integrating role within an organization's human resource processes. First it provides a checking mechanism for resourcing policies and procedures, evaluating the quality of recruits and hence the underlying decision making process. Secondly, it monitors employee commitment and the relevance of their working behaviour to business objectives. Thirdly, it provides a rationale for an organization's pay policies. However, the definition and measurement of good performance is a controversial matter, involving fundamental issues of motivation, assessment and reward (Price, 2007).

All aspects of performance management arouse controversy, especially appraisals and performance related pay. Critics point to weaknesses in their methodology and basic philosophy. Employees are often dissatisfied with the methods of performance management systems and managers are frequently reluctant to engage in the process because of its confrontational nature. Pettijohn et al., (2001) has demonstrated that a positive attitude towards appraisal from employees and managers is possible if managers are provided with information designed to increase the benefits of engaging in the evaluation process and more thought is given to the appropriateness of measurement criteria. Fletcher (2001) argues that performance assessment has widened both as a concept and as a set of practices, becoming more obviously a part of human resource management's strategic integration of human resource activities and business policies.

Price (2007) has indicated that culture affects performance management through socio-political traditions and attitudes that determine whether assessment is acceptable, and to what degree. Cultural norms dictate acceptable standards of performance and the management methods by which they are assured. The challenge for human resource managers as cited by Armstrong and Baron (1998) is how do organizations decide which performance criteria should be measured and how do they differentiate between a good, average or indifferent employee. Denisi and Pritchard (2006) cited by Price (2007) argue that almost a century of research on performance appraisal has resulted in very few specific recommendations about designing and implementing appraisal and performance management systems whose goal is performance improvement. They suggest that there has been too great a focus on measurement issues and not enough attention has been paid to the outcome of the management exercise. Organizations face a critical paradox. No other management tool is more critical to productivity than effective performance appraisals, yet they can actually impair employees' performance (English, 1991).

2.3 Challenges Facing Human Resource Management Function

Challenges emanate both from within the hospital and external issues from the environment. Ikama (2010) asserts that the personal values, perceptions, beliefs and attitudes people hold affect their interactions and work relationships with others who are perceived to be different hence managing diversity in organizations is not an easy task. Other challenges include resistance to change, organizational culture challenges, employee retention and turnover, employee involvement and recognition, managing costs and legal requirements.

Managing diversity in the work place is a challenge. People are different, they vary in gender, culture, race, social, physical and psychological characteristics, but our attitudes towards these differences can be negative or positive, depending upon individual perspectives and prejudices. Baset-jones, (2005) argues that diversity is a recognizable source of creativity and innovation that can provide a basis for competitive advantage. Diversity is also a cause of misunderstanding, suspicion and conflict in the workplace that can result in absenteeism, poor quality, low morale and loss of competitive advantage. Organizations have to manage the resulting paradox (Price, 2007).

Kosset and Lobel (1996) argue that human resource management policies and practices require organizations to strike a balance between opposing forces or influences. Shifts in demographics and labour force participation have changed the composition of employment in favour of women, rising levels of education have made workers more aware of their uniqueness and fueled the expectation that companies should tolerate and even accommodate differences among individuals and groups. The challenge for human resource managers is how to strike a balance between diversity and commonality. Foot and Hook (2008) have noted that equality and diversity are major issues that affect everyone in the workplace. All employees' current and potential have a right not to be discriminated against unfairly and blocked in their careers for reasons that have nothing to do with their abilities in relation to their work. Line managers need to be trained further in understanding what the organization aims to gain from diversity, and in managing people in such a way that they can achieve their full potential.

Providing diversity training to everyone might be too costly, but organizations should lay out their expectations to all employees. Ikama (2010) has noted that managing diversity in organizations is not an easy task, it brings about challenges of communication, perception, cultural, language, ineffective communication of key objectives resulting in confusion, lack of teamwork and low morale.

Change has always been a feature of organizational life. Planned change is a term used to distinguish change that was consciously embarked upon and planned by an organization, as averse to types of change that might come about by accident, by impulse or that might be force on an organization (Burnes, 2004). Change is the single most important element of successful business management today. Ignoring or trivializing a changing trend can be costly, so managing change teaches managers how to be one step ahead of rivals, set trends and lead change in order to survive (Heller, 1998).

Armstrong (2008) has noted that human resource is concerned with playing a major role in the achievement of continuous improvement in organizational and individual performance and in the human resource processes that support that improvement. Ulrich, (1997) has indicated that one of the key roles of human resource professionals is to act as change agents, delivering organizational transformation and culture change. Human resource has to be fully aware of the reasons why people resist change. Resistance to change occurs where there are employees who will refuse to accept the fact that the social and cultural makeup of their workplace is changing. The bid to

maintain a status quo mentality silences new ideas and inhibits progress (Ikama, 2010). The greatest challenge for managers is to overcome barriers, especially emotional ones, to acceptance of change. Carefully planning forestalls many problems, but human resource managers will still need to interpret and deal effectively with various forms of resistance (Heller, 1998). Literature on organizational change advocates that employee involvement is crucial to successful change, especially in situations that require attitudinal and cultural change (Burnes, 2004).

