RETENTION STRATEGIES AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE OF WATER RESOURCES AUTHORITY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

The organization's focus on retaining the workforce is essential for efficiency and effectiveness in serving customer needs. Long-term employees usually possess a deep understanding of the organization's processes and institutional knowledge. This reduces the turnover and its related costs, thereby contributing to better performance. The current research examined the effect of retention strategies on employee performance of the Water Resources Authority. The specific objectives of the study included; to determine the effect of employee engagement strategy on employee performance and to ascertain the effect of work-life alignment strategy on employee performance. The study was anchored by theories that comprise the human capital theory, and job embeddedness theory. A descriptive research design was utilized. The target population comprised human resource officers and managers working with the Water Resources Authority. Data was collected using questionnaire. Both descriptive and inferential data analysis methods were employed. To aid in the data analysis, Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used. The presentation of the findings done through tables. In conclusion, the employee engagement in the realm of retention strategy enhanced employee performance. It was observed that prioritizing employee engagement strategy leads to increased levels of productivity and job satisfaction. Further, , the work-life alignment strategy has a notable effect on employee performance in the Water Resources Authority. Specifically, employee assistance programs offer crucial support to individuals encountering personal or professional challenges, thus enhancing overall well-being and decreasing stress levels. First, it is recommended that Water Resources Authority should regularly share organization's plans and challenges with employees to foster transparency. It is also recommended that Water Resources Authority should cultivate a culture that places importance on employee well-being by implementing policies that facilitate workload management.

Key Words: Retention Strategies, Employee Engagement Strategy, Work-Life Alignment Strategy

Background of the Study

Employee retention plays a pivotal role in ensuring stability and consistency in the provision of efficient services by organizations (Kamalaveni, Ramesh, & Vetrivel, 2019). The organization's focus on retaining the workforce is essential for efficiency and effectiveness in serving customer needs. According to Bharadwaj, Khan, and Yameen (2022) the smooth transition of critical requires robust succession planning, which depends on workforce retention. Long-term employees usually possess a deep understanding of the organization's processes and institutional knowledge. This reduces the turnover and its related costs, thereby contributing to productivity. Nethravathi, Aithal, Gayathri-Babu, Soans, & Jayaraj (2021) asserted that employee retention is efficient and less costly than hiring and training new personnel. Therefore, an organization ought to keep valuable employees who focus on fulfilling their goals. The ability to keep quality personnel is informed by the strategies that comprise employee engagement, training, work-life alignment, and recognition strategies.

Employee engagement expresses the connection between employees, their work, and the organization in terms of the level of level of involvement and commitment (Verčič, 2021). Effective employee engagement is attributable to productive and high-performing workforce. It drives enthusiasm and readiness for new challenges, which enhances effectiveness in service delivery (Bhakuni & Saxena, 2023). Further, well-engaged employees usually exhibit a stronger dedication to the attainment of organizational objectives. According to Sun and Bunchapattanasakda (2019) employee engagement drives emotional commitment, which fosters loyalty and make employees to work with the organization for longer time.

Training equips employees with new skills and knowledge to perform their tasks better (Aleem & Bowra, 2020). As a continuous process, training prepares employees to assume more demanding responsibilities that increases the contribution to the betterment of the organization. In an era of technology advancement, training has become an essential requirement for the organizations to keep phase with changing needs of the customers (Hassan, 2022). The ever-increasing complexities in the environment has compelled organizations to readapt the services being provided and the skills needed to do so. As such, the need for training has increased in both public and private entities. Training programs determines the company's ability to retain their employees. Continuous learning and professional growth motivate the employees to stay longer with the organization (Mukherjee, Chandra, & Singh, 2020). Employing work-life alignment as an employee retention strategy entails aligning organizational goals with the individual aspirations and lifestyle choices of employees. This approach encompasses implementing flexible work schedules, accommodating parental leave through supportive policies, and designing wellness programs aimed at fostering a balanced work-life dynamic (Bhakuni & Saxena, 2023). By cultivating an environment where employees are empowered to seamlessly integrate their personal and professional commitments, organizations can bolster job satisfaction, foster loyalty, and effectively retain top talent. Recognition programs encompasses initiatives for acknowledging and appreciating the employees' efforts, achievements, and contributions to the success of the organization (Mohd-Zin, Ibrahim, Aman-Ullah, & Ibrahim, 2023). These programs usually boost morale, improve productivity and help in retaining talent. Additionally, the recognition programs reinforce desired accomplishments that align with the organization's values and goals (Hassan, 2022). This fosters a positive work culture, a sense of unity and collaboration among employees.

Employee performance is a reflection of an individual's effectiveness and productivity (Igbinoba, Joel, Igbadumhe, & Peter, 2022). It focuses on evaluating tangible and observable actions that play a role in the success and development of both the employee and the organization as a whole. Employee performance assesses how effectively and efficiently an employee contributes to the achievement of objectives within an organization through the delivery of services. This is evaluated based on the ability to meet the needs and expectations of customers. The efficiency in the utilization of resources to attain desired outcomes also indicates the performance of an employee. According to Kumar (2022), the focus on

performance motivates employees to increase efforts towards delivering the intended results and outcomes. Therefore, it anchors long-term planning and the ability to address the challenges associated with environmental dynamism.

