ADOPTION OF BEST HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
PRACTICES AMONG PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN
KISUMU COUNTY, KENYA

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for the Award of the Degree of Master of Business Administration
(MBA), School of Business, University of Nairobi

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work in this project is my original work and has not been previously in its entirety or part been presented at any other university for a degree and that all citations and references in the text have been duly acknowledged.

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DEDICATION

I want to passionately dedicate this work to my dear wife Nancy, bosom friends Victor J and Enos Ogol, dear son Dessler and the entire Ogara family.
ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I wish to acknowledge my supervisor Mr. George Omondi for his massive assistance in enriching, drafting and editing this work. His sense of thought and deep knowledge in human resource management has been phenomenal and valuable to me. I wish to also express my gratitude to my wife Nancy Ombewa, my friends Victor Jacodul, Omondi Okun, Washington Onuko, Samuel Ochieng and Enos Ogol for their encouragement and material support throughout the entire period I was undertaking this project. On the material front, I want to make a special mention of my dad Mr. Caleb Ouma Ombewa.

God bless.
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ABSTRACT

Adoption of best practices in human resource management among private secondary schools in Kisumu County, Kenya is a study that was conceived out of the realization that many Kenyans especially those in Kisumu County are craving for high quality education for their children. This issue of quality has seen parents in the County turn to private secondary schools as their schools of choice largely due to the fact that inadequate funding by the state has militated against quality in the public schools. Best practices in human resource management are many and the correct combination that each organization can use to optimize the use of their human resource is not clear Boxall and Purcell, (2003). However in each functional area there are activities which if practiced at their best will spur the performance of the organization. The objective of the study was to establish the extent to which private secondary schools in Kisumu County have adopted best human resource management practices. Cross sectional descriptive survey design was used to conduct the study. Data collection and analysis was done by means of semi structured questionnaire and descriptive statistics respectively. The findings revealed that private secondary schools in Kisumu County have adopted different best practices in human resource management at varying degrees and where the practices have not been adopted; the study recommends that such practices be enhanced and strengthened to help improve staff performance. The researcher also recommends that further studies be carried out on influence of best practices in human resource management on academic performance of private secondary schools in Kisumu County.
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

To understand the critical importance of people in any organization is to recognize that the human element and the organization are synonymous. A well managed organization usually sees an average worker as the root source of quality and productivity (Banjoko, 2005). The approach that a firm uses to manage its human resources is increasingly recognized as particularly important to the execution of its business strategy (Torrington, 2005). Boxall and Steenveld (1999) argue that there is a positive relationship between firm performance and labor management and it is evident that the quality of human resource management is critical in the performance of a firm. There are human resource management practices and approaches which will invariably help an organization in achieving competitive advantage in service delivery over others. These practices generally rotate around how to get the best performance out of people employed in organization; how to recruit, reward and keep top performers and how to improve employee performance. While there are differences of opinion on the question of details on how each practice creates competitive advantage, all authorities; [Huselid (1995); Mac Duffie (1995)] who have elaborated on human resource best practices strongly suggest that the same basic bundles of human resource practices tend to enhance business in all organizations irrespective of particular product market strategy.

Resources in terms of money, time and other assets have been utilized over recent decades to determine how to make organizations profitable and productive and how to maintain the good performance. Theories and models have been developed, proven
successful or debunked. A case in point is the resource based view as a basis of competitive advantage of a firm which lies primarily in application of the bundle of valuable interchangeable and tangible as well as intangible resources at the firm’s disposal (Rumelt, 1991). To transform short run competitive advantage into sustained competitive advantage requires that the human resources for instance are heterogeneous in nature and not perfectly mobile. Effectively, this translates into valuable human resources that are neither perfectly imitable nor sustainable without great effort. All firms with a reporting staff should have resources to guide and support in people management activities; these resources support the provision and application of best practices in human resource management (Torrington, 2005).

Private secondary schools in Kisumu County operate in competitive environment just like other organizations in the private sector. This implies that these schools have to embrace good human resource management practices in order to compete favorably. The schools conduct on the job training and development for their employees, have made performance management part of their culture and try to empower their employees through establishing communication channel between management and workers among some of the practices. The extent to which these practices have been adopted is a matter worth investigating.

1.1.1 Human Resource Management Best Practices

Best practice is a quality statement of performing an activity or business process that has generally been accepted as successful. To qualify as best practice, the technique must have proven record in significantly lowering costs, increasing revenue, improving quality
or performance, shortening time requirements, enhancing safety or delivering some highly positive outcome (Strickland, Arthur and Gamble, 2007). The identity path for operating excellence for a best practice is to be valuable and transferable; it must demonstrate success over time, deliver quantifiable and highly positive results and be repeatable. It is argued that all organizations will benefit and see improvement in organizational performance if they identify, gain commitment to and implement a set of best human resource management practices. According to Beardwell and Claydon (2003), the concept of best practices or high commitment human resource management was identified initially in the early US models of human resource management, many of which mooted the idea that the adoption of certain best human resource practices would result in enhanced organizational performance manifested in improved employee attitudes and behaviors, lower levels of absenteeism and turnover and therefore higher productivity, enhanced quality and efficiency in service provision.

Best practices in human resource management include selection and recruitment strictly on merit, by giving equal opportunity to all qualified people without discrimination; proper matching of the individual capabilities and interests with the demands and rewards given by the organization against the job; regular training and development activities that are aimed at not only improving employee performance at work, but also boosting self confidence of the individual employee; use of flexible work arrangements to enable employees to mix work and family responsibilities without hurting any side; making performance appraisal to be part of the organizations culture and linking it to organizational objectives and good labor relationships that include diversity management (Torrington, 2005).
Boxall and Purcel (2003) argue that no list of best practices is likely to have universal application because of principles, which if applied, can bring about more effective but different people management. However, there seems to be a growing tendency around the broad human resource management territory that there is plausible list of practices that include selection, training, communication, job design and reward system. There are also practices on the margins such as family friendly and equal opportunity practices as well as some that cannot apply across all sectors such as profit related pay and employee share ownership schemes (Guest 2001).