Organization culture is the shared understanding of employees about how they do things within an organization. It can be defined as the set of important assumptions that members of an organization share in common (Pearce and Robinson, 2003). The content of an organization's culture derives from 3 sources: the influence of the business environment in general, and the industry in particular; founders, leaders and organizational employees who bring a pattern of assumptions with them when they join the organization and the actual experience people in the organization have had in working out solutions for coping with the basic problems the organization encounters. Culture affects the way managers behave within the organization as well as the decisions they make regarding the organization's relationship with the environment.

According to Thompson and Strickland (2003) there are a number of unhealthy cultures that result to low performance. These are internal environments that allow influential managers to operate their units autonomously and resist required change, the hostility to change to people who champion new ways of doing things and the promotion of

managers who understand structures, systems, budgets and controls better than how they understand vision, strategies, inspiration and culture building. A company's performance and hence its reputation is put at risk if the company does not care how it does business. The challenge to organizations is to instill constructive pressure to perform and a results oriented culture that inspires people to do their best. Culture can be both a strength as well as a weakness for the organization. As a strength, it can facilitate communication. On the other hand, it can be its weakness by obstructing the smooth implementation of policies by creating resistance to change (Kagwaini, 2008).

Torrington et al (2008) has established that there is always a conflict between the needs of the employer to push for increased output and efficiency and the needs of the employee to be protected from the hazards of the workplace. In the mid-nineteenth century these tensions centered almost entirely on the long hours and heavy physical demands of the factory system. In the twenty first century the tensions are more varied and more subtle, but concern about them remains as great. Health is the concern for good health, it is being physically and mentally well with body and mind in excellent working order; safety is absence from danger and avoidance of injury; Welfare is wellbeing, and health and safety are both aspects of welfare as they are both important to the employee's well being. Reducing accidents and improving occupational ill-health is important for organizations today and many are taking an increasing interest in areas such as absenteeism (Foot and Hook 2008).

The importance of health, safety and welfare from the employees' point of view is clear because their lives and futures are at risk. Health and safety has thus been given increasing emphasis and two major developments in recent years are discernible, a shift in concern about prevention of physical injury towards a focus on mental health and work related stress and the development of the view that employers should take steps not just to prevent injury and unnecessary stress, but actively to seek to promote healthy lifestyles in a more general sense (Torrington et al, 2008).

Another challenge is employee retention. Having acquired staff with reliable work habits, the challenge for most organizations has always been retention of such marketable and sought after human assets. The retention of key strategic employees can have a major impact on the success or failure of an organization Baraza (2008). This problem is particularly acute for the professional service sector like hospitals where the loss of key personnel can affect the organizations ability to maintain consistency in service delivery. The retention of talented employees increases the reputation and image of the organization and thus increases selection attractiveness which in turn enhances a firm's ability to recruit high performing staff.

Employee retention poses particularly acute problems in high contact service industries. Schlesinger and Heskett (1991) describe a cycle of failure where high employee turnover results in low productivity, poor service, angry customers, even more discontented workers and thus continuing high turnover. According to Rust et. al. (1996) organizations with satisfied employees have satisfied customers. Organizations

with strategies of high quality customer service also have programmes aimed at nurturing a loyal workforce in order to achieve quality customer service. Baraza (2008) states that the reason for this is simply a function of the fact that the employees intimate knowledge of organization routines grows with their length of service. Ultimately a customer's contact with a company is through employees. Overtime contact between employees and repeat customers build bonds of trust and expectations. When these employees leave a vacancy chain is set in motion, often involving the transfer of many other employees. This again disrupts the smooth working of the organization and quality defects emerge at the end of the chain with external customer effect.

Turnover represents an outflow of skills and may consequently seriously hinder competitiveness, efficiency and quality delivery. Turnover can occur for a variety of reasons with the main ones being retirement, redundancy, dismissal, resignations. However, resignation occurrence which is hard to predict has the most disruptive effects. Research shows that employees who leave voluntarily tend to be above average performers (Staw, 1980) and in most cases leave to join competitor organizations. A particular problem for organizations with higher turnover rates is maintaining high standards of customer care. Reichold (1993) sees retaining carefully selected employees as the key to customer retention. The costs of practices designed to facilitate the retention of employees for example attractive salaries, improved working conditions, job security are more than offset by the financial benefits of retaining existing customers over the cost of winning new ones (Berry, 1993). Social changes have resulted to changes in work attitudes. People are not just looking for a job, but

want satisfying careers. To attract and retain employees, an organization must respond with recruitment efforts that emphasize opportunity for training and development. They need to also present more realistic views of the job to avoid disappointing the candidate (Kagwaini, 2008).