Water Resources Authority (WRA) is a government entity entrusted with managing and overseeing water resources in the Country (Oyuke, 2019). Created under the Water Act of 2002, its primary goal is to ensure the responsible and fair utilization of water resources in Kenya. The WRA is responsible for monitoring and safeguarding the quality of water resources to protect public health and the environment. Kathambi, Muthama, and Ang'u (2021) states that WRA establishes water quality standards and enforces regulations to prevent water pollution and contamination. The agency also encourages water conservation and the efficient utilization of water resources through water demand management initiatives and public awareness campaigns.

Water Resources Authority face difficulties in retaining skilled professionals with specialized expertise in water resources management (Ng'ang'a & Justus, 2019). The field demands technical knowledge, hydrological expertise, and environmental understanding, all of which can be in short supply. The main challenges include insufficient recognition, compensation, and opportunities for career advancement, which lead to low employee motivation and morale (Kathambi et al., 2021). As a consequence, employee productivity and job satisfaction have been greatly affected. Therefore, a study on retention strategies is necessary.

Statement of the Problem

Employee retention has become a primary strategy adopted by companies to enhance their performance (Igbinoba, Joel, Igbadumhe, & Peter, 2022). However, high turnover rates within organizations lead to the loss of skilled and experienced personnel, potentially affecting their ability to achieve sustainable performance. According to a report by Water Resources Authority for the period 2021-2022, the efficiency rates for processing permits in categories Cat A, B, C, and D were 43%, 67.3%, 52%, and 38%. As such, there is a consistent struggle to meet timelines for most permits. This points to a challenge in the organization's permit processing, underscoring inadequate employee performance and potential inefficiencies in workflow. As such, the retention strategies in the Water Resources Authority (WRA) in Kenya could be possibly ineffective thus attributable to inadequate employee satisfaction and productivity. Therefore, employee performance of the WRA is a critical area of concern. The main focus is on understanding the relationship between retention and performance, a gap that has not been adequately addressed in previous research works. For instance, Najat (2021) conducted a study on the effect of talent management practices on employee turnover intentions at Nairobi City Water and Sewerage Company. The findings highlighted the significant effect of human resource planning, training, rewards management, and recruitment on employee turnover. Similarly, Chepyegon and Kamiya (2018) examined the challenges faced by Kenya water sector management in improving water supply coverage. The study revealed that the main challenges in water management included low social acceptance of interventions, inadequate investment in the sector, and water-related conflicts. Another study by Akoth (2021) assessed the association between change management and organizational performance at Eldoret Water Resources Authority. The findings indicated that a lack of operations alignment and expertise requirements had a significant effect on organizational performance. The current study aimed to bridge the existing research gaps by assessing the effect of retention strategies on employee performance of the Water Resources Authority, Kenya.

General Objective of the Study

The general objective was to evaluate the effect of retention strategies on employee performance at the Water Resources Authority, Kenya.

Specific Objectives of the Study
   i.   To determine the effect of employee engagement strategy on employee performance of Water Resources Authority.
   ii. To determine the effect of work-life alignment strategy on employee performance of Water Resources Authority.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

Job Embeddedness Theory

The job embeddedness theory, introduced in 2001 by Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, Sablynski, and Erez, underscores the impact of factors beyond the immediate job on an employee's decision to remain in their current role. These factors include social connections and personal sacrifices. The theory suggests that employees become intertwined with their jobs and organizations due to links, fit and sacrifices, which are interconnected. The links dimension encapsulates the relationships and affiliations an employee cultivates within the workplace and the larger community (Treuren & Fein, 2021). These connections span both social interactions, such as relationships with peers, supervisors, and mentors, and instrumental connections like business and professional networks. Robust links foster a sense of belonging, support, and attachment, rendering it more challenging for employees to consider leaving their present position and organization. According to Safavi and Karatepe (2019) the fit dimension corresponds to the alignment between an employee's personal values, interests, and skills and the values and culture of the organization. When employees perceive alignment between themselves and the organizational ethos, they experience congruence and compatibility (Treuren & Fein, 2021). This alignment fosters a sense of personal identification with the organization and augments their commitment to remaining in their current role. On the other hand, the concept of sacrifice encompasses both tangible and intangible investments an employee has made in their job and organization. These investments encompass time, effort, training, seniority, relationships, and even geographic location. The underlying notion is that the greater an employee's investment in their current role and organization, the higher the perceived cost of leaving, thus acting as a deterrent to turnover (Li, Mitchell, Lee, Eberly, & Shi, 2022). The job embeddedness theory further asserts that these dimensions are interwoven and collaborate to form a network that binds employees to their current positions. When employees foster strong social and professional connections, sense alignment with the organization, and have invested substantially, they tend to feel attached and obliged to remain in their current roles. This theory provides valuable insights into enhancing retention strategies within organizations. By nurturing robust relationships, cultivating a positive organizational culture, and acknowledging and rewarding employee investments, organizations can bolster employees' sense of attachment and commitment, diminishing the likelihood of them seeking external opportunities (Safavi & Karatepe, 2019). Furthermore, grasping the broader context of employees' lives, including their affiliations and sacrifices, empowers organizations to create an environment conducive to job embeddedness and long-term retention.