Although there are differences in opinion on the question of details of how each practice impacts on organizational performance, all authorities who have elaborated on the subject of human resource management practices have agreed that they tend to enhance business performance in all organizations irrespective of the particular product market being pursued.

1.1.2 Private Secondary Schools in Kisumu County

Private secondary schools are owned and managed by individuals or groups as business entities. They complement the public schools in providing education to many Kenyans. Since they are business oriented, it is important that the man power they have be of proper quality and quantity. The man power should consistently form part of the school culture through controlled, efficient and effective personnel management (Eshiwani 1993).

Kisumu County borders Vihiga to the north, Nandi to the north east, Kericho to the east, Nyamira to the south, Homa Bay to the south west and Siaya to the west. Increased
demand by the people and the limited resources available to the government has made it difficult for the government alone to finance education provision in the county. It has therefore become increasingly necessary for the private sector to get involved in the provision of educational facilities in the county. According to statistical returns obtained at Kisumu County Director of Education office 2013, there are twenty private secondary schools in the county which complement the public ones in education provision. These schools have also emerged as major employer of various types of professionals including teachers, cooks, accounting clerks, guards and entrepreneurs.

1.2 Research Problem

Randall (2007) maintains that all firms seek to gain competitive advantage through proper strategies and evidence has shown that effective service delivery is achieved by systematically melding human resource management practices with selected competitive strategy. According to Derrick and Stephen (2007), there are certain human resource management practices and approaches which will invariably help an organization in achieving competitive advantage; the adoption of human resource management practices to strategy can be done by a firm on its own or through other linked firms. These human resource management practices include; selection and recruitment strictly on merit, by giving equal opportunity to all qualified people without discrimination; proper matching of the individual capabilities and interests with the demands and rewards given by the organization against the job; regular training and development activities that are aimed at not only improving employee performance at work, but also boosting self confidence of the individual employee; use of flexible work arrangements to enable employees to mix
work and family responsibilities without hurting any side; making performance appraisal to be part of the organizations culture and linking it to organizational objectives and good labor relationships that include diversity management (Torrington, 2005). In the same argument, Torrington (2005) noted that the way in which a firm manages its human resources is increasingly recognized as particularly important to the execution of its strategy.

Private secondary schools in Kisumu County rely mainly on recruitment and selection procedures of references, unsolicited applications and advertisement while ignoring the fancied sources such as job centers, direct links with colleges, use of private agencies and e-recruitment. The emerging issues in education pose challenges to schools on what type of skills that their staff require to remain relevant and competitive (Carroll, 2003). Adoption of best practices in human resource management may therefore create a conducive environment making it easier for the schools to attract a motivated work force and offer quality services to their clients. Just like in the corporate world, private secondary schools in Kisumu County conduct regular on the job training and development for their employees, have made performance management and appraisal part of their culture and try to empower their employees through establishing an adequate communication channel between management and workers in order to keep them informed about decisions which affect their work and interest. In a study conducted by Watson Wyelt in 2000-2001 into the links between human resource management practices and market value creation, it was concluded that adoption of key human resource management practices resulted in an overall increase of 47% in market value
(Scharingner 2002). However, it’s unlikely that any one practice will result in identical outcomes in any two firms, we can be reasonably certain that the practices discussed here could be used to maintain a high quality workforce and therefore increase and sustain competitive advantage for each firm.

Studies in best practices in human resource management have concentrated on the content of human resource practices; there are those who focus on single or a combination of human resource management practices and examine their effects on various performance measures [Keller and Dansereou, (1995); Bernadine, (2007); Hitt, Bierman and Kochar (2001)]. Mac Duffie, (1995), also studies the effects of the bundles or systems of human resource management practices on performance but does not attempt to relate these practices to a particular industry. In Kenya, relevant studies in best practices in human resource management have concentrated on other sectors. Furthermore, such studies on human resource have been addressing the relationships between aspects of human resource management practices; for instance, Njenga, (2007) focused on the relationship between human resource management practices, job satisfaction, organizational commitment and performance in secondary schools in Dagoretti division of Nairobi; Omoro (2008) and Nguku (2008) studied strategic human resource management practices and firm performance in the banking and hotel industries respectively. Baraza (2008) dwelt on adoption of best practices in human resource management among hotels in Kenya. Whereas the findings of these studies are valid on their own right, the context in which they were carried out and perspective were very different. There is no known study that has been done on extent of adoption of best
human resource management practices among private secondary schools in Kisumu County and hence the knowledge gap. This study seeks to answer the question; to what extent have private secondary schools in Kisumu county adopted best practices in human resource management?

1.3 Research Objective

To establish the extent to which private secondary schools in Kisumu County have adopted best practices in human resource management.

1.4 Value of the study

This study will enable human resource practitioners to investigate human resource management practices commonly used by private secondary schools in Kisumu County and compare them to the perceived best practices and give those in private academic institutions a chance to adopt what is suitable for them.

The study will assist in enhancing awareness of best human resource management practices among private schools and make them employers of choice and increase individual firm’s competitive advantage.