Employee involvement and recognition is also an important factor that can result in challenges in the human resource function. Indeed a study by Lawler et al (1998) has clearly shown that employee involvement is strongly associated with the adoption of quality management practices. Lawler's study particularly finds a strong association between employee involvement and the development of a strong customer focus, speeding of products to markets, and building knowledge and intellectual capital. It is significantly related to ensuring high levels of quality, responding quickly to change and being a technology leader. Kahneman et. al. (1982) argue that Individuals are poor processors of information and therefore in most cases fail to understand the true causal relationships among the variables they encounter at the work place. It is therefore understandable when employees misjudge situations and make wrong decisions. Under such circumstances employees rely on colleagues assistance to collect information concerning the environment so as to better understand the available alternatives and make correct decisions. There are instances where human resource personnel are unable to translate organizations strategic goals into supportive human resource activities. Participation and worker involvement are believed to be effective in promoting organizational performance. A set of proper information sharing and worker involvement mechanism is indispensable in any work setting (Baraza, 2008).

Managers could have well defined thoughts about what they want to accomplish and when they want it accomplished. The difficulty could occur in the way of communicating their thoughts and plans to others so as to enable them attain desired objectives (Gachithi, 2010). Employee internal perceptions can be affected by the person's upbringing, intellect, state of mind, culture and health which also affects communication at work. Management needs to develop an environment which creates perceptions of fairness and by extension trust between employee and management. This perception introduces an element of security for employees and reinforces the psychological contract thus adding meaningfulness to work and eases communication barriers (Baraza, 2008).

Managing costs is a major challenge in many organizations. In response to cost containment issues, health organizations have undertaken a seemingly endless stream of budget cutting initiatives, restructuring to gain efficiencies, curtailment of low demand or low margin services and other initiatives designed to meet cost reduction objectives. Given the fact more than fifty percent of the total operating cost of most healthcare organizations resides in employee pay and benefits, managing costs almost always means managing the number, skill mix and wages of employees. The management of reward is heavily constrained by the financial position of the organization. The challenge is to design competitive reward packages which serve to attract, retain and motivate staff, while at the same time keeping a lid on the costs so as to ensure the organization's financial viability. This is not an easy task, and it is made harder

because of the great significance that employees themselves attach to their pay and particularly to the level of pay they receive in comparison to other people. Getting it wrong has major, negative consequences, because it can demotivate in quite serious ways leading to the departure of good performers, higher absence levels, less effort and the deterioration of the organization's employee relations climate (Torrington D. et al., 2008). Wolf (1999) argues that compensation programmes should be structured to meet three primary design criteria of being internally equitable and pay people in proportion to the relative value of the job. Externally competitive and pay people in proportion to the market price of the job and finally personally motivating to employees. The legal environment where equal employment opportunity, gender mainstreaming laws and orders that have over the last years been effected have seen organizations adopt policies in an effort to abide with the law. Labour market rigidities which include strong social protections for working people like minimum wage and significant strength of trade unions poses a legal challenge (Pollin, 2009). Affirmative action giving women and the minority an equal chance of employment has seen companies consider their selection process. Such laws and administrative rules restrict information that can be gathered from applicants and the way information is evaluated (Gatewood et. all. 1987). Organization policy and financial constraints where policy restrict management's behaviour is also a challenge. Human resource must operate within the legal framework. A main challenge here for the human resource manager is how to accommodate all the legal requirements. Recruitment efforts have to thus account for these legal requirements and give all applicants equal opportunity to compete (Kagwaini, 2008).

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the research design used to carry out the study, the data collection method used and how data was analyzed.

3.2 Research Design

This was a descriptive study that took a case study design. A case study is an in-depth investigation of an individual or phenomenon. The study sought to establish the challenges facing the human resource management function in public hospitals by taking Kenyatta National Hospital as a specific case for investigation, a case study design was therefore deemed to be the best method of attaining the objectives of the study.

3.3 Data collection

Data was collected from both primary and secondary sources. Secondary data was sort from existing audit reports and employee surveys from the hospital. The primary data was obtained through an interview guide. Respondents were a human resources officer from the human resources department, two heads of departments in the clinical areas, and one head nursing officer. The researcher settled on four respondents because the data collected would be similar, and thus the four respondents were to enable the researcher to check the data for accuracy and get additional information. Information was gathered through face to face interviews.