Incorporating the tenets of the job embeddedness theory into an employee engagement strategy prompts organizations to adopt a comprehensive approach that extends beyond the job satisfaction. By tending to employees' connections and alignment organizations can establish an atmosphere in which employees become more involved, dedicated, and driven to enhance the organization's accomplishments.

Human Capital Theory

The theory of human capital was propounded by Gary Becker and Theodore Schultz in 1961. The theory suggests that individuals can improve their competencies and comprehension through training. Within this framework, an individual's competencies and comprehension are viewed as human capital, which holds the potential to generate advantages over time. The theory underscores the importance of dedicating resources to employee training and

development initiatives (Deming, 2022). Human resources departments conceive and implement training projects aimed at enriching employees' skill sets and understanding, thereby amplifying their human capital. These endeavors span a spectrum from on-the-job training to structured educational programs tailored to elevate employees' capabilities. The concept of human capital is harnessed to evaluate employee performance and potential (Marginson, 2019). Appraisals of performance encompass not solely existing job performance but also an individual's potential to contribute to the organization's expansion through the refinement of their human capital. The theory advocates for an ongoing learning process. The notion of lifelong learning is indispensable for sustaining and augmenting human capital (Darmawan, Mardikaningsih, Sinambela, Arifin, Putra, Hariani, & Issalillah, 2020). This strategy aims to retain employees enriched with invaluable human capital and motivate others to invest in fortifying their skill set. A training strategy aligned with the principles of the human capital theory acknowledges employees as valuable resources and centers on investing in their growth for shared advantages.

Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework portrays the connections that exist between variables that are independent and dependent. Figure 2.1 depicts the link between strategies for retaining employees (independent variables) and the performance of the Water Resources Authority (dependent variable).
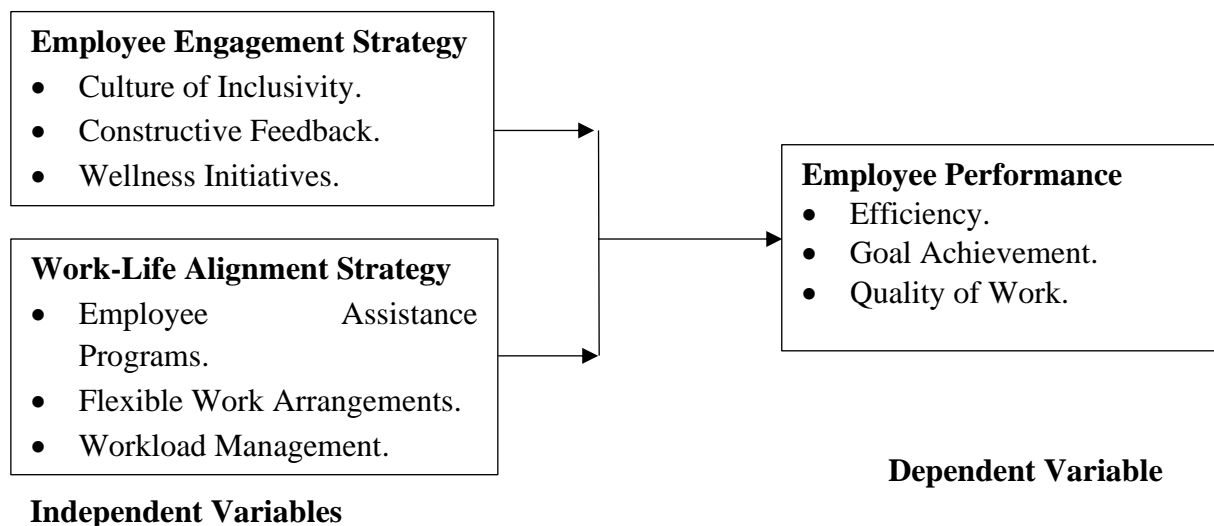
Employee Engagement Strategy
- Culture of Inclusivity.
- Constructive Feedback.
- Wellness Initiatives.

Work-Life Alignment Strategy
- Employee Assistance Programs.
- Flexible Work Arrangements.
- Workload Management.

Employee Performance
- Efficiency.
- Goal Achievement.
- Quality of Work.

Dependent Variable

Independent Variables

Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework

Employee Engagement Strategy

Employee engagement denotes the emotional bond, dedication, and enthusiastic participation that employees establish with their tasks, coworkers, and the broader objectives of the organization (Azizi, Atlasi, Ziapour, Abbas, & Naemi, 2021). This concept transcends basic job contentment and centers on cultivating a profound feeling of significance, membership, and resonance with the organization's values and purpose. By prioritizing employee engagement, human resource management strives to establish a work environment where employees transcend their roles as mere staff and become dynamic contributors who hold a vested emotional interest in the organization's prosperity (Verčič, 2021). This approach yields constructive outcomes, benefiting both the individual's welfare and the overall performance of the organization.