It will enable researchers to understand the nature of human resource management practices used in private secondary schools used in the context of the study.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Human resource management is one of the support activities which though not directly involved in production will increase effectiveness and efficiency in the creation of goods and services. Indeed, human resources are the major source of competitive advantage for any business firm. Great attention thus needs to be paid to human resource and its management as this will impact on performance of any organization. This chapter focuses on best human resource management and their application and how they impact on organizational performance. The literature adopts the Boxall and Purcell’s (2003) bundles of best practices in human resource management which include recruitment and selection, employee retention through realistic job preview, training and development, performance management and communication.

2.2 Best Practices in Human Resource Management

According to Huselid (1995), people are the source of competitive advantage and there is need for use of specific human resource management practices to achieve this. Within such approaches is an implicit assumption that gaining employee commitment to the organizations goals is possible and indeed crucial. The challenge facing human resource management professionals today is to secure employee commitment within an enterprise culture and demands there off. When deciding what human resource practices to use to link with competitive strategy, organization can choose from six human resource practice ‘menus’, each of the six menus concerns a different aspect of human resource
management; these aspects are planning, staffing, appraising, compensation and training development.

Torrington (2005), concluded in his research that although human resource management practices matter for performance in general, little is known, in particular about how and which combinations of human resource management practices matter; for example, they are employed in different types of firms, support different knowledge strategies. Evidence suggests that when several human resource practices are used simultaneously and in a particular system configuration, productivity increases beyond what individual human resource practice can achieve in isolation. Furthermore, the most successful organization will be those that fully recognize that without the ability to employ motivated, committed workforce it will be extremely difficult to enact changes associated with market place demand for new product introduction, cost reduction strategies, new production technologies and so on. They will also understand the cost associated with high turnover and take the necessary steps to control it.

Some of the best practices include selection and recruitment strictly on merit, by giving equal opportunity to all qualified people without discrimination; proper matching of the individual capabilities and interests with the demands and rewards given by the organization against the job; regular training and development activities that are aimed at not only improving employee performance at work, but also boosting self confidence; use of flexible work arrangements to enable employees to mix work and family
responsibilities without hurting any side; making performance appraisal to be part of the organizations culture and linking it to the organizational objectives and good labor relationships that include diversity arrangement.

Other important areas in which best human resource practices must be applied include the creation of viable and attractive benefit and compensation packages, managing the performance of the employees, making sure that business practices and workers conditions stay well within the law, creating a positive enjoyable work environment, talent recruitment and mapping out the best human resource strategies for the future. Staying within the law is however a highly prominent aspect of human resources that comes into heavy play when discussing the best practices involved in keeping the workplace free of dangerous contentious business practices. It should be law suit proof and free from discrimination of any form.

In a research conducted by Watson Wyelt (2000-2001) into the links between human resource practices and market value creation, it was concluded that application of key human resource management practices was associated with an overall increase of 47% in market value (Scharinger 2002). It is unlikely that any one practice will result in identical outcomes in any two firms, we can be reasonably certain that the practices discussed here could be used to maintain a high quality work force and therefore increase and sustain a competitive advantage. Beardwell and Clayton (2003) argued that human resource best practices are complimentary in that investing in another interrelated practice and which
may be mutually enhancing their supporting effects on knowledge creation and utilization in the pursuit of strategic goals. Several studies have been done in Kenya focusing on human resource management. In a study of diversity management practices applied by commercial banks in Kenya, Oluoch (2006), concluded that there is no single way of treating employees as each one will have their own personal needs, values and beliefs and the notion that best practices while helpful in theoretical setting will not provide all answers in reality. Mutuku (2003) found that majority of the management have an understanding of the diversity in the work place and are aware about its benefits. Such diversity includes the area of the team work, productivity motivation, creativity and staff turns over.

2.2.1 Recruitment and Selection

Recruitment and selection are essentially concerned with identifying, assessing and engaging new employees or promoting existing ones. The focus is on matching the capabilities and interests of prospective candidates with the demands and rewards given by the organization against the job. In her findings Kilonzi (2008) noted that in the manufacturing sector, different companies use different recruitment and selection methods; however advertisement of vacancies and promotion from within are the most preferred, while consultancies and employment agencies are least preferred. She further asserted that in selecting employees for vacant positions in the sector, academic qualifications and competence emerged as the most used; individual flexibility is least considered as a method of selecting employees for vacant positions. The most common method is interview and selection tests. But whichever criteria of selection that is used in selection it should be controllable, measurable, reliable and relevant to the organization.
In a study conducted by Hay Group Inc and Michigan University it was reported that when business is pursuing a growth strategy it needs top managers who are likely to abandon the status quo and adapt their strategies and goals to the market place. According to the study insiders are slow to recognize the onset of a decline and tend to persevere- strategies that are no longer effective, so top management need to be recruited from outside the organization. Insiders on the other hand will be important when business is pursuing a mature strategy because they already know the intricacies of the business. The results of the Hay Group study suggest that the staffing practices of top management be tied to the nature of the business demand different aspects of the business demand different behavior from individual running the business. The implication is that selecting the right top managers is an important staffing decision (Randall and Susan 1987).

According to Mac Duffie (1995), it is logical to conceive that organizations can use selection to increase their generic human capital while focusing on training to develop a firm’s specific human capital. For a firm to sustain its competitive advantage, the resources must also be inimitable and non substitutable to prevent rivals from replicating the value of the resources and competing away their benefits. Rumelt (1994), observed that the duration of a firm’s competitive advantage is directly related to the strength of isolating mechanisms. But given the ease with which human resources can move between firms especially from one private school to a rival school it seems on the surface that it will be difficult to prevent and protect the human resource from expropriation by rivals.
Barret (2000), concluded that best practices in recruitment requires that the human side of the business should always be addressed; this means meeting the needs of potential new employees who are choosing to work for the organization, cultures that align with their personal professional growth; usually the relationship between the employee and the organization is made by contract in which the employee commits himself to use his knowledge, learning and skills for the benefits of the company. In return the organization provides a reasonable compensation.