3.4 Data Analysis

Before analysis, the data collected was checked for completeness and consistency. Data was analyzed using content analysis. Content analysis is a research tool used to

determine the presence of certain words or concepts within texts or sets of texts or even responses provided by respondents. The researcher summarized responses into manageable categories on a variety of levels, phrases and sentences, and then examined them using conceptual analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The main objective of the study was to establish challenges facing human resource management function at Kenyatta National Hospital. Interviews were conducted with four officers in the hospital. The researcher used an interview guide to conduct face to face interviews with the four respondents who included an officer in the human resources department, two heads of department in the clinical area and one chief nursing officer.

4.2 Respondents Profile

The researcher sought to know the academic qualifications and professional qualification or training in human resource management of the interviewees. The researcher established that the human resource officer was a university graduate with higher diploma in human resource management. This shows that the respondent was well versed with the human resource management functions, policies and operations of the hospital. The heads of departments had attained postgraduate level of qualification and had attended various trainings and seminars in management of human resources. The nursing officer had attained a diploma level as Kenya registered nurse and had also attended short courses in management which covered human resource management aspects. The interviewees were well versed with the policies and operations of the hospital and were involved in the human resource management decisions. They combine both the role of human resource management together with other duties in the hospital.

The study also sought to establish the years the respondents had worked at Kenyatta national hospital. According to the interviewee's response, all of them had worked for the institutions for over six years. This emphasizes that the respondents have vast knowledge and understanding of the hospitals human resource management operations. The researcher found that respondents were well versed with the human resource management functions and had a good command of the knowledge on the interview guide, the reason being that they deal directly with the management and supervision of people and also owing to their years of experience on the job coupled with personal aptitude.

4.3 Human Resource Management Function at Kenyatta National Hospital

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Kenyatta National Hospital has an established human resources department that is headed by the manager human resources. The mandate of the department is stated in the vision and mission statements. To be the provider of innovative human resource services for specialized quality healthcare. The mission of the department is to attract and retain competent human resource, facilitate need-driven training and development programmes, institute performance management systems and reward employees competitively. The human resource department is charged with the coordination of human resource practices in the hospital. The department is charged with the management and administration of the hospital's current operational staff that constitutes 58% technical staff who include doctors, dentists, pharmacists, paramedics, nurses, and auxiliary staff. Administrative staff makes up the remaining 42%.

The hospital is a labour intensive institution with a wide diversity of position types requiring a broad cross-section of skill sets, professional training, and academic preparation. The delivery of healthcare requires workers in a variety of job categories with different levels of education, training and experience. In addition to the myriad of medical and clinical positions present in the hospital's healthcare delivery there are also significant requirements for workers with skills in management and administration, legal and compliance services, physical plant operations, safety and security, information technology, fund raising and community affairs food and nutritional services.

The study established that Kenyatta National Hospital endeavors to be to an equal opportunity employer and seeks to recruit the most qualified person for the job. Affirmative action is applied in regard to gender equity, participation of physically challenged persons and persons from marginal regions without adversely compromising the principles of meritocracy. The study established that the authority to recruit staff at all levels rests with the hospital's board of management. The board of management delegates authority to the chief executive officer and to specific committees. All vacant positions in the hospital are filled competitively. When vacancies occur for managers and policy makers who give leadership and direction to the operations in the hospital, the chief executive officer informs the board. The management recruitment committee works under delegated authority of the board and recruits professional staff. The management recruitment committee is chaired by the chief executive officer. The

general staff recruitment committee under delegated authority of the chief executive officer recruits general staff. The general staff recruitment committee is chaired by the director human resource and operations.

Selection is done on merit. The heads of departments give priority to those who have been working on locum basis at the hospital. Specialized doctors are selected from the doctors who are pursuing their masters' level of education at the hospital under the University of Nairobi. On completion of the masters' programme, if there are vacant positions in their area of specialization, then the doctors that are interested in joining the hospital are absorbed into the hospital's healthcare provision system. Oral interviews are carried out for most positions, however, for technical positions; practical assessments are carried out in the laboratories and successful candidates thereafter are invited for oral interviews.

The study established that the Hospital's salary structure consists of seventeen salary scales indicated as K17 to K1. Where K4-K1 is senior grade, K10-K5 is middle grade and K17-K11 is junior grade. The salary scales in force at any one time are circulated to staff through issuance of circulars. The salaries for non-unionisable staff are harmonized with the scales in the Civil Service and salaries for unionisable staff are as awarded by the Industrial Court and are negotiated from time to time as per collective bargaining agreement. The study also established that the hospital gives various allowances like responsibility allowance which is paid to the heads of clinical departments. Acting allowance is paid to an officer who is appointed to act in a higher

position. The acting allowance is paid at the rate of 15% of the employee's basic salary. It is paid to an officer when he/she acts in the higher post for a continuous period of thirty days or more. Doctors, dentists, and pharmacists are paid non-practice allowance which compensates them for working at the hospital without engaging in private practice. Medical risk allowance is paid to all employees since they are all working in a hospital environment. All regular employees are paid leave allowance once a year. Newly appointed employees are required to complete a minimum period of six months service before being eligible for annual leave, subsequent to which they are paid the leave allowance through the payroll. All employees are paid house allowance to enable them access reasonable accommodation. The hospital owns institutional quarters. Employees in occupation of these houses receive house allowance and pay rent to the Hospital at market rates. The study also noted that the hospital regards a healthy employee to be a great asset not only to it, but also to the nation as a whole. Consequently, the Hospital accords medical benefits to all employees and their nuclear families in order to maintain good health.