An employee engagement strategy involves thorough and intentional method that organizations employ to establish a workplace atmosphere where employees feel motivated, devoted, and emotionally connected to their responsibilities and the organization's overall achievements (Verčič, 2021). This strategy encompasses the creation and execution of various initiatives, programs, and practices that cultivate a favorable and efficient workplace

culture, prompting employees to deliver their utmost and make substantial contributions to the organization's goals. The main goal of an employee engagement strategy is to establish a workplace culture that is optimistic, collaborative, and encouraging (Treuren & Fein, 2021). In this environment, employees are driven to achieve excellence, remain devoted to the organization, and play an active role in its advancement and achievements. A successful strategy brings advantages not only to employees but also enhances the organization's performance outcomes.

Work-Life Alignment Strategy

Work-life alignment in the framework of retention strategy encompasses integrating policies, practices, and initiatives to cultivate a balanced relationship between employees' work responsibilities and personal lives (Palumbo, 2023). This commitment from organizations underscores their dedication to enhancing employees' overall well-being, contentment, and sense of fulfillment. It incorporates working arrangements that are flexible, family-friendly policies that employees to effectively manage both work and personal obligations. According to Nissinen, Maksniemi, Rothmann, and Lonka (2022) alignment of work-life enhances employee satisfaction, loyalty, and tenure among the workforce.

Integral to this work-life alignment are the Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs), which furnish resources and supportive services designed to assist employees in navigating personal challenges and preserving their well-being (Jumani, 2022). These programs encompass a spectrum of offerings, including wellness initiatives that address personal concerns and sustain a favorable work environment. Through the provision of EAPs, organizations underscore their dedication to nurturing employees' comprehensive well-being and acknowledging the significance of addressing personal hurdles that could impact job performance and contentment (Palumbo, 2023).

Flexible Work Arrangements (FWAs) constitute a pivotal facet of the work-life alignment strategy, providing employees with the latitude to tailor their work schedules to accommodate personal obligations and preferences (Nissinen et al., 2022). This adaptability not only augments employee contentment and morale but also fosters heightened productivity and engagement. Furthermore, by acknowledging and catering to the varied needs and preferences of employees through FWAs, organizations demonstrate their commitment to fostering an inclusive and supportive workplace environment. Workload management ensures that employees' workloads remain reasonable and manageable, thereby averting undue stress and burnout. Through the provision of manageable workloads, organizations affirm their dedication to supporting employee well-being and acknowledging the importance of sustaining a balanced work-life equilibrium (Ritz & Knies, 2023). This approach aids in mitigating the risk of burnout and turnover, ultimately fostering increased employee satisfaction and retention.

Empirical Review

Empirical review involves the process of examining and synthesizing the findings, methodologies, and outcomes of studies that have been previously undertaken. The goal of empirical review is to acquire insights, pinpoint areas of knowledge gaps, and provide guidance for the formulation of new research endeavors. This section reviewed the studies related to retention strategies.

Munyua and Mbugua (2019) examined the factors influencing performance of water resource users associations in water resources management in Laikipia County. The research uncovered that community engagement, the sharing of water resources, and the resolution of water usage conflicts influenced performance. Further, the study established that the organizational structure exerted the most significant impact on the performance of WRUAs in water resources management, followed by the legal framework, whereas functions held the least influence on their performance in this domain. While the research delved into the

evaluation of Water Resource Users Associations' performance, it did not address aspects of human resource management, such as employee retention.

Mule, Rintari, Moguche, and Kaaria (2020) evaluated the relationship between career development and employee retention at Meru County Government. The correlation findings unveiled a positive correlation between career development and employee retention (r=0.521, p=0.000). Specifically, it was established that providing on-the-job, off-the-job, and overseas training played pivotal roles in career development, subsequently influencing employee retention within the County Government of Meru.

Njagi and Muna (2021) assessed the performance management strategies and employee productivity in the ministry of water and irrigation in Nairobi City County. The results indicated that performance management strategies have varying effects on employee productivity. Among these strategies, remuneration emerged as the primary factor negatively affecting productivity. The study also observed that the promotion process within the Ministry of Water and Irrigation had a detrimental effect due to its lack of merit-based criteria. Additionally, training initiatives and the physical work environment were identified as contributors to enhanced productivity among employees. These findings collectively demonstrate that performance management strategies exert influence on the overall employee productivity.

Najat (2021) conducted a study on the effect of talent management practices on employee turnover intentions at Nairobi City Water and Sewerage Company. The findings highlighted the significant effect of human resource planning, training, rewards management, and recruitment on employee turnover. The study concluded that employee turnover intentions can be diminished through the implementation of human resource planning, training, rewards management, and recruitment strategies. Chepyegon and Kamiya (2018) conducted a study on the challenges encountered by Kenya water sector management. The results unveiled those primary obstacles within water management encompassed limited societal approval of interventions, insufficient sectoral investments, and conflicts related to water. Akoth (2021) assessed the association between change management and organizational performance at Eldoret Water Resources Authority. The results revealed that organizational performance was significantly affected by the absence of operational alignment and the necessity for expertise.

Ambiyo, Were, and Rintai (2018) researched on the relationship between human resource management practices and employee retention by water boards in Nairobi County. The study's results highlighted a noteworthy link between recruitment, compensation, and employee retention within the Water Boards of Nairobi County. Based on these findings, the study ultimately affirmed a robust correlation between human resource management practices and employee retention in the context of Water Boards within Nairobi County.