The American Institute of Personnel observed that the hiring procedures followed vary between organization and each has its own ultimate impact on organizational employees’ perceptions. The procedures should however at all times take into account the individual organizations vision, mission and objectives and should match the job description with persons qualification otherwise the cost of attracting and retaining a wrong person on the job would be enormous (Mullins 2005)

2.2.2 Realistic Job Preview

It is selection device involving allowing job candidates to learn negative as well as positive information about the job and organization. It may include brochures, films, plant tours, work sampling or merely a short script made up of realistic statements that accurately portray the job. The key element in Realistic Job Preview is that unfavorable as well as favorable information about the job is shared. The concept has even been extended to even recruiting students by college admissions (Armstrong 2008). Most studies demonstrate that giving candidates realistic job preview before offering them the
job reduces turn over without lowering acceptance rates. Job preview should be done exhaustively before placement and this time the prospective employee should be made aware of the nature of job, requirements and working conditions. The primary purpose of selection devices is to identify individuals who will be effective performers. But it is not management’s interest to find good prospects, hire them, and then have them leave the organization.

Selection should be concerned with reducing voluntary turnover among the hired. There are many ways of ensuring this, but the most effective and scientifically tested device is the Realistic Job Preview. While Realistic Job Preview is not normally treated as a selection device, it does take place during selection process and it has demonstrated effectiveness as a method for increasing job survival among new employees. Every applicant acquires during the selection process a set of hypothetical expectations about the organization and about the specific job the applicant is hoping to be offered. It is not unusual for these expectations to be excessively inflated as a result of receiving almost uniformly positive information about the organization and job during recruitment and selection activities (Wanous and Poporich, 1979).

Evidence suggests however, that managers may be erring by giving applicants only favorable information. Applicants who have been given the realistic job preview hold lower and more realistic expectations about the job they will be doing and are better prepared to cope with the job and its frustrating element. The result is lower turnover
rates. It is not unreasonable to suggest that exposing an applicant to Realistic Job Preview may also result in the hiring of different type of person, or that better information may result in greater commitment on the part of new employees to their decision to come and stay aboard (Wanous et al, 1979). While Realistic Job Preview is helpful and can create more positive job related attitude, there is no indication that general Realistic Job Preview procedure exists. What is of interest to one person may not be to another. However the benefits of some type of Realistic Job Preview appear to outweigh its cost.

2.2.3 Training and Development

A well trained labor force fosters technological advancements and new methods of production both of which are critical ingredients of sustained economic development. Training and development are activities that are used to maintain and promote the competencies and talents of employees in relation to the developments inside and outside the organization. Private secondary schools have human resources that are not firm specific although Hatch and Dyer (2004) noted that firms without superior foresight into the productivity of human resources may be able to earn competitive advantage by building the firm specific human capital of its employees through training.

In his conclusion, Njenga (2008) noted that employee development directly impacts on the organizational ability to satisfy customers, resolve problems and crises, and adopt changing market conditions. Paying for an employee’s continuing professional education for example can help organization gain expertise in new technologies and opportunities
or markets, which can save resources in the long run. In addition, most employees find learning new skills and taking on new challenges extremely rewarding.

Given the ease with which human resources can move between firms it would seem on the surface that it should be difficult to protect human capital from expropriation by rivals. According to Hitt et al (2001) human capital is most valuable and most inimitable when it is firm specific and original in the environment where it was originally and optimally developed. Becker (1964) concluded that a firm’s internal and external training may contribute to corporate prosperity, for example, workers through on the job training, seminars, learning by doing to create firm specific human capital.

2.2.4 Clear Job Design

To ensure flexibility of work force skills, commitment and motivation, including steps to ensure that employees have the responsibility and full autonomy to use their knowledge and skills. There should also be skill variety at the work place which is the extent to which job incumbents can complete a whole and identifiable task using various skills, activities and ability.

A good job design is one that can help employees balance their work and non work lives by allowing workers to adopt more flexible work schedules; for example, flextime, permanent part time work, and job sharing and compressed weeks. These programmes enable employees to address their work and family concerns and reduce potential stress
and conflict between the various life roles (Bernadine 2007). But according to Beardwell and Claydon (2007), despite the advantages of flexible work arrangements, workers may be unwilling to take advantage of work life balance initiatives because they are worried that it will generate hostile response from colleagues who are not able to do the same or even have damage to career prospects. Resistance is also due to the possible effect to leisure time.

Flexible work systems are contingent based adaptability of human resource activities to the organizations situation. Different patterns, times and people are used in performing activities. Such programmes can be applied in areas such as working time, number of workers, the place of work and even type of workers. It’s also important to note that different organizations have different objectives when it comes to deciding which flexible work systems should be used. However, for it to work effectively employees need to accept the drastic changes that come with such arrangements; the changes affect mainly their personal lives, security and status. It also requires employees to be self disciplined since supervision is minimal especially at odd hours or those who work from home.

2.2.5 Performance Management

Organizations have long acknowledged the values of performance appraisal in both administration decisions and in motivating employees. Albrook (1968), the reluctance to implement the appraisal systems with lower level and base grade employees may be due to several factors, including employee and union resistance to compulsory system of appraisal. Scherer and Segal (2006) noted that some of the best practices of performance
appraisal are ensuring that an organization makes performance appraisal to be part of the culture, link performance appraisal to organizational objectives, invest in training and education, design the system for the unique needs of the organization; use performance appraisal to build relationships between supervisors and employees; use flexible, customized appraisal forms and finally separates the compensation from performance. Ouko (2008) recommended that it is at best 360 degrees of performance appraisal should be used by organizations because it creates a mutually beneficial relationship between the organization and the employees. It should fit in the strategic mission of the organization and be used as a means not as an end in itself.