The study established that the hospital management recognizes that employees' performance is key to the attainment of the hospital objectives. It therefore evaluates their work on a continuous basis through performance assessment. The supervisor and the employee are required to agree on achievable performance targets at the beginning of each financial year which serves as the assessment year. Prior to the beginning of the performance period, the departments prepare a departmental work plan based on the strategic plan. Supervisors meet with staff under their direct supervision to discuss and

ensure that the objectives and performance targets of the department are understood and annual individual work plans are drawn. The departmental work plan includes the departmental priority objectives from which individual performance targets are derived. The individual work plan describes the performance targets or expected results on specific assignment and activities for which the staff member is responsible during the performance year. The employee holds discussions with the immediate supervisor to agree on the work plan. End of year assessment takes place at the end of assessment period where the supervisor and the appraisee meet to discuss overall performance. Both the employee and the supervisor sign the assessment report after which it is forwarded to the head of department to indicate their remarks and countersign.

The study established that the hospital's policy on training is to continually upgrade core competencies, knowledge, skills and attitude of employees. The training aims at addressing identified performance gaps. Emphasis is on short courses geared towards performance improvement. Employees charged with supervisor responsibilities undergo short supervisory management courses. The hospital also supports long term training in recognition of the need for highly skilled personnel to meet its mandate. In considering cases for training, management evaluates the relevance of the training and needs of the hospital. In each case, due consideration is given to the cost effectiveness and convenience. The hospital ensures that new employees undergo induction training within the first month of engagement to orientate them on the hospital's operations and expectations. Each department then orientates new employees on departmental expectations.

The study also established that the hospital has a staff training and development committee which is the main hospital training committee and executes various functions like consideration of the hospital training projections and analysis of training needs as well as setting up a hierarchy of priorities within the overall training projections; Identification and selection of suitable candidates for various training programmes locally, regionally and overseas; and assessment of available scholarship awards and optimum utilization of local training resources. The staff training and development committee considers applications originating from departmental training and development committees. The departmental training committees are charged with identification and prioritization of departmental training needs; preparing training projections including training budget for the department; assess training applications, ascertain their relevance, nominate trainees and to make recommendations to the staff training and development committee; and evaluate the impact of training. The human resource department organizes training which is provided internally in various areas like critical care nursing, nephrology nursing, theatre nursing and accident and emergency nursing. The study found out that the department has partnered with international training institutions to assist in the provision of specialized training for the medical and paramedical staff.

4.4 Challenges Facing Human Resource Management Function at Kenyatta National Hospital

Prominent challenges to the human resource management are policies and procedures which hinder the recruitment process and delay recruitment. The heads of departments

are expected to identify the number of vacant positions, required qualifications and experience of right candidates to fill the position and inform the human resource department to enable it plan on filling the positions. The human resource department experiences challenges in recruitment due to delayed information from the heads of departments on their staff requirements. These delays frustrate its efforts to identify and acquire the right number of people with appropriate skills from the market to equip the hospital with skills required to perform various jobs in the hospital.

Another challenge is canvassing for positions by influential people both within the hospital and from outside. Canvassing places the head's of departments and the human resource managers in awkward and compromising situations. Lobbying for positions especially by influential people leads to compromising the recruitment and selection process and leads to admitting candidates who might not be the best qualified leaving out better qualified candidates. This situation is aggravated by the high rate of unemployment in the country. The high rate of unemployment has resulted in a flooded job market with many applicants seeking employment which results in huge number of applications.

The study established that human resource managers face a number of challenges while recruiting emanating from the increased demand for specialized health care and also given that there are inadequate financial resources to meet these demands. The inadequate resources results in measures to cut costs and hence understaffing in both technical and auxiliary areas is experienced. Understaffing is exacerbated when workers

leave and they are not replaced. Understaffing results in overworked staff and at times leads to burn out of employees. Understaffing has also led to lack of qualified personnel whereby there are few candidates for specific positions in the hospital. This may cripple the hospital's ability to provide quality care, as existing staff members are overworked and cannot assume more tasks. The lack of person job fit may thus impede the hospital's ability to provide certain services efficiently.