Grace (2021) conducted a study on the management turnover and performance of Mombasa Water Supply and Sanitation Company Limited Kenya. The study revealed that involuntary turnover stems from factors such as the results of performance appraisals, a deficiency in the amalgamation of supervisors' and managers' skills, and insufficient preparedness for technological advancements. The voluntary turnover among management is influenced by unequal workload distribution, political intervention, and organizational culture. Moreover, dysfunctional management turnover is exacerbated by the preference for external hires over internal talent, absence of a merit-based internal promotion system for managers, and inadequate investment in training and development.

Sang (2021) undertook a study on the employee retention strategies and employee performance in tea industry. The findings of the study revealed that employee performance was impacted by rewards, welfare policies, and employee development. The introduction of training and mentorship programs played a pivotal role in improving the efficiency of employees in carrying out their roles. In conclusion, the study establishes that employee

rewards, welfare policies, and employee development play crucial roles in shaping and influencing employee performance.

Fahim (2018) examined the relationship between strategic human resource management and public employee retention. The findings indicated that the human resource practices comprising recruitment and selection, training and career development, performance appraisal and compensation and benefits constitute a significant strategic approach for retaining essential public employees. Furthermore, the analytical outcomes offer proof that strategic human resource management contributes to the retention of employees.

Mary and Susan (2019) assessed the factors influencing employees' retention in private organizations in Kenya. The study established a positive correlation between the work environment and employee retention. Furthermore, it revealed that an augmentation in leadership styles would have a favorable effect on employee retention within private companies in Kenya. Additionally, the study established that an increase in rewards was associated with a positive influence on employee retention within these companies. Lastly, the research indicated that enhancing training and development opportunities would result in an increase in employee retention. Rao (2021) assessed the risk factors and water sanitation infrastructure investments in Kenya. The findings established that operational risks, credit risks, liquidity risks, and environmental risks significantly influenced water-sanitation infrastructure investments in Kenya. This underscores the need for a comprehensive risk management strategy to enhance the resilience and sustainability of such projects.

Njoroge and Nzulwa (2019) assessed the factors affecting employee retention in non-governmental organizations in Nairobi County. The study's results indicated that well-defined leadership has a beneficial effect on employee retention. The associated shift in retention can be attributed to a one-unit alteration in leadership clarity while keeping other factors constant. The research also revealed that rewards play a positive role in influencing employee retention. The corresponding variation in employee retention in non-governmental organizations can be attributed to change in rewards. Macharia, Mugambi, and Kapsandoy (2018) conducted a study on the influence of motivation and training on labour turnover in state corporations in Kenya. The study results established that motivation significantly influences an employee's duration of stay within the organization. Moreover, the study highlighted that both training and employee motivation play substantial roles in impacting employee turnover.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design
Research design pertains to the framework embraced by a researcher to effectively address research objectives (abutabenjeh & jaradat, 2018). It delineates the precise steps that will be utilized for collection and analysis of data. The significance of a well-crafted research design cannot be overstated, as it is vital for conducting a methodical and meaningful study (Tobi & Kampen, 2018). In this study, a descriptive research design was utilized to provide an exhaustive and accurate portrayal of the phenomenon that is being researched. It enabled the researcher to gather comprehensive information about retention strategies without influencing or manipulating them.

Target Population
Target population denotes the particular group of individuals, elements, or units that the researcher intends to undertake study and draw conclusions about (Nayak & Singh, 2021). Target population also encompasses the complete set of subjects to which the research findings are meant to be relevant and applicable. It is of utmost importance to precisely define the target population to ensure that the research results can be accurately extended and applied to the intended group (Mishra & Alok, 2022). In this study, the target population comprised the 8 managers, 22 human resource officers and 18 office administrators working with the Water Resources Authority. The total population was 48. Therefore, the unit of

analysis was the Water Resources Authority, while the unit of observation was the 48 comprising managers, human resource officers and office administrators.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique
Sample size is the number of individuals, elements, or units chosen from the larger population for inclusion in a study (Newman & Gough, 2020). A sampling technique denotes the approach employed to select a subset of individuals, elements, or units from the larger population for inclusion in a study. The selection of a sampling technique holds paramount importance as it directly impacts the representativeness and generalizability of the study's findings to the entire population. However, sampling was not conducted for the present study. The study's focus was 48 managers, human resource officers, and office administrators as the unit of observation. Given the manageable and small size of the target population, a census technique was employed. Therefore, all the 48 managers, human resource officers, and office administrators were involved in the study.

Data Collection Instruments
Data collection involves gathering information from individuals, groups, or documented sources to be analyzed (Sileyew, 2019). The data collection instruments are carefully crafted to systematically and orderly gather data, aligning with the research objectives and hypotheses. In this study, questionnaire was utilized in data collection. According to Zawacki-Richter, Kerres, Bedenlier, Bond, and Buntins (2020) questionnaires offer a uniform approach to collecting data, ensuring that all respondents receive identical sets of questions in a consistent and standardized manner. Therefore, this method of data collection minimizes potential bias and guarantees comparability of responses.

Pilot Study
A pilot study in research is a preliminary investigation conducted on a small scale before the main research study (Copeland, 2021). Its purpose is to test the research instrument, identify potential issues, and make necessary improvements before undertaking the full-scale research. A pilot study was conducted at Nairobi Water and Sewerage Company to assess the data collection instrument's reliability and validity. 7 respondents participated, constituting 14.6% of the target population (48). According to Hazzi and Maldaon (2015), 10%-20% of the full-scale population is suitable for a pilot study. Thus, the inclusion of 7 participants (14.6%) was deemed appropriate for this study. As such, 7 questionnaires were issued, out of which 6 were fully filled and returned, leading to 85.7% response rate for the pilot study.

Data Collection Procedure
The procedure of data collection involves systematically gathering pertinent and dependable information (Lichtman, 2023). Before commencing data collection, the researcher obtained a data collection authorization letter from JKUAT Nairobi CBD Campus and a research permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI). The drop and pick method was employed in actual data collection.

Data Analysis and Presentation
Data analysis involves the systematic examination and interpretation of data collected during a study (Newman & Gough, 2020). It plays a crucial role in the research process, allowing researchers to scrutinize the data to derive meaningful conclusions, identify patterns, relationships, and trends, and address research hypotheses. Both descriptive and inferential data analysis methods were employed. Descriptive data analysis aims to provide a clear overview of the data, enabling researchers to gain insights into its distribution, central tendency, dispersion, and other important characteristics (Zawacki-Richter et al., 2020). The inferential data analysis utilized correlation and regression analysis methods to establish the relationship between retention strategies and employee performance. To aid in the data analysis, Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) was utilized. The presentation of the data was done through tables.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS
Descriptive Findings and Discussions
The main objective of the study was to establish the effect of retention strategies on employee performance at Water Resources Authority.

Effect of Employee Engagement Strategy on Employee Performance
The study sought to establish the effect of employee engagement strategy on employee performance at Water Resources Authority. Descriptive findings are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Effect of Employee Engagement Strategy on Employee Performance

	N	SA 5	A 4	N 3	D 2	SD 1	Mean	Std. Dev.
Our organization actively promotes a culture that values diversity and inclusion.	34	55.9%	35.3%	2.9%	5.9%	0%	4.41	0.821
Our organization's policies and decision-making processes mirror the inclusion of employees.	34	29.4%	61.8%	2.9%	5.9%	0%	4.15	0.744
Constructive feedback contributes to a sense of involvement and commitment to the organization.	34	29.4%	14.7%	47.1%	8.8%	0%	3.65	1.012
The organization fosters an open-door approach as a means of receiving feedback	34	44.1%	11.8%	8.8%	29.6%	14.7%	3.50	1.581
Wellness initiatives contribute to a more positive work environment.	34	14.7%	79.4%	5.9%	0%	0%	4.09	0.452
Employee assistance programs enhance employee engagement.	34	32.4%	29.4%	17.6%	11.8%	8.8%	3.65	1.300

Descriptive findings established that 91.2% of the respondents agreed (Mean=4.41; Std. Dev.= 0.821) that the Water Resources Authority actively promotes a culture that values diversity and inclusion. A culture that prioritizes diversity and inclusion boosts retention and employee performance through nurturing a sense of belonging and harnessing varied perspectives to propel organizational achievements. 81.2% of the respondents also agreed (Mean=4.15; Std. Dev.=0.744) that the organization's policies and decision-making processes mirror the inclusion of employees. When organizational policies and decision-making processes embody the inclusion of employees, they foster a feeling of ownership and dedication within the workforce. However, the 47.1% of the respondents had differing opinions (Mean=3.65; Std. Dev.=1.012) that constructive feedback contributes to a sense of involvement and commitment to the organization. 8.8% also disagreed with this assertion. This may imply that constructive feed opportunities in Water Resources Authority are not adequate or there is little focus on the same by the management. Similarly, 8.8% of the respondents were indifferent while 29.6% disagreed that Water Resources Authority fosters an open-door approach as a means of receiving feedback. Additionally, 94.1% of the respondents concurred (Mean=4.09; Std. Dev.=0.452) that wellness initiatives contribute to a more positive work environment. Wellness initiatives contribute to a more positive work environment by promoting employee well-being, reducing stress, and enhancing overall morale and productivity. Moreover, 61.8% of the respondents agreed that employee

assistance programs enhance employee engagement. By offering essential support for personal and professional challenges, employee assistance programs alleviate stress and promote well-being. This proactive stance showcases organizational concern, satisfaction, and productivity among employees. Overall, the findings revealed that employee engagement as a retention strategy had an effect on employee performance at the Water Resources Authority. The findings align with those of Sang (2021) regarding the retention strategies and employee performance in the tea industry. The study unveiled that rewards, welfare policies, and employee development significantly influenced employee performance. However, it is important to note that the current study was conducted within the context of the Water Resources Authority.