On the other hand the compensation should be schemed in such a way that it provides for the recognition and reward of high performing employees this can be in the form of employee share ownership programmes to increase employee awareness of the implication of their actions for the financial performance of the firm. The terms should be clearly harmonized. Furthermore, compensation systems have been regarded as influential to elicit employees’ contribution, for example, high powered incentives may be used to induce contributions through providing larger shares of quasi rents to employees (Williamson 1996). Every worker requires some form of feedback on their performance. Performance measurement enables the worker to get feedback from the job itself, which is the extent to which carrying out the work activities result in incumbent receiving clear and direct knowledge about how they are performing.
Human resource audit is the examination of the quality and the standard of the level of performance of the personnel by looking at their numbers, efficiency and relations at the place of work. Periodical audit enables human resource managers to plan ahead by anticipating future change in people and work requirements; it helps to avoid wastage in terms of excess numbers of employees for duties that are available in the organization. Audit also results into job evaluation which exposes and compares skills required, the job itself and the cost benefit analysis.

People leave jobs for variety of reasons, many of which are wholly outside the power of the organization to influence. The argument against staff turnover is equally persuasive; first the sheer cost of replacing people who have been hired ranging from the cost of placing a recruitment advertisement through the time spent administering and conducting the selection, to other expenses required in inducting and training employees. There are other explicit losses to the organization arising as a result of poor performance of inexperienced employees which are not measurable (Torrington, 2005).

2.2.6 Communication and Motivation

Every organization should strive to include good labor relations and ensure industrial peace by avoiding labor unrest such as strikes, work stoppages, boycotts, picketing and lock outs. The best practice is to keep a communication line that everybody in the process is fully informed frequently and comprehensively to enhance teamwork. Private sector though not vulnerable is culpable to labor interruption (Armstrong 2008).
According to Limo (2008), most managers do not prioritize quality employee relationship as an aspect of quality management practices. Employee relations include the use of reward system practices in a manner that supports employee involvement. This is even more important given the scholarly nature of academic institutions. Adoption of systems that reward collective performance and thus encourage teams and individuals to be involved in the business units of which they are part and perceived to contribute positively to overall organizational performance and this is best practice in employee relationship.

Good labor relations also includes diversity management initiatives which include practices and policies that the organization adopts voluntarily for the purpose of ensuring that all members of diverse work force feel they are treated fairly (Jackson Randall and Steven, 2009). Diversity has many dimensions, but in Kenya, it tends to revolve around gender, ethnicity, race and education. Each firm has its unique combination of these aspects of diversity. By using diversity initiative the firm creates a culture of inclusion whereby everybody feels equally integrated into the larger system. Members of the majority and the minority subcultures feel respected and everyone has an equal chance to express views and influence decisions and everyone has similar access to both formal and informal networks within the organization. This makes all members own the organization and less likely to resort to legal means for ensuring fair treatment. Respect to all employees is shown when the employment decisions are made on the basis of the merit rather than personal or demographic attributes (Derrick, Laura and Stephen, 2007).
2.2.7 **Employee Empowerment**

This is an approach to employee relations and management that allows employees greater freedom, autonomy and self control over their work, and responsibility for decision making (Mullins, 2002). Researchers have looked at it in different dimensions; they include, control over own work, autonomy on the job, pay system that links pay with performance. Caudron (1995), suggested that the components of empowerment include, self directed work teams, free flow of information about a company’s goals and direction, training and continual development of work, management leadership skills of all employees, managers who are more like coaches and who empower gradually, employee control of needed resources, provision for performance measurement, continual feedback and reinforcement on performance.

Empowerment is from both the individual employee perspective and the organization perspective. The organization creates the environment that allows for the empowerment of individual, for example, superiors can empower the subordinates by delegating responsibilities to them; this makes the subordinates to be satisfied with their leaders and their work, they often perceive their leaders as being fair and in turn perform to superior’s expectations (Keller and Dansereu 1995). When employees are empowered they feel more appreciated and valued at work place and acquire sense of belonging to the organization. Empowerment makes greater use of skills and ability of the work force, it encourages team work and there is meaningful participation and can lead to successful implementation of programmes; usually empowered employees do not suffer ambiguity about their roles in the organization.
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the methodology and procedures which were employed to conduct the study. Since information was collected without changing the environment, cross-sectional descriptive survey design was used.

3.2 Research Design

The study employed a cross-sectional descriptive survey design. This was the most appropriate design for the study as it enables the examination of the entire population of the existing phenomena by asking questions without making inference or casual statement. It was also appropriate because it enabled the researcher to secure factual and detailed information from the respondents on the various aspects of the phenomena that existed namely extent of adoption of best human resource management practices.

3.3 Population of the Study

The population of study consisted of the twenty private secondary schools in Kisumu County (Ministry Of Education Statistical Returns, Kisumu County Director of Education Office, March 2013).

3.4 Data Collection

Primary data was collected using a semi-structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided in two sections; section one contained demographic information of the respondent while section two focused on best practices in human resource management in
the school. The deputy head teachers of the schools were the target respondents. This was because in secondary schools, the deputy head teachers are normally in charge of staff welfare and thus better placed to answer questions regarding staff and their welfare. Drop and pick method was used to administer the questionnaire.

3.5 Data Analysis

The data analysis was carried out using descriptive statistics, namely the mean and percentages to measure the extent of adoption of best practices in human resource management. Frequency distributions and tables were used to present the findings.
CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the data that was found on the survey of extent of adoption of best human resource management practices among private secondary schools in Kisumu County, Kenya. The study was conducted on 14 schools out of the 20 initially targeted.