Workers exit the hospital due to various reasons like natural attrition, retirement and resignations. These exists results in overworked staff that at times work to burn out levels. For example the hospital has not recruited nurses for the last two years. This necessitates the need to hire casual workers. Employees on casual terms are not committed and motivated and give their supervisors problems and perform their duties in a substandard manner. Casual employees are most of the time complaining of poor pay, work load and they are slow and lethargic in their work performance.

Challenges related to training and development occurs because each group in the hospital has different needs, preferences and learning potential. The hospital is a labour intensive institution with a wide diversity of position types requiring a broad cross-section of skill sets, professional training, and academic preparation. The delivery of healthcare requires workers in a variety of job categories with different levels of education, training and experience. In addition to the myriad of medical and clinical positions present in the hospital for healthcare delivery there are also significant requirements for workers with skills in management and administration, legal and compliance services, physical plant operations, safety and security, information technology, fund raising and community

affairs, food and nutritional services. Moreover training is expensive, and this therefore leads to underestimating the training needs and training requirements of the employees in an effort to contain cost which is a challenge. The human resource managers' experiences challenges in their efforts to evaluate training programs to send employees, carrying out training needs assessment and cost benefit analysis also poses a great challenge. The study also established that the human resource function does not provide opportunities for staff development like career counseling.

Achieving amiable employee relations in the hospital is a challenge for the human resource managers. The study established that there was lack of employee satisfaction especially due to poor pay often leading to industrial action especially by the doctors and nurses. As one respondent put it, the pay is not adequate but there is leeway to engage in other activities out there that generate income, that is, there is latitude. Lack of job satisfaction and poor pay causes the employees to look for other sources of income. For example doctors are able to engage in private practice while they are still employees of the hospital. Poor working conditions are also a challenge which causes staff grievances that are inevitable and resolving employee grievances is a challenge for the human resource managers. These unresolved grievances have usually resulted in limiting the health care professionals in meeting the needs of their patients especially because it creates a tense atmosphere that is almost hostile.

Managing diversity and providing culturally competent human resource services is not an easy task in the hospital. People are different; they vary in gender, culture, social,

physical and psychological characteristics. Diversity of people in the hospital is often a cause of misunderstanding, suspicion and conflict in the hospital. Conflict results in absenteeism and low morale of workers. The human resource managers have to provide practices, and solutions that strike a balance between opposing forces and influences. The study established that managing diversity in the hospital is a challenge especially due to the large number of employees from different backgrounds, ethnicities and diverse social and economic situations of employees. There are also powerful subcultures in the hospital based on occupation and specialization for example, physicians, nurses and pharmacists. These groups have their own definition of errors, quality and efficiency in healthcare. The interests of the physicians, nurses and pharmacists and their functional and occupational orientations do not facilitate an efficient approach to the promotion of safety and performance improvements, thus managing these differences and orientations is a challenge to the human resource managers.

The human resource managers have to contend with manual systems of record keeping. The hospital's management has been slow to embrace computerization of its systems. All human resource records are kept in manual filing systems. Thus keeping track of important personnel data, information and records is a challenge for the human resource managers. The study established that the hospital has not been able to fully take advantage of the current information and communication technologies particularly with respect to the capture, organization and management of medical data and employee

records due to the high cost of healthcare management information systems and human resource management information systems.

The study established that high turnover was common among the more highly experienced staff. There are especially challenges in retaining their nurses due to unsatisfactory salary and benefits, unsuitable shifts and working hours, presence of better opportunities abroad and within the country and heavy workload. There are no retention strategies through better pay, appropriate staffing norms, working and retirement incentive packages. The current poor conditions of service have limited the hospital's ability to attract and retain qualified and experienced health professionals. Other challenges leading to staff turnover include lack of a sense of ownership of the work and responsibilities by employees. Many of the employees do their work more from a sense of duty rather than taking it as if it were their own work. This study found out that the hospital has not institutionalized positive employee involvement practices. Other challenges leading to staff turnover include low staff morale and poor working environment.

One of the biggest challenges for the hospital today is the availability of a strong, capable, and motivated workforce. The hospital is people driven and the primary expenses are labour costs. The study established that fifty to sixty percent of the total operating cost of the hospital resides in employee pay and benefits. This means a huge budget for the payroll to meet all employee salaries. The challenge for the human resource managers is to meet this huge budget with restricted financial allocations from

the government. The most important asset to the hospital besides physical capital and consumables is their health human resources, without which they cannot properly function. The challenge for the human resource managers is to provide competitive pay packages for the employees. It is paramount to provide competitive pay in order to retain qualified employees. In order to manage costs associated with employee remuneration, the human resource managers have to also manage the number of employees, skill mix, and wages. This situation is exacerbated by inadequate government funding to the hospital leading to inadequate resources for financing hospital activities such as replacement of staff, equipment and purchase of supplies. Yet the staff is persistently engaging in industrial action and strikes demanding for increased pay and better working conditions.