Effect of Work-life Alignment Strategy on Employee Performance
The study aimed to determine the effect of Work-life Alignment Strategy on Employee Performance. Descriptive findings are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Effect of Work-life Alignment Strategy on Employee Performance

	N	SA 5	A 4	N 3	D 2	SD 1	Mean	Std. Dev.
Organization's support for work-life alignment through its policies enhances employee satisfaction.	34	47.1%	29.4%	14.7%	5.9%	2.9%	4.12	1.066
Our organization offers flexible work arrangements to accommodate personal commitments.	34	35.3%	41.2%	11.8%	11.8%	0%	4.00	0.985
Our organization provides autonomy to adjust work schedule.	34	47.1%	29.4%	17.6%	5.9%	0%	4.18	0.936
Employee assistance programs support mental health and work-force wellness.	34	29.4%	17.6%	14.7%	26.5%	11.8%	3.26	1.442
Our organization provides resources and support for professional development to the employees.	34	50%	14.7%	26.5%	8.8%	0%	4.06	1.071
Employees are given manageable workload to sustain a healthy balance between work and personal life.	34	32.4%	26.5%	23.5%	8.8%	8.8%	3.65	1.276

According to the research findings, 76.5% of the respondents agreed (Mean=4.12; Std. Dev.=1.066) that Water Resources Authority support for work-life alignment through its policies enhances employee satisfaction. Encouraging work-life alignment positively impacts employee performance by fostering a harmony between professional duties and personal well-being, leading to heightened job satisfaction. Similarly, 76.5% of the respondents also agreed (Mean=4.00; Std. Dev.=0.985) that Water Resources Authority offers flexible work arrangements to accommodate personal commitments. Flexible work arrangements enhance employee performance by improving efficiency and work quality through granting greater autonomy and adapting to individual work styles and preferences. Additionally, 47.1% of the respondents strongly agreed (Mean=4.18; Std. Dev.=0.936) that they provide autonomy to adjust work schedule. The autonomy to adjust work schedules empowers individuals to

manage their time effectively, prioritize tasks, and align their efforts with organizational objectives, thus positively influencing employee performance in terms of goal achievement. This flexibility fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility, enhancing employees' ability to meet and exceed their targets. However, the respondents had differing opinions (Mean=3.26; Std. Dev.=1.442) that employee assistance programs support mental health and work-force wellness. Moreover, 64.7% of the respondents agreed (Mean=4.06; Std. Dev.=1.071) that the organization provides resources and support for professional development to the employees. Providing resources and support for professional development empowers employees to gain new skills, knowledge, and expertise, thereby enhancing their capabilities and effectiveness in carrying out job responsibilities, ultimately improving employee performance. The findings contrast with those of Munyua and Mbugua (2019) regarding factors influencing the performance of water resource users associations in water resources management in Laikipia County. The study revealed that performance was influenced by community engagement, the equitable sharing of water resources, and the resolution of conflicts related to water usage.

Employee Performance

The study sough views of the respondents pertaining to the employee performance at Water Resources Authority. Findings are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Employee Performance

	N	SA 5	A 4	N 3	D 2	SD 1	Mean	Std. Dev.
Employees are effectively informed about performance goals and expectations.	34	58.8%	35.3%	5.9%	0%	0%	4.53	0.615
The organization actively supports and provides resources to help employees accomplish their assigned tasks and goals.	34	50%	38.2%	8.8%	2.9%	0%	4.35	0.774
We employ a 360-degree feedback approach provide a holistic view of an employees' efficiency.	34	47.1%	35.3%	8.8%	8.8%	0%	4.21	0.941
Our organization provide Performance-based incentives to motivate employees to excel in their roles.	34	41.2%	35.3%	11.8%	8.8%	2.9%	4.03	1.087
Our compensation structure reflects the employees' quality of work.	34	38.2%	41.2%	17.6%	2.9%	0%	4.15	0.821
We provide regular feedback to enhance job satisfaction.	34	32.4%	38.2%	5.9%	17.9%	5.9%	3.74	1.263

The descriptive findings showed that 94.1% of the respondents agreed (Mean=4.53; Std. dev.=0.615) that employees are effectively informed about performance goals and expectations. It was also revealed that 88.2% of the respondents strongly agreed (Mean=4.35; Std. Dev.=0.774) that Water Resources Authority actively supports and provides resources to help employees accomplish their assigned tasks and goals. According to the findings, 82.4% of the respondents agreed (Mean=4.21; Std. Dev.=0.941) that Water Resources Authority employ a 360-degree feedback approach provide a holistic view of an employees' efficiency. Additionally, 76.5% of the respondents agreed (Mean=4.03; Std. Dev.=1.087) that the organization provide performance-based incentives to motivate employees to excel in their roles. Moreover, 79.4% of the respondents were in agreement (Mean=4.15; Std. Dev.=0.821)

that the Water Resources Authority's compensation structure reflects the employees' quality of work. The findings showed that retention strategies comprising employee engagement, training, work-life alignment, and recognition strategies affected the employee performance at Water Resources Authority. The research findings established that retention strategies affected the employee performance at the Water Resources Authority to a large extent. Retention strategies impact employee performance by enhancing efficiency, facilitating goal achievement, and improving the quality of work. These strategies achieve this by retaining skilled and experienced employees who are motivated and committed to organizational success. The findings align with those of Ambiyo et al (2018) regarding the correlation between human resource management practices and employee retention among water boards in Nairobi County. The study's outcomes emphasized a significant association between recruitment, compensation, and employee retention.

Inferential Findings and Discussions

Inferential analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between retention strategies and employee performance at Water Resources Authority, utilizing correlation and regression analysis techniques.