4.2 Response Rate

The response rate was 14 out of 20 schools targeted for the study purposes, this forms 70% response rate.

4.3 Demographic Characteristics

From the findings 11 out of 14 respondents were men, that is, 78.6% . The female respondents formed 21.4% of the total. From these figures we can conclude that private secondary schools in Kisumu County have more male employees than the females. The findings also indicated that 100% are in the age bracket of 26 years and above with only 1% falling above the age of 60 years. This means that the private schools mostly employ adults and phase out those who have attained retirement age of 60. The analysis of the personal information also established that 85.7% are married with families to take care of and therefore are responsible people. 84% have served for more than one year and therefore have experience of their work. From the findings 38% are temporary employees while 62% are permanent.
Table 4.1 Distribution of Respondents by gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.4 Extent of Adoption of Best Practices in Human Resource Management

From the findings all the schools do not have a fully fledged and independent human resource department. The major decisions on human resource are handled by the directors and the principals.

4.4.1 Recruitment, Selection and Realistic Job Preview

The study sought to find out whether recruitment, selection and realistic job preview practices have been adopted in the schools and the extent to which these have been applied. From the findings 64.3% of the respondents feel that recruitment and selection methods used are fair enough while 35.7% disagree. Further proof of best practice in recruitment and selection is the finding that 71.42% of the respondents agreeing that the vacancies are advertised. 85.7% of the respondents agree that education and professional qualification is considered in recruitment. This is in agreement with Dessler (2008) observation that recruitment and selection should march organizations mission, vision
and person qualification to avoid attracting wrong persons. The findings also revealed that work sampling, plant tours and films are rarely used before hiring workers with 92.9% disagreeing. A further 71% of respondents disagreed that workers are allowed to have a feel of negative aspects of their job before placement. This implies that the schools largely ignore realistic job preview as a selection device.

4.4.2 Staff Training and Development Practices

The study aimed at establishing the extent to which training and development activities have been implemented in the schools. From the findings 85% have undergone training. This means way over half of the respondents have trained and therefore these schools emphasize training as part of staff development. According to Brenda Sugre(2005) training has a fairly impressive record of influencing organizational effectiveness, scoring high than appraisal and feedback. The 85% who have trained acknowledge that training has helped to impart professional ethics and skills and has improved cognitive ability of staff making learners to excel. This is in line with Njenga, (2008) observation that employee development directly impacts on the organizational ability to satisfy customers, resolve problems and crises, and adopt changing market conditions and Becker, (1964) view that internal and external training of workers of an organization contribute to corporate prosperity. 64% of the respondents however would like training to be regular in order to improve service delivery. The most common form of training is on job training for staff development with 71.4% agreement. A further 50% of respondents agreed that they attend seminars and workshops to build their capacity. This is an important tool in developing employees since it helps in passing values, work activities and job design from incumbents to new workers. The study also established that no school supports
development of workers through scholarship and sponsorship while 35.7% agree that those who want to further their studies are given study leave to develop their careers.

4.4.3 Job Design

The study purposed to find out the extent to which job design as best human resource management practice has been adopted in the schools i.e. whether there is flexible work scheduling, part time work activities and whether shifts are arranged in agreement with employees. The study established that 50% of the respondents agree that employees are involved in arrangement of work schedules and a similar percentage find work activities in their school very interesting. This may be an indicator that the job design adopted by the schools is satisfactory. However on the other hand, 52% think that they have been denied leisure time while 28.5% complain about work activities implying there is some discontent. An equal 42.8% of the respondents agree and disagree that they have adequate time for personal activities. This is in agreement with Bernadine, (2007) assertion that such programmes enable employees to address their work and family concerns and reduce potential stress and conflict between the various life roles. An overwhelming 92.8% strongly disagree that workers can work in their school and elsewhere. This implies that the management of these schools does not tolerate part time work activities. The findings also revealed that 64% of respondents agreed that there is job rotation and sharing in their departments. This may be an indication of management policy or employee congruence and commitment in their work.
4.4.4 Employee Empowerment

The study sought to determine the extent to which employee empowerment has been practiced in the schools. The findings revealed that 64.2% agree that they have good working relations with other employees in their organization and none of the respondents disagreed meaning therefore that there is good interpersonal relationship in the organizations studied. The same proportion of respondents agreed that their bosses delegated duties to them. These findings confirm Derrick et al (2007) observation that respect to employees and among employees is important especially if it is on the basis of merit and not on personal and demographic attributes and this tends to improve loyalty to the organization. It is worth noting that all the respondents do not belong to any trade union, although 64.2% believe that trade unions are important and only 5% disagree that trade unions are important.

4.4.5 Motivation and Communication

The researcher sought to find out the extent to which communication and motivation as human resource management best practices have been adopted in secondary schools across Kisumu County. The findings indicate that 50% agree that they are treated as important and responsible workers by fellow employees. On the chances of improvement of career 57.1% disagree that they have equal opportunities to improve their careers. Staff meetings are held regularly in all organizations and 100% agree that they are given equal chances to give their opinion during the meetings. 50% of the respondents agreed that there is adequate payment structure, fair remuneration and satisfactory working condition. Further, the respondents agreed that there is fair attitude of supervisors towards
workers rights, redressing their grievances and in assignment of duties and tasks a 64 percentage points. This makes the subordinates to be satisfied with their leaders and their work, as they will perceive their leaders as being fair and in turn perform to superior’s expectations (Keller and Dansereu 1995).