Another challenge is limited capacity and authority of the human resource department. The human resource managers have limited capacity and authority to mitigate challenges that are hindering human resource development in the institution. There is lack of management capacity. The Hospital suffers from poor managerial and planning capacity in the area of health human resources and lack recruitment and retention strategies. There is great need for the further development of the hospital managers. The responsibility is therefore on human resource officers and those responsible for management education and training to identify managers in need of development to make available training that is contextually relevant in terms of program design and delivery. Limited capacity and authority of the human resource management function is made worse by a weak organizational structure that does not promote effective and

efficient delivery of services. The lines of communication from the top management to the operational levels are not clear enough to promote efficient human resource management practices and employee recognition and involvement.

Lack of proper performance evaluation mechanisms is another challenge for the human resource managers. Although conducting performance appraisal is a requirement, not many employees recognize its importance. Lack of a system for performance evaluation emerged as a major challenge as it has reportedly limited the hospital's ability to evaluate competencies and performance of their staff, especially critical staff members. A genuine employee assessment requires that every human resource leader looks at workers in line with both their present performance and their potential. Many human resource leaders assess present performance only because it is the easier. This kind of assessment defeats the true spirit of performance appraisal, which should focus on understanding the potential and passions of employees and aligning these with their responsibilities as much as possible. There is lack of a focused performance appraisal system that requires concerted efforts aimed at identifying, developing and deploying the right people in the appropriate jobs. Another challenge in performance assessment occurs as the employees do not set specific targets to achieve and neither do they discuss these targets with their supervisors.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the summary of findings on the challenges facing human resource managers at Kenyatta National Hospital, the conclusion of the study by the researcher, recommendations to mitigate some of the challenges, limitations of the study and recommendations for further research.

5.2 Summary of Findings

The study sought to establish challenges facing human resources managers at Kenyatta National Hospital. The researcher held face to face interviews with the respondents to collect data using an interview guide. The hospital is a labour intensive institution with a wide diversity of position types requiring a broad cross-section of skill sets, professional training, and academic preparation. From the study it was established that the human resource managers experience various challenges when carrying out there functions.

There are policies and procedures which curtail recruitment such as delayed information from line managers on staffing requirements for departments. At Kenyatta Hospital canvassing for positions especially by influential people is common thus compromising the recruitment and selection process. There is a challenge in recruitment emanating

from the increased demand for specialized health care and inadequate financial resources to meet these demands, leading to cost cutting and hence understaffing in the hospital.

There are challenges related to training and development at Kenyatta National Hospital since each group in the hospital has different training needs, preferences and learning potential, training is expensive hence underestimating staff training needs and requirements. Evaluating training programs to send employees, carrying out training needs assessment and cost benefit analysis also poses a great challenge. Lack of employee satisfaction due to poor pay leading to industrial action, poor working conditions are also a challenge which causes staff grievances. Unresolved grievances result in tense atmosphere. Managing diversity at Kenyatta National Hospital is a challenge especially due to the large number of employees from different backgrounds, ethnicities and diverse social and economic situations of employees. There are also powerful subcultures in the hospital based on occupation and specialization for example, physicians, nurses and pharmacists have differing interests, managing these differences and orientations is a challenge to the human resource managers.

Human resource managers at Kenyatta National Hospital have to contend with manual systems of record keeping which a challenge is since they have not computerized systems. Other challenges include lack of a sense of ownership of the work and responsibilities by employees, low staff morale, poor working environment and high turnover among the more highly experienced staff.

At Kenyatta National Hospital, payroll budget is fifty to sixty percent of the total operating cost, covering this huge budget is a challenge to the human resource managers considering the restricted financial allocations from the government and staff persistently engaging in industrial action. There is limited capacity and authority of the human resource department to mitigate challenges hindering human resource development in the hospital. Kenyatta National Hospital lacks a proper system for performance evaluation which has allegedly limited the human resource manager's ability to evaluate competencies and performance of staff.

5.3 Conclusion

Kenyatta National Hospital being an important referral and teaching hospital requires an efficient human resource management function to support the role of the hospital in health care service delivery to the nation. Sound human resources management practices are essential for retaining effective professionals in the hospital. The central focus of the human resource department should be to contribute to the success of the hospital. Having an efficient human resource management function system to provide accurate and timely information for human source planning is crucial.

The human resource managers face enormous challenges. Given the complexity of the services the hospital provides, the role of the human resource managers and those who combine the role of human resource management with other responsibilities should not be underestimated. The management of the hospital should provide managerial support to the managers with human resource management responsibilities as an effective mechanism to improve employee motivation, job satisfaction and retention. Managerial

support includes but is not limited to coaching and mentoring staff, supporting continuing education pursuits, and mediation between staff and administration. Human resource managers also have a leadership role, which is an essential component of employee retention, particularly through encouraging an atmosphere of autonomy and shared governance, in addition to empowerment and group cohesion.

Offering continuing education, training sessions and implementing professional clinical/career ladders can be an effective measure for improving retention and improving health worker efficiency and can lead to scaling up of productivity. Training and continuing education are forms of non-financial incentive which allow employees the opportunity to advance their careers.

5.4 Recommendations

To enable the hospital deliver good quality, safe healthcare, improving human resources management is critical. Human resource management is a discipline which requires a distinct knowledge base and training and there is therefore a need to expand human resource professional knowledge and competencies to perform well especially among departmental heads who play a vital role in human resource management and provide supervisory support. The management should provide further education or training to the clinicians who assume human resource management responsibilities. This is necessary to increase their competencies for the effective management of human resources.

Differential training is necessary given that various categories of healthcare professionals have differing skill requirements. The hospital should device a framework for meeting training needs to enhance performance. The human resource function should provide development opportunities for its staff that include mentoring, career counseling and supervisory development opportunities.

The human resource managers should formulate plans and policies to ensure retention and maintenance of competent staff in the hospital. This can help reduce incidences of labour turnover and save the hospital from incurring unnecessary recruitment costs. Retention programmes aimed at creating incentives to motivate employees to perform better and to create job satisfaction, they include offering permanent employment, seminars, trainings, and education programmes. Managerial support is an effective mechanism to improve employee motivation, job satisfaction and retention. Managerial support includes but is not limited to coaching and mentoring staff, supporting continuing education pursuits, and mediation between staff and administration. Managers also have a leadership role, which is an essential component of employee retention, particularly through encouraging an atmosphere of autonomy and shared governance, in addition to empowerment and group cohesion.

The management of the hospital in conjunction with the human resource managers should spearhead the adoption of new technologies. Such technologies include the computerization of human resource records and adopt current human resource management information systems. Embracing information technology will result in

improved records management and increase efficiency. These human resource information systems will lead to significant advances in the delivery and quality of services. As these advances are implemented, employees should receive orientation and training to effectively and efficiently use them.

Employee involvement and recognition is strongly associated with the adoption of quality and efficient management practices. There is strong association between employee involvement and the development of a strong customer focus, building knowledge and intellectual capital. Employee involvement is significantly related to ensuring high levels of quality and responding quickly to change. The human resources managers can adopt practices that encourage employee involvement, recognize, applaud and reward individual effort. This can lead to positive outcomes such as low staff turnover and better employee performance.

A proper performance evaluation system should be instituted and sensitization of employees on the need and importance of performance appraisal conducted. The performance appraisal system should be one that allows human resource leaders look at both employees' present performance their potential and passions and align these with their responsibilities as much as possible. Workers should also be given an opportunity to set targets and discuss these targets with their supervisors in order to improve commitment and effort to achieve the set targets.

5.5 Limitations of the Study

This being a case study on challenges facing human resource management function at Kenyatta national hospital, the findings of this research are only applicable to Kenyatta National Hospital and not to the entire public health care sector in Kenya. It may therefore not be possible to generalize the findings of the study to the entire industry. The study also faced financial limitations. The researcher was not funded but was relying on personal savings.

5.6 Recommendations for Further Research

The researcher recommends that further research should be done on the challenges facing the human resources the individual employees themselves working at Kenyatta National Hospital in their provision of healthcare services. Further research can also be undertaken to establish if the hospital has adopted any strategic human resource management practices at the hospital in order to efficiently manage its human resources. An important extension of this study is to replicate this research to other health institutions, and more importantly conduct comparative studies within both private and public health institutions.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Part A: General Information

1. Designation
2. What is your highest academic qualification?
3. Do you possess any professional qualification or training in human resource management?
4. How many years have you been working in Kenyatta National Hospital?

Part B. Human Resource Management Function Challenges

1. Does the Hospital have a Human Resource Management Policy?
2. Do you experience any challenges in planning your human resources?
3. What challenges do you face when recruiting and selecting new staff in the various cadres?
4. Which challenges do you experience in rewarding/paying staff?
5. What challenges do you experience in training and development of your staff in the different categories?
6. Which challenges do you face in ensuring amiable employee relations in the hospital?
7. Which challenges do you face when carrying out performance appraisal exercise and performance management in general?
8. What challenges do you experience in managing diversity of people in the hospital?

9. Which challenges do you experience emanating from the culture in the hospital especially from the different categories of staff?
10. Does resistance to change pose as a challenge in the hospital?
11. What challenges do you experience in health, safety and welfare matters for staff in the hospital?
12. Which challenges do you experience in employee retention efforts and curbing turnover?
13. What challenges do you experience in communication of various policy and information in the hospital?
14. Do you experience any challenges in relation to managing costs?
15. What challenges do you experience in implementing the various labour laws and legal requirements in the hospital?

Thank you