

**ASSESSMENT OF STRATEGIES USED IN RETENTION OF
SENIOR EMPLOYEES IN SELECTED SUGAR COMPANIES IN
WESTERN KENYA.**

BY

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ABSTRACT

Whereas firms have retention strategies, the turnover rates keep escalating and thus the need for this study. The specific objectives of this study were to: determine the effectiveness of rewards on retention of senior employees, establish the influence of training and development on retention of senior employees, ascertain the influence of management style on retention of senior employees, find out the impact of opportunities for professional growth on retention of senior employees and lastly to establish the effectiveness of working environment on retention of senior employees. The study utilised the survey design and was carried out in Sugar companies located in Western Kenya. The following industries were selected for this study: Mumias Sugar Company Limited, Nzoia Sugar Company Limited and Chemelil Sugar Company. The study population included human resource managers, H.O.Ds and senior employees (employees who engage in specialised work and who also possess specialised training, skills and experience) drawn from the following departments within each selected company: finance, agriculture, production, marketing and IT. Simple random sampling was used to select respondents who were used to obtain information within the study location. There were 146 respondents: 2 HR managers, 14 H.O.Ds and 130 senior employees. Besides reviewing secondary data on pertinent issues, the information was sourced using questionnaires and scheduled interviews. The raw data was then analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods using a statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) and M.S Excel for means and percentages. The analysed data was presented in tables, pie charts and bar graphs. The study found out that the rewards the sugar companies were offering were not competitive enough to retain their senior employees, training and development programmes were evident but preference was given to workshops and seminars at the expense of professional certification and as such training and development programmes motivated the senior employees. The study also found out that there was lack of opportunities for professional growth, lack of management support and conducive working environment.

In conclusion, senior employees preferred the following strategies as retention strategies in the following order respectively: opportunity for professional growth, improved general working environment, increased salaries and related benefits, training and development and management support. On the basis of its findings, it was recommended that: a competitive package that is commensurate to the tasks performed and skills one possesses should be adopted. Finally the management should prioritise on opening up opportunities for professional growth, promotion of senior employees should be based on meritocracy