4.4.6 Performance Management

The study aimed at establishing the extent to which performance management activities have been adopted. From the findings, 50% of the respondents acknowledged that their bosses help them in setting performance targets and a further 64% agreed that both subordinates and supervisors are clear about what is expected of subordinate’s performance. This is a clear indication that performance of workers is tracked with a view to improving and is in agreement with Scherer and Segal (2006) observation that some of the best practices of performance appraisal are ensuring that an organization makes performance appraisal to be part of its culture and use performance appraisal to build relationships between supervisors and employees. An overwhelming 78.5% agreed that management by objectives is widely used as performance appraisal tool. This they acknowledged took the form of inspecting work plans, records and schemes. On completion of tasks and assignment within the target time, 57% disagreed. This could have been as a result of work overload and extraneous activities teachers engage in in the course of the academic term. On ability of workers to work without supervision and cope with pressure of work 32% agreed and 57% disagreed. This could have been attributable to pressure by management to perform necessitating the close supervision. It is worth pointing out that all the respondents strongly agreed that their supervisors and coworkers helped them know how well they have performed implying that the schools have
embraced 360 degrees performance appraisal. This confirm the findings of Ouko,( 2008) that it is best to use 360 degrees performance appraisal because it creates a mutually beneficial relationship between the organization and the employees.
CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter gives a summary of the findings of the study, conclusion of the researcher as well as recommendations and suggestions for further research. The chapter also gives an outline of limitations of the study.

5.2 Summary

Private secondary schools in Kisumu County have adopted best practices in human resource management at varying degrees. While the researcher may not have sought to find out precisely who and how the human resource management functions are carried out in the schools, it is evident from the findings that these duties were carried out by the managers assisted by the head teachers. The most popular selection methods are advertisement and unsolicited applications and there is a lot of emphasis on education and professional qualifications. Employees in the schools feel the methods used in recruitment are satisfactory. On the job training through seminars and workshops is a popular practice. Employee participation levels in secondary schools in Kisumu County is a practice that is common especially having had 100% agreeing that their opinion is a sort in decision making during staff meetings. However, employees need to be allowed to form and join trade unions since 64% believe the unions are important while none belong to any trade union.
5.3 Conclusion
The findings of this study points to the need for secondary schools in Kisumu County to embrace best practices in human resource in order to reduce staff turnover and improve job satisfaction and performance. This is in view of the fact that there is general discontentment owing to the fact that 64% of respondents would not choose their current organization faced with an option. Each school needs to invest in people management practices and vary them from time to time to suit the needs of the customer. There are varied degrees of adoption of various best practices in human resource management among private secondary schools in Kisumu County and the findings will help each school to reassess their individual practices and strengthen their human resources as observed by various scholars(Pfeffer,(2004) Boxall and Steenveld (1999): Laursen and Mahnke (2000): Becker et al (1997): Huselid(1995): Ichiniowski et al (1997): Mac Duffie (1995) who have elaborated on human resource best practice strongly suggest that the same basic bundles of human resource practices tend to enhance business in all organization irrespective of particular product market strategy.

5.4 Recommendations for Policy and Practice
To improve performance of staff in private secondary schools in Kisumu County, there is need to fully embrace best practices in human resource management. This should start from planning with focus on the customer needs and the selection and recruitment based on education and professional qualifications. Training and development should be continuous. The training should be regular and consistent in view of the ever increasing need to provide quality education while performance management especially
management by objectives should be enhanced in response to the market needs. To curb employee turnover remuneration and compensation should be improved to be consistent with the work activities and increasing cost of living.

5.5 Limitations of the Study

The method of analysis of data used in the study and especially the over reliance on percentages may have created exaggerated statistical impression. The target group were deputy head teachers of the schools and it is possible the findings would have been different if other levels of employees would have been involved in the research. The research process and findings carries with itself the personal limitations and biases of the researcher.

5.6 Suggestion for Further Studies

The researcher aimed at establishing the extent of adoption of best practices in human resources management among private secondary schools in Kisumu County. Further studies therefore can be carried out on influence of best practices in human resource management on academic performance of private secondary schools in Kisumu County.
Letter of Introduction

Telegram: “Varsity” Nairobi
Fax: 4181650
Kisumu, Kenya
Telex: 22095Varsity
Mobile: 0720348080
Email: ajaleha@uonbi.ac.ke

Date: 31st August, 2013.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

The bearer of this letter Mr. Ombewa Kenneth

REGISTRATION NO: D61/61935/2010

The above named student is in the Master of Business Administration degree program. As part of requirements for the course, he is expected to carry out a study on “Adoption of best human resource management practices among private Secondary Schools in Kisumu County”

He has identified your organization for that purpose. This is to kindly request your assistance to enable him complete the study.

The exercise is strictly for academic purposes and a copy of the final paper will be availed to your organization on request.

Your assistance will be greatly appreciated.

Thanking you in advance.

Sincerely,

MR. ALEX JALEHA
CO ORDINATOR, SOB, KISUMU CAMPUS

ISO 9001:2008
The Fountain of Knowledge
Providing leadership in academic excellence
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APPENDICES

Appendix I: List of Private Secondary Schools In Kisumu County

1. Chemelil Sugar Academy
2. Covenant High School
3. DHT Secondary School
4. Highway High School
5. Jans Senior Academy
6. Liberty Secondary School
7. St Gabriel’s Seminary
8. St Patrick’s Senior Academy Tom Mboya Estate
9. St Patrick’s Senior Academy Migosi Estate
10. Jalaram Academy Kisumu
11. Kisumu Elite Academy
12. Kisumu South Adventist Secondary School
13. Muslim Secondary School
14. Salem Secondary School
15. Ebenezer Secondary School
16. Dr. Elphin Secondary School

17. Griffin Secondary School

18. Amazing Grace Girls Secondary


Appendix II: Letter of Introduction

Dear respondent,

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I’m a post graduate student undertaking a master in Business Administration (MBA) degree at the school of business, University of Nairobi. I’m currently carrying out research on extent of adoption of best human resource management practices among private secondary schools in Kisumu County. This is a requirement to complete MBA course project at the University of Nairobi.