Correlation Analysis Statistical Results

The correlation analysis assessed the magnitude and direction of relationships among the study variables. It quantified the extent to which changes in one variable corresponded to changes in another, thus offering insights into potential connections. The findings are outlined in Table 4.

Table 4: Correlation Analysis

		Employee Performance	Employee Engagement Strategy	Work-life Alignment Strategy
Employee Performance	Pearson Correlation	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)			
	N	34		
Employee Engagement Strategy	Pearson Correlation	.580**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		
	N	34	34	
Work-life Alignment Strategy	Pearson Correlation	.764**	.494**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.003	
	N	34	34	34

According to the correlation analysis results, it was established that the relationship between employee engagement strategy and employee performance was positive and significant (r=0.580**; p=0.000) at 1% significance level. This means that increase in employee engagement contributed to the increase in employee performance at Water Resources Authority. It implies that employee engagement strategy as indicated by culture of inclusivity, constructive feedback, and wellness initiatives affected the employee performance. Employee engagement as a retention strategy positively influences employee performance at Water Resources Authority by fostering a culture of commitment, collaboration, and motivation, thereby enhancing productivity and job satisfaction.

According to the findings, there was a strong, positive and statistically significant relationship (r=0.764**; p=0.000) between the work-life alignment strategy and the employee performance at Water Resources Authority. This means that the components of the work-life alignment strategy comprising the employee assistance programs, flexible work arrangements, and workload management affected the employee performance. Consequently, an enhancement in the work-life alignment strategy was associated with improvements in retention and the overall employee performance.

Regression Analysis Statistical Results

The regression analysis offered a platform for testing hypotheses and drawing conclusions about the relationships among variables, enabling the researcher to ascertain the statistical significance of these relationships.

Table 5: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.856[a]	.733	.696	.28950

a. Predictors: (Constant), Employee Engagement Strategy, Work-life Alignment Strategy

The model summary shows that the correlation coefficient was R=0.856. The coefficient of determination was R^2=0.733. Therefore, the retention strategies including employee engagement strategy and work-life alignment strategy, accounted for 73.3% of variation in the employee performance at Water Resources Authority.

Table 6: ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	6.681	2	3.341	42.61	.000[b]
1	Residual	2.431	31	.0784		
	Total	9.111	33			

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance
b. Predictors: (Constant), Employee Engagement Strategy and Work-life Alignment Strategy

The results from the analysis of variance (ANOVA) reveal that the F-value of 19.927 was statistically significant (p=0.000). This outcome indicates that the overall model was significant, implying that all the retention strategies collectively influenced employee performance at Water Resources Authority.

Table 7: Regression Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
	(Constant)	1.010	.408		2.478	.019
1	Employee Engagement Strategy	.209	.096	.241	2.180	.037
	Work-life Alignment Strategy	.261	.081	.421	3.231	.003

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance

The following regression model was applied; $Y= \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \varepsilon$. The model was interpreted as $Y= \beta_0 + 0.209 X_1 + 0.261 X_2 + \varepsilon$. The regression coefficients revealed that a one-unit change in employee engagement strategy led to a 0.209-unit change in employee performance. One-unit change in work-life alignment strategy led to 0.261 unit change in employee performance.

Conclusions
Employee Engagement Strategy
In conclusion, the employee engagement in the realm of retention strategy enhanced employee performance. It was observed that prioritizing employee engagement strategy leads to increased levels of productivity and job satisfaction. These results highlight the crucial role of such strategy in influencing organizational outcomes. Encouraging inclusivity within the workplace fosters a feeling of belonging and psychological safety among employees, thereby boosting motivation, collaboration, and innovation. Implementing constructive feedback mechanisms offers employees valuable insights into their performance, empowering them to pinpoint areas for improvement and growth, thus fostering a culture of continuous learning

and enhancing both individual and team effectiveness. Additionally, wellness initiatives signal organizational care for employees and effectively mitigate stress. Therefore, effective employee engagement contributes significantly to enhancing employee performance.

Work-life Alignment Strategy

In conclusion, the work-life alignment strategy has a notable effect on employee performance in the Water Resources Authority. Specifically, employee assistance programs offer crucial support to individuals encountering personal or professional challenges, thus enhancing overall well-being and decreasing stress levels. Flexible work arrangements grant employees the autonomy to balance work responsibilities with personal commitments, cultivating a feeling of control and contentment. Additionally, effective workload management strategies ensure employees maintain a manageable workload, mitigating burnout and fostering a harmonious work-life balance. Through prioritizing work-life alignment, organizations showcase their dedication to employee welfare, motivating employees to strive for increased performance.

Recommendations

First, it is recommended that Water Resources Authority should regularly share organization's plans and challenges with employees to foster transparency. This will in turn build trust and cultivate a collaborative atmosphere. When employees feel informed and included, they are more likely to be engaged, committed, and motivated to contribute to the organization's success, leading to improved retention and enhanced performance.

Secondly, it is recommended that Water Resources Authority should cultivate a culture that places importance on employee well-being by implementing policies that facilitate workload management. This approach will foster a healthier workplace environment, resulting in higher job satisfaction and better employee performance.

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