Your School has been selected to form part of this study. This letter is to kindly request you to assist me collect data by filling out the accompanying questionnaire, which I will collect from you. The information provided will be used exclusively for academic purposes. I assure you that the information you give will be treated with strict and utmost confidence. Your name or the name of your School will not be mentioned in this research.

A copy of this project will be made to you upon request.

Thank you in advance.

Yours faithfully

OMBEWA KENNETH

D61/61935/2010

UON School of Business
Appendix III: Questionnaire

Please respond to the following questions by ticking the right box or write in the spaces where applicable.

PART 1: PERSONAL INFORMATION/ BIO DATA

Gender:

Male [ ] Female [ ]

Age:

19-26 [ ] 26-40 [ ]

40-60 [ ] 60+ [ ]

Marital Status

Single [ ] Married [ ]

Separated [ ] Divorced [ ]

Widowed [ ]

Level of education

Certificate [ ] Diploma [ ]

Degree [ ] others (specify)

...............................................

Length of service in current station
Less than 1 year [ ] 1-3 years [ ]
4-6 years [ ] 7 and above [ ]

What is your position in the school?
Owner [ ] Employee [ ]
Shareholder [ ]

Do you have professional qualifications for your current job?
Yes [ ] No [ ]

What are your terms of services?
Permanent [ ] Temporary [ ]

PART II: BEST PRACTICES IN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

1. SELECTION AND RECRUITMENT

Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree Nor Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There is a lot of fairness in the recruitment style in the organization</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education and professional qualifications</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

45
are considered during recruitment.

The attribute used in selection are good and adequate for my job.

Short listing and interviews are done before placement

Recruitment agencies are used

Past job experience is key factor during recruitment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Respond to the following statements by indicating your level of agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Statement</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training is very important to an employee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have undergone training for my current job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are chances of advancement on my job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have confidence with the manner in which promotions are carried out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I attend workshops and seminars to build my capacity in job performance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Those who want to further their studies are given study leave to develop their careers

The employee has improved in performance in light of recent training and development

Personnel and operational analysis are key to designing a training programme

The management supports career development of workers through scholarship and sponsorship

Training and development especially skills development has led to improved results

3. CLEAR JOB DESIGN

1. Please state to what extent you agree with the following statements as far as the job design in your organization is concerned.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree Nor Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shifts are arranged in agreement with employees</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>There is planned time for personal activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>My organization recognizes leisure time</td>
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<tr>
<td>I have some work activities that are</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
interesting to me

My work mates complain about work schedules

I am allowed to carry work at home

There is job rotation and sharing in my department

No flexible work schedules in our school

Part time work is allowed in this school so that I can work here and elsewhere

4. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Please state to what extent you agree with the following statement as far as performance measurement, recruitment and retention are concerned.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree Nor Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am fairly compensated for my services</td>
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<td>There is equality in the salary and other benefits</td>
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<tr>
<td>Given a chance I will still choose my</td>
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<tr>
<td>current school</td>
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<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>I like the way my performance is appraised</td>
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<td>My boss and coworkers let me know how</td>
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<td>well I have performed in my job</td>
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<td>My boss helps me in setting performance</td>
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<tr>
<td>target</td>
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<tr>
<td>Workers complete their assignment within</td>
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<td>target time</td>
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<tr>
<td>Workers produce work of good quality and</td>
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<tr>
<td>are responsible for errors and omissions</td>
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<td>Workers are able to work without</td>
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<td>supervision, cope with pressure of work</td>
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<tr>
<td>and are dependable in time of stress</td>
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<td>Workers show interest in learning more</td>
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<td>about activities of their department and</td>
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<td>school for the purpose of self development</td>
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<td>and self advancement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Workers have ability to plan and</td>
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<tr>
<td>organise their work desk and work and</td>
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<td>those of own department</td>
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<tr>
<td>Both the subordinate and supervisor are</td>
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</table>
clear about what is expected of the earliers
job performance

Management by objectives is widely used
as performance appraisal method

5. EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT, MOTIVATION AND COMMUNICATION

Please respond by a tick to what extent you agree with the following statements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree Nor Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have good working relationship with my supervisor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do you think a union is important?</td>
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<tr>
<td>I am treated as a responsible and important person</td>
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<tr>
<td>I am encouraged to develop creative and innovative ways</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employees are provided with equal opportunities to improve their careers</td>
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<tr>
<td>My boss delegates work to me</td>
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<tr>
<td>My views are respected</td>
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<tr>
<td>Workers enjoy equitable share of gains in</td>
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<tr>
<td>Productivity</td>
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<tr>
<td>There is an atmosphere of participation through joint committees, consultation and quality circles.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Workers are trained on labor and human relation skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>There is adequate communication channel between management and workers that keep workers informed about decisions affecting their interest and work</td>
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<tr>
<td>There is fair remuneration as well as adequate payment structure plus satisfactory working condition</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is fair attitude of supervisors towards workers rights and towards redressing their grievances</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. REALISTIC JOB PREVIEW

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree Nor Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Workers to be hired are allowed to have a feel of negative aspect of their job before placement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Work sampling, plant tours and films are used before hiring</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do you think turnover rates in your organization can be attributable to inflated expectations during recruitment</td>
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</table>

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION