

**REWARDS AND EMPLOYEE RETENTION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT :A CASE
STUDY OF MUKONO DISTRICT LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

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S23B42/045

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF HUMAN
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT OF UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY**

January, 2026



**UGANDA CHRISTIAN
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ABSTRACT

The research investigated the potential role of human resource management rewards in promoting employee retention in the local government of Uganda, particularly in Mukono District. The research had three objectives. To investigate the nature of rewards provided to employees in Mukono District local government, to investigate the current status of employee retention in Mukono district local government.

to investigate the relationship between employee rewards and employee retention in Mukono district Local Government, Uganda.

The research used a qualitative research approach and targeted 25 respondents using purposive and simple random sampling methods. The research used the employee checklist and group discussion methods to gather data, which was then analyzed using content analysis to analyze the qualitative data. The research results showed that the rewards dimension has a significant positive relationship between employee retention in Mukono District Local Government. retention in Kisoro District Local Government. To solve this problem, the researcher recommends that the district should create better rewards for employees and a salary structure that allocates money for employee rewards. Promotion should be fair and dependent on effective performance by employees. Additionally, the researcher recommends that the district should always provide opportunities for staff training and development for better performance and retention.

DECLARATION

DECLARATION

I KEDI WINNIE MERCY, solemnly declare that the information in this study titled "Human Resource Management rewards and Employee Retention in Local Government: A Case study of Mukono District Local Government" has never been submitted for any qualification in any academic institution



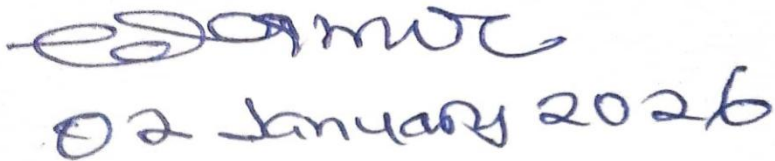
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APPROVAL

With the approval of the university supervisors, this dissertation titled " **Human Resource Management Rewards and Employee Retention in Local Government** " is ready for submission for review by examiners.



Waweru Abraham
02 January 2026

Waweru Abraham

DEDICATION.

This work is dedicated to God and my family who have been there for me in the process of doing this research.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	ii
DECLARATION	iii
APPROVAL	iv
DEDICATION	v
CHAPTER ONE.....	1
1.0 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background of the Study	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem	3
1.3 Specific Objectives.....	4
1.4 Research Questions.....	4
1.5 Geographical scope	4
1.5 Content Scope.....	5
1.6 Time scope	5
1.7 Significance of the Study.....	6
CHAPTER TWO.....	7
2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW	7
2.1 Theoretical Review.....	7
2.1.1 The Two Factor Theory by Herzberg (1959)	7
2.1.2 Abraham Maslow's Theory	8
2.3 Employee Retention	12
2.4 Employee Rewards	15

2.5 Rewards and Employee Retention	21
CHAPTER THREE.....	31
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	31
3.0 Research Methodology.....	31
3.1 Research Design	31
3.2 Study Population	31
3.4 Sampling Procedure	34
3.5 Purposive Sampling	34
3.6 Data Collection Methods	34
• Interviews.....	34
Data Collection Instruments.....	35
Interview Guide	35
Documentary Review Checklist	35
3.11 Data Collection Procedure.....	35
3.12 Trustworthiness of the Study.....	36
3.13 Ethical Considerations	36
CHAPTER FOUR.....	37
DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS	37
4.1 Introduction.....	37
4.2 Profile of Respondents.....	37
4.2.1 Gender of Respondents	37
4.2.2 Age of Respondents	37
4.2.3 Educational Qualifications.....	38
4.2.4 Length of Service	38
4.3 Objective One: Nature of Rewards Offered to Employees in Mukono	38
District Local	38

4.3.1 Monetary Incentives	38
4.3.2 Non-Monetary Rewards.....	40
4.4 Objective Two: Status of Employee Retention in Mukono District Local Government.....	41
4.4.1 Continued Service Despite Dissatisfaction	41
4.4.2 Staff Turnover Experiences	41
4.4.3 Middle-Level Management Experiences.....	41
4.5 Objective Three:	42
4.6 Conceptual framework derived from chapter four findings.....	42
4.5.1 Rewards and Willingness to Stay.....	42
4.5.2 Inadequate Rewards and Turnover Intentions	42
4.5.3 Other Factors Supporting Retention	42
4.6.1 Interpretation of the framework	43
4.6.2 Conclusion	44
CHAPTER FIVE	46
SUMMARY, DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	46
5.0 Introduction	46
5.1 Summary of Major Findings	46
5.2 Discussion of Findings.....	46
5.2.1 Nature of Rewards in Mukono District Local Government.....	46
5.2.2 Employee Retention in Mukono District Local Government.....	48
5.2.3 Relationship Between Rewards and Employee Retention	49
5.2.4 Other Factors Influencing Employee Retention	49
5.3 Conclusion	50
5.4 Recommendations.....	50

Study Limitations	51
Recommendations for Further Research.....	51
APPENDIX I: CHECKLISTS	51
NON-MONETARY REWARDS.	54
REFERENCES	59

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This study examined the relationship between employee retention and human resource management rewards in Uganda's local government sector focusing on the administration of Mukono district. In this chapter, it presented an overview of the background of the study, the statement of the problem, research objectives and research question, defines the scope of the study and presents the significance of the study. Additionally, operational definition of the terms used in **the study and the that serves as a guide for the study are presented.**

1.1 Background of the Study

Employee retention has increasingly become a major concern in human resource management as organizations have come to realize that the loss of experienced employees poses a threat to the continuity of operations and service delivery. During the last decade, the debate on employee retention has moved from providing employees with competitive salaries to adopting holistic human resource strategies that meet the psychological, career, and social needs of employees (Armstrong, 2020; Bersin, 2021). Modern human resource literature between 2020 and 2025 highlights that employees are no longer driven by financial rewards but by a combination of job security, recognition, development, and meaningful work. Strategies in retaining employees have been the development of reward programs, performance pay, career development programs, wellness programs, flexible work arrangements, and better leadership practices. All these strategies have been geared toward addressing the increasing complexity in the labor market and the changing expectations of professionals, especially the Gen Y and Z workforce, who require unique employment value propositions (Deloitte, 2023). Despite all the advances in the global arena in terms of employee retention strategies, it remains a challenge in critical sectors such as education, healthcare, and public administration due to issues of financial difficulties, inflexibility, and inconsistencies. Various nations have adopted unique strategies in retaining employees in critical sectors. In North America, there has been an extension of non-financial benefits like flexible work options, support for

professional certifications, mentorship initiatives, and mental health services following the COVID19 pandemic, which revealed weaknesses in employee well-being (SHRM, 2022). Scandinavian nations, including Norway, Denmark, and Sweden, created comprehensive reward frameworks that focused on job autonomy, reduced hierarchical control, and work-life integration, resulting in the highest retention rates in Europe (Eurofound, 2023). In Asia, Singapore, Japan, and South Korea have placed emphasis on skills enhancement and competency-based promotion structures to retain top talent in a highly competitive labor market (ILO, 2024). On the other hand, some African countries like Rwanda, Kenya, and South Africa have adopted performance contracting, staff development programs, and monetary rewards to retain key staff in the public sector, including the health and local administration departments (AU Commission, 2023). The similarity in the strategies employed worldwide shows a major shift towards a more sustainable and employee-centric approach to retention.

Despite the efforts put in by governments and institutions worldwide, the issue of brain drain remains a common phenomenon for many developing countries around the world. Uganda is no exception. The country has experienced a high rate of brain drain in the fields of science, engineering, medicine, and IT professionals seeking better remuneration packages and working conditions in other countries. According to reports by the Ministry of Finance and UBOS from 2021 to 2024, thousands of Ugandan professionals have sought jobs in OECD countries and Gulf nations. The country is currently facing a high skill gap in technical fields. The health sector is also affected by the brain drain. Nurses and medical officers from Uganda have been sought after by many institutions in Canada, the UK, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE, where they receive up to ten times what they currently receive in Uganda. In the Ugandan setting, particularly in the government employment sector, the efforts aimed at improving employee retention have not produced the desired results. Despite the reforms initiated by the Government of Uganda, including the enhancement of scientists' remuneration, the provision of housing allowances for health personnel, and pension sector reforms to enhance job security, these efforts have remained selective and patchy in the various ministries and local governments (Ministry of Public Service, 2024). Moreover, the red tape in promotions, delayed salaries, restricted training budgets, and poor recognition

schemes continue to demotivate employees, with latent turnover intentions. The public sector is also constrained by structural issues arising from centralized control of the wage bill, inflexible job grading structures, and inadequate funding for human resource development. As evident from recent studies on the Ugandan workforce between 2020 and 2025, public sector institutions are unable to match the motivational value propositions offered by private sector companies, NGOs, and international organizations that offer competitive remuneration packages, performance-based rewards, and fast-track career advancement opportunities (Kaggwa, 2022; World Bank, 2024).

Mukono District Local Government has not been spared in this challenge of retaining staff and has struggled to retain some of its brightest and best employees, especially in technical departments such as health, engineering, natural resources, and planning. It has been observed that some of the brightest and best officers have left the district for greener pastures in NGOs, private sector organizations, or international development agencies that provide more attractive rewards and opportunities for growth. Moreover, those who are left in the district are left because there are no better alternatives outside. The district has struggled to fill key posts, absorb newly hired staff in the long run, and encouraging mid-career employees who may feel stagnation as a result of long promotion cycles and lack of recognition. These challenges of retaining employees have led to talent gaps, increased pressure on the existing employees, and inefficient service delivery. The continued existence of these HR challenges in the Mukono District justifies the need for a further analysis of the role of human resource management rewards in employee retention in local governments in Uganda.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite the increased recognition of the importance of employee retention as a key component of organizational performance, local governments in Uganda continue to face difficulties in retaining qualified professionals in key departments. Although the Government of Uganda has introduced selective pay increments, limited pension reforms, and sector-related incentives for employees in Uganda, these efforts have been limited in scope and insufficiently resourced to address the effects of low pay

levels, lack of recognition schemes, limited promotion prospects, and poor career growth opportunities in local governments. The gap between employee expectations and rewards has also led to intentions to leave, low morale, and, in some instances, the loss of qualified employees to NGOs, the private sector, and the international labor market. Mukono District Local Government has also not been immune to these problems, as evidenced by the difficulties experienced in retaining officers in health, engineering, and planning departments, as well as rising workloads and service delivery gaps attributed to the loss of staff due to departures. This state of affairs presents a critical question about the significance of human resource management rewards in influencing employee retention in local government institutions, thus requiring an empirical study based on the case of Mukono District Local

1.3 Specific Objectives

The study has three specific objectives:

- i. To examine the nature of rewards offered to employees in Mukono District Local Government.
- ii. To assess the status of employee retention in Mukono District Local Government.
- iii. To establish the relationship between human resource management rewards and employee retention in Mukono District Local Government

1.4 Research Questions

- i. What is the nature of rewards offered to employees in Mukono District Local Government?
- ii. What is the status of employee retention in Mukono District Local Government?
- iii. What is the relationship between human resource management rewards and employee retention in Mukono District Local Government?

1.5 Geographical scope

The research was carried out in Mukono district Local Government, Uganda, which is located in the Central Region of Uganda, and is a very important administrative and economic area with a constantly growing population that requires the strategic management of human resources. The structure of the local government in Mukono had various departments that were supposed to offer services to the people, and thus

the efficient management of employee retention and rewards was very crucial. This geographical analysis sought to investigate the significance of human resource rewards in employee retention within the specific context of Mukono Local

Government, taking into account the specific cultural, economic, and social factors of the area. The existence of local institutions such as schools, hospitals, and local government departments presents a competitive environment for talent acquisition and retention. Economic factors in Mukono, such as the cost of living, job creation, and economic development, play a crucial role in employee retention. The local government operates in a dynamic economic environment that is influenced by inflation, local business development, and financial constraints. Thus, the integration of rewards with economic realities is of great significance.

1.5 Content Scope

The focus of the content of this study was based on the investigation of human resource rewards and their influence on employee retention within the local government in Mukono. This study was investigated through a thorough examination of literature concerning employee rewards and retention strategies, both theoretically and practically. Later, explained the situation in human resource management practices within the local government in Mukono. This included a study of the prevailing reward systems, employee satisfaction, and retention levels in order to identify areas for improvement and deficiencies. This proposal highlighted the demographics, drivers, and dreams of employees, together with the evaluation of their influence on retention and the reward factor in their choice to stay with the local government.

1.6 Time scope

Based on a retrospective analysis that has covered the last three to five years, it has been possible to have a comprehensive evaluation of the trends in employee turnover, satisfaction levels, and recruitment difficulties within Mukono Local Government. This retrospective approach made it possible to identify trends that can help understand the current situation with human resource rewards and retention.

1.7 Significance of the Study

The implications of this, were used as a basis for the management and those concerned with formulating policies to come up with the best policies and guidelines for the management of human resources in local governments which were consequently increased the number of years a staff had to work in a certain local government.

The findings of this study were used by different government authorities such as the Local Government Ministry and Public Service Ministry to help them make informed decisions about employee retention that will reduce employee turnover, expensive hiring processes and subpar efficiency in government administrative agencies.

The findings of the research were useful to students who conducted their research on the same topic and compare their findings to similar circumstances elsewhere. As a result, it added new knowledge on to the already existing knowledge for reference by other researchers.

Taking part in a research study offered a student a wide range of benefits, including the improvement of their research skills. By taking part in the research process, students were able to gain hands-on experience in coming up with research questions, coming up with a study, data collection and analysis, and coming up with conclusions from the findings. The successful completion of this study enabled the student to earn a Bachelor's degree in Human resource Management, thereby providing them with valuable academic credentials.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter gave an insight into the previous studies and researches conducted on the topic of the current research. It was important to review the literature on the topic to emphasize what other researchers have found out about the topic and identify any research gaps that are yet to be answered. This chapter assessed the literature related to the topic, including the theoretical framework, literature, and summary of the existing gaps in the literature.

2.1 Theoretical Review

To explain the variables under investigation and assessed the general association of rewards, training and performance appraisal and employee retention, this study employed the use of Herzberg's and Maslow's theories.

2.1.1 The Two Factor Theory by Herzberg (1959)

Frederick Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1959) explained the difference between hygiene and motivating factors. It is significant to note that a factor can never be both motivating and hygiene. Motivators are those things which are inherently motivating, such as effort, recognition, and responsibility. Hygiene factors also include external motivators such as status, job security, and compensation. While the absence of hygiene factors may lead to dissatisfaction and the presence of motivating factors may lead to satisfaction, these two factors cannot be perceived as competing with each other.

Frederick Herzberg wrote about the subject of job motivation in his Two-Factor Theory. In an attempt to describe overall job satisfaction, the theory describes two factors, or aspects: motivators and hygiene factors. Unlike the absence of hygienic factors in the work environment, the presence of motivator factors in a job can lead employees to be satisfied; whereas the absence of these factors can decrease the level of contentment. The environment and context of the job are referred to by hygiene factors. This may include compensation, secure jobs, status, and others. The

characteristics of the job itself are what motivate individuals, and these factors include hard work, recognition, and responsibility.

Herzberg argues that the motivation comes from the actual work. Therefore, taking into consideration the nature of the work, it is important to give the work to the best employees. The theory put forward by Herzberg suggested that an employee should have a good job to start with if you want them to work well, retain them, and perform good work. It is important for employers to consider both factors to improve productivity and not to think that increased satisfaction leads to decreased unhappiness. Therefore, the study by Herzberg indicates that anyone would respond positively to a job that has strong motivational factors. The relationship between the variables being studied was clarified by the application of this theory. Herzberg twofactor theory argues that hygienic factors and motivational factors cannot on their own ensure employee motivation and reduce employee unhappiness. The Mukono district Local Government must find the right balance between the motivational factors and the hygiene factors in order to meet the special needs of the staff if they are to ensure that the staff are motivated, retained, and well satisfied at the same time. Local government managers must ensure that the right balance is achieved, with more emphasis being placed on the sanitary aspects that are more effective in reducing discontent since dissatisfaction would definitely affect both positively and negatively the retention of staff.

2.1.2 Abraham Maslow's Theory

Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory was used to explain the problem of employee retention. The theory that was developed in 1943 explains how human resources can be managed in order to ensure that the staff are satisfied. The theory explains that there are five needs that motivate employees and these needs are in order of importance from the most to the least critical.

As per the theory of hierarchy of needs, the basic need that drives employees is their physiological needs, followed by safety needs and the need for affiliation or belongingness. These three needs are classified as lower-level needs. The remaining two needs, self-esteem and self-actualization, are classified as higher-level needs. In

order to ensure the survival and safety of an employee, it is necessary for the company to provide them with adequate heat, air, and base pay. This satisfied their need for safety and protection against harm. Social needs comprise the need to associate with others and the need to experience love and belongingness. These needs influence an employee's need for favorable relations with their superiors, participation in work groups, and excellent relations with co-workers in the workplace. Self-esteem and self-actualization needs are the last two. The need for esteem is the need for recognition and respect, which can be gained through such things as job responsibility, achievement, appreciation, and attention in an organization. Self-actualization is the pursuit of personal growth, creativity, and job satisfaction. It is the realization of one's full potential and the need to constantly improve oneself through self-improvement and development. This claim is supported by the finding that the regular distribution of rewards to the best-performing employees by local governments can diminish their effectiveness as rewards and cause them to be considered normal benefits.

In order to ensure that employees are retained, the human resource management of the Mukono district Local Government must be able to meet the needs of the employees at all levels. The needs are shown in the figure below.

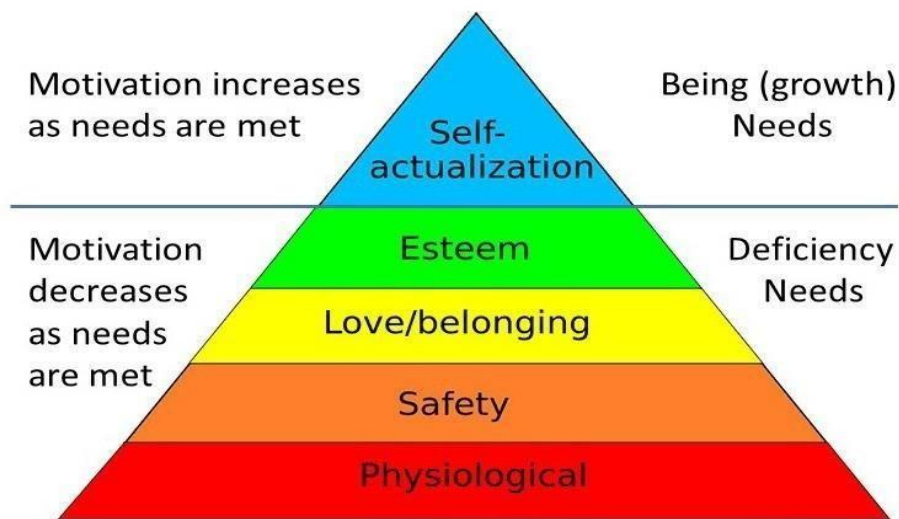


Figure 2.1 Hierarchy of needs

Consistent with Maslow, individuals must first satisfy the deficit needs at the lower levels of need before satisfying the growth needs at the higher levels. He admitted that his previous statements had given the impression that one need must be satisfied before another need emerges but continued to explain that the satisfaction of a need is not an "all-or-none" proposition.

This five-level theory can be classified according to the needs for deficit and growth. The highest level is called growth or being needs, while the other four levels are sporadically referred to as deficiency needs (D-needs) or B-needs.

The deficiency needs progress due to dispossession and are thought to motivate people when they are not satisfied. Moreover, the longer these needs are unmet, the stronger the motivation to satisfy them will be. For instance, a worker's discouragement will increase the longer she/he remains without food that ultimately leads to decreased performance.

If the deficit need is "more or less" satisfied, it will disappear, and our activities will then frequently be focused on satisfying the next set of unmet needs. These then become our preeminent needs. However, once they are satisfied, growth needs are still there and may even become stronger. Physiological needs are the most basic needs for the survival of human beings, such as air, food, water, shelter, clothing, warmth, sleep, and sexual needs. These needs are biological in nature, and if they are not fulfilled, the human body will not be able to function at its best. Maslow thought that physiological needs were given priority over all other needs because, without fulfilling these needs, all other needs become secondary. Given the fact that the lack of fulfillment of their basic needs affects their performance, it is clear that the Mukono district Local Government employees need a lot of money in order to be able to perform their duties.

If the first level of needs of an individual (physiological needs) are fulfilled and satisfied, then the next level of needs, such as security and safety, are also fulfilled.

Employees need a sense of control, predictability, and direction in life at work. These needs can be fulfilled by the family and society, such as schools, police, business, and medical facilities). These needs include psychological safety, financial safety (including

work and social benefits), law and order, confidence, societal cohesion, possession, health and wellness (such as safety from accidents and injuries).

As per Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, the third level of human needs is belongingness. The need for social interactions and interpersonal relationships can be fulfilled only when the physiological and safety needs are met. The needs of belongingness are friendship, closeness, trust, acceptance, and giving and receiving love and affection from coworkers.

The fourth level of Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory is esteem. It is further divided into two categories. The first category includes the need for power, success, self-sufficiency, assurance, independence, and autonomy. The second category includes the need for recognition, respect, appreciation, importance, and admiration from others. If the employees are not recognized and appreciated for their efforts, they may look for other job opportunities that will satisfy their esteem needs.

The fifth and most difficult level to attain in Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory is self-actualization. Self-actualization is the need for self-realization, realization of one's potential, and personal growth and development of an employee.

If the needs of the employees are satisfied in the correct order of their importance, Maslow's theory states that they will be completely committed to the organization and will look for opportunities to excel. Maslow's theory explains why employees who have their needs satisfied tend to be loyal to the organization for their entire lifetime. Hence, communication is the key because through it, one understands what the employees need to be motivated to be more committed to their job and be more knowledgeable and productive.

2.2 Empirical Literature

In this section, the empirical literature that is relevant to the objectives of this study has been discussed. The literature review was aimed at exploring the relationship between rewards, training, and performance appraisal and employee retention in the local government.

2.3 Employee Retention

Human resources and functions were an integral part of the development and success of organizations. Generally, the term HR encompasses a range of approaches that organizations have adopted to manage their human resources effectively (Alajlani ,Yesufu et al., 2022). The procedures and policies that affect the behavior, performance, and attitudes of employees are covered under these (Alajlani , Yesufu et al., 2022).

One of the most essential sectors in every nation is the banking sector. The mentioned sector is the backbone of the economy and the nation (Shah et al., 2020). It helps in the development of the economy, promotes economic growth, aids in the creation of new opportunities, and helps in giving millions of people new opportunities and jobs (Shah et al., 2020). While analyzing the case study of Qatar, it is important to note that in 2020, there were 2.4 million people of working age, which was an increase of 1% from the previous year (Planning and Statistics Authority, 2020). Moreover, half of the workforce was categorized as skilled and university graduates (Planning and Statistics Authority, 2020). However, despite the rising number of the active workforce, it was the need of the hour to hire and retain professionals.

As stated by Khatun et al., “Retaining potential employees is one of the biggest and long-term investment decisions that banks need to focus on in order to succeed and grow in this highly competitive and challenging environment” (Khatun et al., 2023). In this case, HR retention that involve maintaining the level of satisfaction have played an important role. The level of job satisfaction is affected by a variety of different factors, such as employee sales, job rotation, career development, time management, job performance, and teamwork (Abboud, 2021). In this way, it is possible to understand the complexity of the HR frameworks in the various sectors.

The strategies and recommendations proposed are different and holistic. Some authors, such as Hanai and Pallangyo (2020), argue that “because fair pay is one of the most valued elements of compensation, management should design and implement retention programs that consider this factor.” Moreover, to improve employee retention, bank managers need to focus on the right retention policies (Hanai & Pallangyo, 2020).

However, others, like a consulting firm, PwC (price water house coopers), argue that employers in need need to focus on attracting new talent and retaining talented employees because of the great resignation of 2023 (PwC, 2022). Finally, another consulting firm, KPMG (2019), argues that the problem of having the right set of skills and knowledge needs to be tackled for improved retention and development.

Employee retention is far more than just an HR activity; rather, it is an extremely important

strategic driver that symbolizes the health of an organization. It entails the organizational

echoes that are thoughtfully designed to retain the employees in an organization for an extended period of time. High retention levels are an extremely good indicator of an excellent work environment, good leadership skills, and good management skills in an organization. The advantages of having high retention levels in an organization are twofold:

it helps in saving huge costs due to the avoidance of incurring high costs in the recruitment, selection, and training of new employees in an organization. In addition, retaining employees in an organization also helps in maintaining precious organizational knowledge, creating better client relationships due to constant points of contacts, and enhancing organizational morale. High employee turnover could also be an indicator of underlying problems in an organization that may include poor management skills, an unhealthy work environment, or substandard compensation packages offered in an organization. As per Armstrong (2023), Michael Armstrong, an illustrious expert in the field of HRM, proposed an important strategic definition of employee retention. Armstrong: “It is ‘the systematic effort of an organization to create an environment which engages employees for the long term, encouraging them to stay with the company through a combination of policies and practices designed to satisfy their workrelated needs.’” It is highly effective because it shifts the paradigm from the result to a deliberate and strategic approach by the organization. The most crucial words in this definition are “systematic effort” and

“combination of policies and practices,” which mean that employee retention is not achieved through a single approach but through a multi-faceted approach. It includes everything from talent management to performance management and, most importantly, reward management. Armstrong’s perspective is centered on the organization’s efforts to create an attractive employee value proposition that satisfies a multitude of needs, from basic financial rewards to higher-order needs of recognition, development, and meaning.

Wayne Cascio (2023), "the art and science of retaining the employees you want to retain, for as long as you need them, by understanding and addressing the factors that drive their commitment and loyalty." It also points out several subtleties. First, it points out that it is not about retaining all employees, it is about retaining the key employees, the high performers, those with key skills. It is also about the "art and science" part. It means that although metrics and analytics (quantitative) can help understand what drives turnover, there is also the "art" of leadership, understanding, and developing a strong culture is also important. Finally, he highlights the importance of understanding the particular, and often individual, "factors that drive commitment," implying that a generic approach to retention is less successful than a more targeted approach that addresses the different needs of the different workforce.

In this research, analysis reveals that arguments, it is evident that employee retention is a complex, multi-dimensional phenomenon. It is both a strategic plan as outlined by Armstrong (2024), a satisfaction of a relational contract psychological approach, a specific management approach, casio wayne (2023), a fundamental competitive competency organizational ability, and a vital financial necessity economic viewpoint. A modern and integrated perspective on employee retention recognizes that it cannot be achieved through compensation alone. Instead, it requires a particular and organization-wide focus on creating a context in which employees feel valued, respected, developed, and appropriately compensated. This context is the basis on which long-term commitment and loyalty are built, securing the human capital needed for success.

An organization that can retain its talent better than its competition has greater operational stability, makes more informed decisions about long-term investments, and

develops a deeper body of institutional knowledge. This is accomplished by a foundation of strong leadership, a positive and inclusive corporate culture, equitable HR practices, and a strong value proposition that motivates employees to stay. From this viewpoint, the departure of key employees represents not only a failure of the HR department but a failure of strategy that can have a negative impact on the market position of the organization.

These examples demonstrate that, when examined, it becomes clear that employee retention is a complex and multifaceted issue.

It is at the same time a strategic outcome (Armstrong), a satisfaction of a relational contract (psychological perspective), a focused management activity (according to Cascio), a fundamental competitive advantage (organizational capability), and an absolute financial necessity (economic perspective). A contemporary and comprehensive understanding of the subject recognizes that employee retention cannot be a function of compensation. Employee retention is a purposeful and organizational effort to build a culture in which employees are valued, respected, developed, and compensated. This culture is the foundation in which commitment and loyalty are created to ensure the human asset required for success.

2.4 Employee Rewards

Employee rewards are the complete package of financial and non-financial rewards provided to employees in return for their contribution, time, skills, and commitment. Historically, employee rewards have been considered just wages and salaries. But the concept of rewards has had a radical transformation. Today, it is defined as a whole system that is a crucial part of an organization's strategy to attract, motivate, and, most importantly, retain the brightest and the best. A good rewards system is a direct communication channel, which communicates to the employees what the organization values and how it views their contribution. It is a powerful tool for shaping workplace behavior, cultural values, and aligning individual performance with the overall business strategy. A bad rewards system can lead to demotivation, turnover, and conflicts within the organization, while a good rewards system can be a powerful tool for shaping sustainable employee engagement and performance.

Motivation is the psychological component that excites a being to act towards a desired goal; it is the activation of a purpose-oriented behavior. There are two types of motivation, namely: intrinsic, which is motivated by the enjoyment of the task itself, and extrinsic, which is derived from external sources outside the individual. An incentive scheme is a specified process used to motivate or exhort a specified group of people to perform certain actions or behaviors over a specified period of time.

Rewards, according to Evans (2021), tend to be associated with the achievement of some specified goals, whether individual, team, or business goals, or a combination of all these. The rewards received have proven to be of utmost importance to the individual as well as the business. Generally, the business or company rewards include maintaining the existing workforce, developing team building, improving productivity, improving motivation and commitment levels of the employees, and linking the business and the individual. In addition, there is also improving business performance (Evans, 2007).

Rewards have been defined by Armstrong and Brown (2023) as: "Rewards are all forms of financial return, concrete service and benefit, and social or psychological return received by the individual as part of the employment relationship." This discussion is basic because it identifies rewards in three distinct forms:

Financial rewards comprise base salary, bonus, and stock options.

Tangible services and rewards comprise health insurance, pension schemes, and company cars.

More importantly, rewards comprise psychological or relational rewards, which are intangible rewards like employee recognition, job security, status, autonomy, and a sense of belonging.

This broad-based understanding is important because it recognizes that what employees really need is far more than their salaries, and a successful rewards strategy must take all these aspects into consideration.

Total Rewards Framework, The

The Total Rewards approach, as suggested by professional associations like World at Work, is a strategic approach to rewards in which rewards are understood as a single, holistic process with five core elements:

Compensation

Benefits

Work-Life Balance

Tangible services and rewards

Relational or psychological rewards Performance & Recognition: Processes for measuring performance and recognizing employees formally and/or informally.

Development & Career Opportunities: Programs that provide learning, skill-building, and career development opportunities within the organization. This approach assumes that, collectively, all five components are significantly more effective in attracting, motivating, and retaining employees than any one component alone. This approach asks not what we pay, but what is the total value of working with us?

Motivational Theory Perspective (Vroom's Expectancy Theory):

Vroom's Expectancy Theory is a part of a broader body of work known as Expectancy Theory, which is a psychological perspective on what is considered an effective reward. According to Vroom, "an effective reward is not an objective but a subjective motivator whose effectiveness is contingent upon three cognitive factors: Expectancy, Instrumentality, and Valence." That is, "an effective reward is one which, if given, will motivate an individual to perform and contribute to retention, if it is a) attractive to the individual (high valence), and b) clearly and transparently linked to performance (high instrumentality), and c) if the individual perceives that he can perform at a level sufficient to attain a reward (high expectancy)."

Milkovich and Newman (2024) Milkovich and Newman, in their classic work on compensation, a definition defines rewards as follows: "Rewards are the monetary and non-monetary returns an organization makes to an employee as compensation for their time, effort, and skills." They go on to make a very important distinction between extrinsic rewards, which are those that are administered by the employer (such as money, bonuses, benefits, and promotions), and intrinsic rewards, which are those that are derived from the task itself (such as feelings of achievement, personal development,

interesting work, and recognition by coworkers). Their point is that both are necessary. Organizations can control the extrinsic rewards, but they have to structure the job and the culture to promote intrinsic motivation.

Strategic HRM discussions In Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM), rewards are described as the key method of ensuring that workers' behavior is aligned with the strategic vision of the organization. A strategic reward system is specifically designed to reward those competencies, behaviors, and performance outcomes that are most important for the achievement of the organization's mission and competitive strategy. For instance, a firm pursuing innovation will reward risk-taking and patent development, while a firm competing on customer service will reward customer satisfaction scores. This description highlights the rewards system as a strategic approach to shaping the culture and managing performance in the organization, ensuring that what is rewarded is what is valued, and what is valued is what drives the organization forward.

As per (McShane et al, 2020), Many people have been wondering whether incentives actually make any difference to the performance of an organization. But many studies have shown clearly that there is a very strong link between incentives and improved employee performance (McShane et al, 2020). Moreover, there is a very strong consensus that incentives and rewards are a very credible and effective means of improving performance. Although other articles tend to deny this fact, one would then like to know why most of the highly performing organizations include both the shortterm and long-term incentives in their schemes

In support of this claim, the Total reward theory, argues that employees will demonstrate improved performance if they feel appreciated by the organization they are working for (Ericson, 2019). All organizations are therefore encouraged to provide an environment that uses incentives and rewards as a means of improving the performance of employees. There are different types of employee incentives and rewards, which assist in increasing the performance of employees. Incentives are designed to have positive impacts on both the organization and the employees; some of the benefits that can be gained include increased performance of the business,

decreased wastage of funds due to staff turnover and recruitment, a more dedicated and passionate workforce, improved staff behaviors, (McShane, et al.,2020).

As per (Ericson, 2019) Firstly, financial incentives assist the employee in concentrating on the accomplishment of a specific target. In this way, the business also gets the benefit of accomplishing its target, and the employees receive value in the form of money. The additional benefit or value received by an individual results in additional output. Secondly, non-monetary or non-financial incentives mostly assist in having more attachment to the business or organization. The priorities and lifestyles of the employee are taken into consideration in this regard, thus increasing his/her productivity. Additionally, when incentives and rewards are provided to teams or groups, they assist in playing as a team. In this way, ideas and knowledge are shared. Consequently, the poor performance of an individual can be improved by interacting with others (Ericson, 2019).

However, there are some limitations of Employee incentive programs. Firstly, the effectiveness of incentives and rewards is short-lived. Most Incentive programs are commonly known to last for only a short period, and as time elapses, the connection between incentives and the employee performance loses its meaning.

Mostly, the incentives used today to yield positive returns become obsolete with time and the next time such a return is needed, the reward will look like an 'expected' rather than an 'incentive'. It is true that there are benefits in the short run but it is people's nature to quickly forget the favor accorded to them in the past (Lee and Seda, 2020). Moreover, when the program is not well planned and implemented, the workforce tends to be unhappy while other employees become distrustful.

Sometimes, these incentives lead to poor communication especially when the employees feel that the criterion used for rating best performance was unjustified (Dessler and Varkkey, 2019). Additionally, some employers fail to provide effective information to their employees; for instance, a manager who does not open up and discuss candidly with his employees, makes the employees also to be reserved.

Additionally, hidden information can result to problems especially if the manager assumes that the employees already know what is expected of them (Lee and Seda, 2020). Moreover, poor communication can result from overloading of information. When a lot of information is given in excess of what the receiver can decode, the information may end up being distorted or omitted (McShane and Glinow, 2021).

Other findings by researchers showed that retaining good employees for a long period of time by tempting them with incentives is harmful. This is particularly true to some extent, especially when the employee is neither challenged nor stimulated and there is no room for growth and development in terms of career advancement. Furthermore, it is fallacious to retain employees on both sides when there is no growth, since the employee is no longer enthusiastic and innovative when there is no learning. He is not able to keep up to date with the ever-advancing business environment and thus the stream of new prospects, new insights, and views is impeded (Rynes et al, 2018). It is thus prudent to look for value-adding factors in the long-serving employees to see if they are just a burden to the company or an asset. Furthermore, it is extremely important for managers to let go and give an opportunity for the unchallenged employees to take advantage of other environments rather than retaining them with rewards and benefits. Moreover, it is extremely true that ‘achieving what you are expected to achieve for the sake of achieving is no source for motivation’ but rather, a person’s quality of life must gain too (Jeffrey and Shaffer, 2022).

In addition, some incentives create pressure on the team leaders, especially when the incentive is required to come from them; and in most cases, the team leaders end up spending a lot of their time and energy coercing the team members to perform better in order to get their incentive. This is at the expense of concentrating on leading the employees, as well as helping them to realize and achieve their full potential. This, in turn, becomes demotivating to the team leader (McShane and Glinow, 2021). In addition, the incentives and rewards, which are in monetary forms, have been known to sometimes be non-effective. For example, when the employees’ expectations are higher than the reward they get, a gap is likely to be created between the members of the party.

Companies have been known to put in place HR systems or programs that have the potential of motivating the employees; and if this is done correctly, the incentive programs and rewards are a very effective tool for improvement. A good incentive program has the potential of motivating even the secondary performers to success . However, the application of a well-designed and planned model of rewarding employees cannot be overlooked by organizations.

2.5 Rewards and Employee Retention

The relationship between organizational reward systems and employee retention is one of the most extensively examined in the area of Human Resource Management. A definitive research evidence from 2023 to 2025 confirms that the design, fairness, and completeness of rewards are not only contributing factors but are the key determinants of an employee's choice to remain with or depart from an organization. This is a twoway relationship in which attractive rewards provide a strong "pull" force that holds employees to the organization, and substandard or perceived unfair rewards provide a crucial "push" force that propels them towards the door. This section will analyze this research by providing new empirical evidence and international studies that demonstrate how poor rewards trigger turnover in different industries.

This research examined a description According to Hanai and Pallangyo (2020), since fair compensation is one of the most valued aspects of compensation, local government set up and execute retention programs that consider this. Moreover, to ensure employee retention, the local government must pay special attention to the right retention rules (Hanai & Pallangyo, 2020). another consulting firm, KPMG (2019), argues that the problem of having the right set of skills and knowledge will be handled for better retention and development.

Analysis and understanding of the correlation between HR rewards and employee retention in the local government is vital. Can easily develop strategies to enhance their processes and build an environment that supports employee satisfaction, engagement, and retention. In these situations, understanding the specific HR practices can make a huge difference in retention.

This research examined (Bartlow & Harris, 2021) the call for the complete rewards package, in addition to the average salary, which comprises savings for retirement,

vacations, work-life balance, growth in career education opportunities, and wellness programs . There are also required and voluntary benefits such as disability insurance, financial advice, and serious illness coverage (Bartlow & Harris, 2021). Overall, the sum of the employee's financial and non-financial rewards is the total reward.

It can be said that the worth of the total reward is the general enhancement of the image of the company from the viewpoint of the employees, who discover it more desirable to work. The worth of the financial reward is apparent since it enables the employee to decide how to spend the amount. The company does not control how the money the individual gets from the company is spent, and all employees can discover how to spend it effectively.

The worth of non-monetary compensation is more complex as it involves social, health, and educational benefits and flexibility of working hours (Bartlow & Harris, 2021). These benefits enable the employee to select the best way to avail the benefits of the total rewards package. In all instances, the employee will avail the benefits they require, which will improve the image of the company. The additional benefits will make the company distinct from its competitors, and they will retain skilled professionals in the company.

This research paper has discussed The PwC Global Workforce Hopes and Fears Survey (2023): PwC's global survey, which involved tens of thousands of employees, offered a grim reminder of the significance of financial fairness. The research findout that employees who felt they were being paid fairly were significantly less likely to be actively looking for a new job. However, the research introduces an important contemporary twist: pay transparency was a critical mediator in this relationship. In companies where pay bands and the logic of compensation decisions were not transparent, even high levels of compensation could be seen as unfair, driving turnover intentions. The research concluded that transparency fosters trust, increases compensation, and helps employees feel more confident that they are being treated equitably, thereby strengthening their commitment to the organization and reducing their susceptibility to poaching.

This research investigated the argument by Joseph Ekhayemhe and Oguzie (2023) on the measuring of whether rewards have a relationship with motivation of staff in some selected not for profit organizations in Abuja, Nigeria. The motivation of the staff is especially investigated in this research in relation to intrinsic rewards, extrinsic rewards, and both. Extrinsic rewards and the motivation of staff are positively and statistically significantly correlated, as per the data analysis by Spearman correlation and multiple regression methods. Intrinsic rewards, however, do not have a significant influence on the level of motivation of staff. This research was conducted in non-profit organizations in Nigeria and did not focus on rewards and employee motivation that could not explain the context of local government in Uganda. For example, what influenced the high retention rate in local governments and how rewards influence retention. Moreover, this research is conducted with a representative sample that is small, and therefore, this type of research is required in Mukono district Local Government

Kampororo (2021) did a research to establish the effect of the reward system used by Rwanda's public institutions on the performance of employees, as a case study of the Rwanda Housing Authority, using a correlational and explanatory research design. The research data is analyzed, and it was established that the use of the reward system by Rwanda Housing Authority had an effect on the performance of employees in different ways, with a mean score value of 4.48; recognition of performance scores stood at

4.41; career development scores stood at 4.45; and employee benefits scores stood at 4.42. The study established that employees of Rwanda Housing Authority perform their job duties and tasks at a high level with a mean of 4.36, working in teams with a mean of 4.46, dependability level with the mean value of 4.27, task completion by employees had a mean score value of 4.29, and creativity with a mean value of 4.44.

Moreover, the results will indicate a significant positive relationship between employees' performance and the factors of the reward system,. The results of the regression analysis on the relationship between the rewards of the Rwanda Housing Authority and staff performance indicate that salary, appreciation programs,

occupation development programs, and employee benefits have a significant positive effect on staff performance respectively). This study did not indicate the rewards' impact on the long stay of staff in the Rwanda Housing Authority. However, the current study was fascinating in indicating the rewards' impact on staff retention in the Mukono district Local government.

In a case study carried out by Ntirandekura and Mushamba (2022) on non-monetary rewards and staff performance at the National Water and Sewerage Corporation in Western Uganda, it was found that promotions can improve employee retention, reduce labor turnover, and increase staff productivity. Additionally, the career development reward system has a significant effect on employee performance, and promotions can motivate employees to perform better. However, the study was based on a public corporation, and the scenario may be different in local governments where monetary gains are limited. The gap in the study is that it only concentrates on a public corporation, which may not be representative of other local government institutions with different reward schemes and financial constraints. Moreover, the study did not investigate the types of non-monetary rewards that have the most important effect on employee retention and productivity. Therefore, further studies could concentrate on the identification of the most important non-monetary rewards for employee retention and performance in local government institutions.

The study was carried out by Emmanuel (2022) examined the effectiveness of reward systems as a motivational tool for employees in the Irish financial sector. The study found that while non-financial rewards may add to the motivational factor, monetary rewards were preferred by most of the participants in the study.

It is important to note that the research was conducted in a developed economy and therefore, the rewards offered could not be entirely applicable to a developing country such as Uganda, which is the subject of this current research. Moreover, the research did not indicate the geographical location of the financial sector on which the research was conducted.

Karani (2024) employed a correlational research methodology to examine the relationship between rewards and employees' performance in Transoia National Police Service in Kenya. Based on the survey, NPS employees received a range of rewards, which include compensation and allowances, paid time off for vacation and sick leave, discounts on purchases, their preferred work assignments, the highest level of security while on the job, and pay equity. karani (2019) failed to clarify the manner in which rewards could shape the willingness of employees to continue to serve in the context of local government. Moreover, the research employed correlational research design and employed three theories to establish the foundation of his study but the current study employed cross sectional research design and also employed two theories of Maslow and Two factor theories to establish the relationship between employee retention and rewards in the context of local governments in Uganda.

Based on Gartner's Research leading American research and advisory firm study on Hybrid Work Rewards ,2024) Gartner's research shows that there is a paradigm shift in what makes a reward valuable. The 2024 data show that organizations that formally incorporated flexibility into their Total Rewards structure, giving it the same weight as healthcare or retirement benefits, saw an astonishing 15% lower voluntary turnover rate. This study shows that for the vast majority of the workforce, the ability to control where and when they work is a non-negotiable form of compensation. Organizations that required a hard return to the office without a good reason were, in effect, imposing a flexibility penalty, resulting in a direct brain drain to competitors who offered more flexibility, proving that non-financial rewards can be as powerful as financial rewards.

McKinsey & Company's study on "The Great Attrition" (2023): McKinsey's study on the talent movement post-pandemic identifies that the lack of opportunities for career growth and development is one of the top three reasons why people voluntarily leave their organizations. The authors of the study make it clear that employees, particularly in knowledge economies, view their job as a vehicle for their own personal and professional development. If the organization does not provide clear career paths, effective learning opportunities, and internal mobility, employees felt stuck and underappreciated. Organizations that made serious efforts to develop talent

marketplaces, mentorship programs, talent development tools, and so on were far more successful at retaining ambitious employees. This study considers career development as a reward for retention, which is not peripheral but central to an organization's commitment to its people.

In the case study of Ntirandekura and Mushamba (2022) on non-monetary rewards and staff performance at the National Water and Sewerage Corporation in Western Uganda, it is revealed that promotion can lead to improved employee retention, decreased labor turnover, and increased staff productivity. Additionally, the career development reward system plays a significant role in employee performance, and promotion can encourage employees to perform better. However, the study was based on a public corporation, and the scenario may be different in local governments where financial rewards are restricted. The limitation of the study is that it was based on a single public corporation, which may not be representative of other local government institutions with different reward systems and financial constraints. In addition, the study will examine the particular types of non-monetary rewards that have the most important influence on employee retention and productivity. Therefore, further study may concentrate on finding the most effective non-monetary rewards for staff retention and performance in local government institutions.

In a case study According to Hansel (2019), attractive compensation packages that are constant and paid on time have a tendency to draw in and keep employees. The benefits include both monetary rewards such as fixed and variable compensation, as well as non-financial rewards such as recognition, appreciation, achievement, advancement, accountability, responsibility, and a host of other things. Highhouse (2020) also emphasizes the importance of employees accepting remuneration paid to them and one practice among many in administration that could moreover increase or decrease concentration, teamwork, and productivity. Therefore, in order to encourage employee retention, the rewards provided to staff in local governments should be consistent with the techniques for managing and support instead of working against their effect. Moreover, there is a need for further research on the types of rewards that are most effective in retaining employees in local governments. There is a need for

more research to understand the role of training in retaining employees and the types of training programmed that are most effective in local governments.

In a study done by Josh Bersin Company, a leading analyst firm in the business world based in California, on the book of Definitive Guide to Retention (2025), it was found in a holistic study of over 1,200 companies that the maturity of a company's rewards program was a key differentiator. Organizations with what they called Systemic Rewards, a highly integrated approach that combines dynamic elements of fair pay, holistic well-being benefits, a recognition culture, and plenty of opportunities for growth, saw employee retention rates that were 2.5 times higher than those with a more traditional, siloed, and compensation-centric approach. This study makes a compelling point that the sum of a well-designed rewards program is indeed greater than its parts. It is the highly personalized blend of all the components that provides an environment where employees simply can't imagine a better place to work. A Case Study (KPMG, 2023) by local government Bringing the focus back to the public sector context hint in your original file, a KPMG report from 2023 investigated retention in local governments. It was discovered that local governments experiencing a brain drain of technical employees (such as IT professionals and engineers) to the private sector were able to successfully mitigate this issue by performing regular pay equity and market pricing studies. By openly adjusting salary ranges to be more competitive with the private sector, these local governments were able to experience a significant reduction in turnover for these key, hard-to-fill positions. This case study directly and empirically verifies the claim made by Hand and Pallangue (2020) that fair compensation is a key principle of retention in local government, as even public sector organizations must contend with the market-driven component of compensation.

The Cost of Poor Rewards (MIT Sloan, 2023) A classic study from MIT Sloan Management Review offered the contrast by examining the underlying drivers of turnover during the Great Resignation. It found that a toxic corporate culture was the single most important predictor of industry-adjusted turnover. Most importantly, the number one driver of a toxic corporate culture was found to be unfair and inequitable compensation practices.

This is a staggering finding because it links poor rewards to a toxic corporate culture. When the workforce perceives that rewards and promotion are not merit-related, are discriminatory, or simply not competitive enough, it creates resentment, destroys trust, and cultivates an atmosphere of injustice. This study aptly demonstrates that poor rewards not only result in the loss of employees but also create an atmosphere that pushes employees away.

Eagle Hill Consulting on Burnout and Pay (2024) The Eagle Hill study has aptly established a causal relationship between poor rewards and employee well-being and turnover. The 2024 national survey carried out by Eagle Hill has found that nearly half of all employees experiencing burnout cited poor pay as a significant reason. This creates a vicious cycle where the underpaid employee is compelled to put in extra hours or even take up a second job to keep their ends met, resulting in burnout. The stress and lack of recognition for their hard work make them look for jobs elsewhere. This study aptly establishes the monetary aspect of rewards and their influence on mental health, establishing that fair compensation is not just a monetary issue but a critical component of employee well-being and a safeguard against burnout-related turnover.

One of the strongest tools for recruitment is the revelation of the total rewards that employees receive. It allows job seekers to have a better understanding of all the benefits that come with working with the organization, allowing them to make a more informed decision about the job offer. More than forty percent of employees state that they would take a job that pays less for better rewards such as flexibility of schedule and teleworking opportunities (Hur et al., 2018). Moreover, the survey respondents

state that teleworking is equivalent to a 4.1% increase in pay, while flexible working hours are equivalent to a 9% increase in pay (Hur et al., 2018). The company can recruit the best and brightest employees and convince those who are waiting in line to accept the job offer by being open about these rewards in job descriptions. The total rewards element is essential in the recruitment and retention of employees because it indicates that the organization cares about the needs of the employees. It is essential for the professional self-esteem of job seekers who have extraordinary qualities (Hur et al., 2018). Moreover, it differentiates the company from the other offers in the market. At the same time, it does not decrease the quality of their performance, which is essential for business. Health insurance provided is essential in supporting the physical and emotional well-being of the employees, who understand that the company cares for them. The organization's educational opportunities allow employees to grow professionally and develop. People value these opportunities because they require time and money if the company does not propose them as part of the total reward package. Companies typically determine the individual overall compensation of each employee and present it to them in the form of a total awards declaration, either alongside a letter of offer for recruits or during annual performance assessments for workers. Employees will better appreciate the value of their employment with the business (Fang et al., 2019). They will be better aware of all the internal initiatives their organization has implemented to support them as individuals and professionals.

It is possible to describe the employee value proposition as the cost the company is ready to pay for their work. This notion includes the total rewards price and the salary the worker receives officially. Therefore, the value of the employee is the combination of the components mentioned earlier that the company is ready to provide. The employee value proposition should correspond to the level the worker perceives, or it should be better so that the employee will not feel humiliated (Fang et al., 2019). People typically make their choices concerning the new place of work based on the rewards and compensation the company can offer them.

According to Smith (2022), money can entice employees into a company, but it doesn't always keep them there. He continues by saying that while money can make an employee happy, it will not keep them around. Money is not regarded as the main factor in retention (Brannick, 2019). According to the past research, occupational schemes were first formed by UK organizations in 19th and early 20th century periods because of their retention impact. Therefore, it is debatably correct in the context of this study to say that while pensions can affect employee tenure, they range from one country to another, one organization to another and are dissimilar to those of government.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Research Methodology

This chapter highlights the methods used in carrying out the research. It outlines the research design, study population, sampling methods and size, data collection methods and tools, data collection procedure, trustworthiness of the research, data analysis, and ethical considerations.

3.1 Research Design

The qualitative research method was used to gain in-depth information on human resource management rewards, training, performance appraisal, and their impact on employee retention. This research method enabled the respondents to give their views freely, hence allowing the collection of in-depth information needed to understand employee retention in local governments in Uganda, specifically in Mukono District Local Government.

3.2 Study Population

The study population is the group of people from which the research results are generalized. The study population consisted of Mukono District Local Government employees. These included the district administrative staff, which included the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), Deputy CAO, Human Resource Officer, Sub-county Chiefs, Town Clerks, Parish Chiefs, Town Agents, Education Officers, Health Officers, and employees in the Finance, Procurement, Natural Resources, Planning, Production, Works and Technical Services, Records, and Water departments. A total of **25 employees** formed the study population. These respondents were considered appropriate because of their direct involvement in policy implementation, human resource management practices, and service delivery within the district.

Table 3.1: Distribution of Population and Sample Size

Population Category	Study Population	Sampling Technique
District Administration staff (CAO, Deputy CAO, HR Officer)	2	Purposive sampling
Sub-county Chiefs and Town Clerks	3	Purposive sampling
Parish Chiefs	1	Purposive sampling
Town Agents	1	Purposive sampling
Education Officers	1	Purposive sampling
Health Officers	4	Purposive sampling
Finance Department	2	Purposive sampling
Procurement Department	1	Purposive sampling
Natural Resources	1	Purposive sampling
Planning Unit	1	Purposive sampling
Production Department	3	Purposive sampling

Works and Technical Services	2	Purposive sampling
Records Department	2	Purposive sampling
Water Section	1	Purposive sampling
Total	25	

3.4 Sampling Procedure

As Makwana et al. (2023) argue, the use of an effective sampling procedure is crucial to ensure that the data collected is representative of the phenomenon under study. The study used a purposive sampling procedure to select respondents who had relevant knowledge and experience about human resource management rewards and employee retention in Mukono District Local Government.

3.5 Purposive Sampling

Purposive sampling is a type of non-probability sampling procedure that is commonly used in qualitative research, where respondents are selected based on their relevance to the research objectives. The study used a purposive sampling procedure to select 25 staff members from different departments, including administration, sub-county leadership, procurement, natural resources, and finance.

This procedure enabled the researcher to obtain in-depth and meaningful qualitative data from information-rich respondents, thus enhancing the quality of the study findings.

3.6 Data Collection Methods

Data collection is the systematic process of gathering information for research purposes (Wagemann, 2019). The study used qualitative data collection methods, which included:

- Interviews
- Documentary review

These methods were preferred because they offered in-depth and context-specific information that was relevant to the research objectives.

Interviews

Interviews were used as the primary instrument of collecting primary data. An interview is an oral communication between the researcher and the respondents. In this research, interviews were conducted with the administration staff and departmental heads to

elicit detailed information about human resource management rewards and employee retention.

The interviews helped the respondents to freely express themselves, thus providing rich qualitative data relevant to the research.

Data Collection Instruments

Data collection instruments refer to the methods used in collecting primary data from the respondents. In this research, an interview guide and document review checklists were used to collect qualitative primary data. The choice of instrument was influenced by factors like time constraint, accessibility of the respondents, and the research study objectives (Mwangi, 2015).

Interview Guide

An interview guide is defined by Kothari (2004) as a set of predetermined questions used in the interviewing process. An interview guide was used in this research to ensure consistency in the interviewing process.

The interview guide helped in collecting in-depth qualitative primary data from purposively selected respondents about employee rewards, training, performance appraisal, and retention.

Documentary Review Checklist

A documentary review checklist was used as a guideline for the review of relevant documents such as minutes, work plans, human resource reports, and previous audit reports from the Mukono District Local Government (Yin, 2018).

3.11 Data Collection Procedure

The introductory letter was obtained from the School of Business, Uganda Christian University. The introductory letter was used by the researcher to introduce himself to the Mukono District Local Government. Permission was sought from the district authorities before the start of the data collection.

The researcher was the one who identified the respondents. The respondents were then contacted by the researcher. The researcher made introductions and then

interviewed the respondents at convenient times. Interviews were conducted with the respondents.

3.12 Trustworthiness of the Study

Trustworthiness of the study in qualitative research refers to the credibility, dependability, and accuracy of the collected data. In order for the research to be trustworthy, the research instruments were shared with supervisors and experts for review.

The research used triangulation. The research used interviews and documentary review. The use of triangulation made the research credible.

3.13 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained through an introductory letter from the Head of the School of Business, Uganda Christian University. Permission to conduct the study was granted by Mukono District Local Government.

Respondents were informed about the purpose of the study, and informed consent was obtained before participation. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were allowed to withdraw at any time. Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured, and the data collected was strictly used for academic purposes.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings and outcomes of the qualitative analysis of the data collected on the issue of human resource management rewards and employee retention in Mukono District Local Government (MDLG). The findings are presented according to the three specific objectives of the study. The data was collected through in-depth interviews and documentary analysis, and is presented through thematic analysis.

This chapter presents what the respondents said and felt, with the help of direct quotes from the interviews. The interpretation, connection to theory, and discussion of the findings and implications are presented in Chapter Five.

4.2 Profile of Respondents

The background information of the respondents was relevant to the context of the findings. The respondents were of different gender, age, educational background, and work experience, which aided the study to obtain a broad spectrum of opinions from different departments and levels of authority.

4.2.1 Gender of Respondents

The study was conducted among both male and female employees. More male respondents participated in the study than female respondents. This was in line with the staffing level in most of the departments of Mukono District Local Government. The respondents believed that gender did not play a crucial role in determining access to rewards, although some female respondents mentioned difficulties in balancing work requirements and family obligations.

4.2.2 Age of Respondents

The ages of the respondents were between 20 and 60 years. The majority of the respondents were between the ages of 31 and 40 years, followed by those between 41 and 50 years. This age bracket is actively engaged in their profession and is highly sensitive to matters concerning reward, promotion, training, and financial security.

4.2.3 Educational Qualifications

The level of education of the respondents varied from diploma to master's level. The majority of the respondents had bachelor's degrees and postgraduate degrees. This level of education also influenced the expectations in terms of reward, promotion, and training.

4.2.4 Length of Service

Most of the respondents had served in Mukono District Local Government for more than four years. Some had served for seven to ten years or more in Mukono District Local Government. This enabled the respondents to offer informed opinions concerning changes in reward systems, retention, and turnover.

4.3 Objective One: Nature of Rewards Offered to Employees in Mukono District Local

Government

The results of this objective indicate that the reward system in Mukono District Local Government comprises monetary rewards and non-monetary rewards. The respondents were very consistent in pointing out the differences in the provision of rewards and implementation.

4.3.1 Monetary Incentives

Base Salary

Base salary was identified as the reward component that is often talked about. The salary was considered too low compared to the level of work done, qualifications of the employees, and the cost of living.

A senior health officer said:

"The salary I receive does not represent the level of responsibility I have, or the qualifications I possess. Most of my salary goes to basic survival, and nothing to longterm planning."

(Interview extract, Senior Health Officer) A

finance officer added:

“We view the numbers every month, and to be frank, the salaries are not enough to maintain a decent standard of living. Employees struggle in silence.”

(Interview extract, Finance Officer)

Some of the respondents mentioned that, because of the low salaries, employees were forced to look for other sources of income, which affected their focus and dedication to work.

(Interview extract, District Staff Member)

Allowances (Overtime and Transport)

It was agreed that there are policies guiding the payment of overtime and transport allowances, but they are not paid consistently and/or on time.

A records officer said:

“You work extra hours, process your claims, and then wait for months. By the time the money comes, it is just not worth it.”

(Interview extract, Records Officer) A

field officer said:

“Our work involves mobility, but transport facilitation is not reliable. In most cases, we use our money just to get our official work done.”

(Interview quote, Field Officer)

Salary Increments and Promotions

The promotion and salary increment processes were considered slow, unclear, and sometimes unpredictable.

A planning officer said:

“Promotion is not directly related to performance. At times, you wait for years without knowing what you need to do to progress to the next level.”

(Interview quote, Planning Officer)

4.3.2 Non-Monetary Rewards

Training and Development

The respondents complained of limited and intermittent access to training. Training was donor-driven rather than organization-driven.

An education officer said:

“Training is not planned. Training opportunities are rare and depend on chance rather than an organizational policy.” (Interview quote, Education Officer)

Recognition and Appreciation

There was no formal recognition. It was left to individual supervisors.

A town clerk said:

“There is no formal recognition system for outstanding performance. Appreciation depends on whether your supervisor recognizes and values your performance.”

(Interview quote, Town Clerk)

Career Development

The respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the limited career growth opportunities.

A senior administrative staff member said:

“Once assigned a position, you remain there for many years without structured guidance on career advancement.”

(Interview extract, Senior Administrative Staff)

4.4 Objective Two: Status of Employee Retention in Mukono District Local Government

The findings have shown that the status of employee retention in Mukono District Local Government is characterized by long service years and dissatisfaction.

4.4.1 Continued Service Despite Dissatisfaction

Despite the long service years, it was established that continued service was influenced by factors other than job satisfaction.

A procurement officer said:

“Staying here is not about being satisfied; it is about limited alternatives and family responsibilities.”

(Interview extract, Procurement Officer)

4.4.2 Staff Turnover Experiences

The respondents showed that staff turnover was experienced, especially among professionals with specialized skills.

A health officer said:

“Staff with specialized skills tend to leave when better-paying opportunities arise, especially in NGOs.”

(Interview extract, Health Officer)

4.4.3 Middle-Level Management Experiences

The middle-level managers showed that they experienced high workloads without corresponding rewards.

A sub-county chief said:

“We carry heavy responsibility, yet our compensation does not reflect our position.”

(Interview extract, Sub-County Chief)

4.5 Objective Three:

Relationship Between Employee Rewards and Employee Retention This chapter presents the findings on the relationship between employee rewards and employee retention at Mukono District Local Government.

4.6 Conceptual framework derived from chapter four findings

From the qualitative findings in Chapter Four, it is evident that employee retention in Mukono District Local Government is dependent on a combination of reward-related variables and non-reward-related variables. The respondents felt that if rewards are good, fair, and timely, employees will be retained in the organization. Poor or irregular rewards served as a catalyst for employee turnover intentions and motivation. In addition to rewards, other organizational and individual variables also came into play as important determinants of employee retention, including fair promotion practices, training, recognition for performance, supportive supervision, and a sense of commitment to community service.

4.5.1 Rewards and Willingness to Stay

Respondents were of the view that adequate, timely, and fair rewards would increase their willingness to stay.

A finance officer said:

“If salaries were improved and allowances paid on time, I would have no reason to look elsewhere.”

(Interview extract, Finance Officer)

4.5.2 Inadequate Rewards and Turnover Intentions

Respondents were candid about their perception that inadequate rewards would increase turnover intentions.

A respondent said:

“When rewards are inadequate, you start thinking about other opportunities. If one arises, you are ready to move.”

(Interview extract, District Officer)

4.5.3 Other Factors Supporting Retention

In addition to rewards, respondents were of the view that some factors could enhance their retention:

- Fair and transparent promotion systems
- Access to continuous training
- Recognition of good work
- Supportive leadership and communication

A parish chief said:

“Commitment to community service keeps some of us here, but motivation decreases when basic needs are unmet.”

(Interview extract, Parish Chief)

4.6.1 Interpretation of the framework

From the findings

1. Reward-Related Factors

The findings show that these factors had a direct effect on the employees’ turnover intentions. The respondents were very clear that if these factors were improved, they would not have any reason to quit the organization.

2. Non-Reward Organizational Factors

The findings show that these factors indirectly contributed to the employees’ loyalty and job satisfaction through:

Recognition

Supportive leadership

Promotion practices

Communication climate

All these factors are motivational and psychological in nature, which contributed to the employees’ attachment to the organization.

3. Personal/External Factors

The findings show that these factors contributed to the retention of employees in the organization despite their level of dissatisfaction with the organization through:

Family commitment

Job opportunities

Commitment to community service

4.6.2 Conclusion

The model indicates that the retention of employees in the Mukono District Local Government is not driven by one factor but by a combination of factors, which are reward, organizational, and personal factors. The issue of reward management improvements alone cannot fully address the problem of employee retention



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter introduces the summary and discussion of the major findings of the study in relation to the research objectives. The discussion will interpret the findings using relevant theoretical perspectives and empirical research studies. This chapter will also introduce the conclusions drawn from the findings, recommendations for policy and practice, limitations of the study, and proposals for further research.

5.1 Summary of Major Findings

The study focused on the relationship between human resource management rewards and employee retention in Mukono District Local Government. The major findings included the fact that despite the existence of a reward system, it was perceived as inadequate. In addition, the reward system was perceived as being managed in an unfair manner. Employee retention was found to have a stable nature in terms of length of service but was characterized by dissatisfaction. The study showed that rewards have a significant influence on the intention of employees to stay in the company, along with other non-reward-related factors.

5.2 Discussion of Findings

5.2.1 Nature of Rewards in Mukono District Local Government

From the findings, it was evident that there was a reward system in place in the Mukono District Local Government. The reward system included both financial and non-financial rewards. Despite the existence of a reward system in the organization, the respondents were unable to express their satisfaction regarding the adequacy of the reward system in motivating and retaining the employees in the particular organization.

One of the possible reasons for the existence of a reward system in the particular organization could be the fact that the organization, being a District Local Government, operates within the framework of the Government of Uganda. This implies that the particular organization is mandated to operate within the framework of the employment act of 2006. This act states that employers are required to provide some basic employee benefits.

Another possible reason could be the fact that the particular organization operates based on conventional human resource management practices. Armstrong (2020) states that most organizations have reward systems in place. The reward system in an organization is geared towards meeting the standards of professional human resource management practices. In the case of public sector organizations, reward Although it was structured, it was deemed inadequate. This might be attributed to budget constraints in local governments where the wage bill and allowances are standardized based on the central government's ceiling (Ministry of Public Service, 2021). This might mean that local governments lack the freedom to increase salaries and allowances even if the needs of employees change.

In addition to that, the delayed payment of allowances and lack of provision of nonmonetary rewards such as training and recognition point to a certain level of inefficiency. The poor levels of hygiene factors such as pay and working conditions that do not satisfy employees were proposed by Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (Herzberg, 1966). This also points to dissatisfaction from the employees as depicted in the study.

Lastly, it was noted from the results of the study that non-monetary rewards were not adequately used. According to Deci and Ryan (2000), employees need to be recognized, they need to grow professionally, and they need to have a sense of meaningfulness in order to be motivated. The lack of these forms of recognition and growth diminished the effect of the reward systems.

5.2.2 Employee Retention in Mukono District Local Government

From the results of the study, it was noted that most employees in Mukono District Local Government had been working in the organization for a number of years. This was a form of retention. However, from the results of the interviews, it was noted that employees were not voluntarily retained in the organization but were there due to a lack of alternative employment opportunities.

The reason for the results of this study is the high unemployment rate in Uganda. According to UBOS (2023), unemployment is a major challenge in Uganda, especially among professionals who are looking for job security. This has seen a majority of employees stay in their respective organizations despite their dissatisfaction with those organizations. Another reason for this result is the job security associated with a government job. Public sector jobs in Uganda are considered secure compared to jobs in the private sector. In the private sector, insecurity can be associated with contract insecurity and termination of contract. According to Kaggwa (2019), job security can be used as a retention strategy in public sector jobs even if the pay is not attractive.

Moreover, family and social needs were also cited as essential factors in retaining employees. Employees with family needs were found not to be willing to quit or risk losing their jobs. This is consistent with the perspective of Meyer and Allen (1997) that continuance commitment to stay due to perceived costs of leaving is a significant factor in retaining employees.

However, it was also established from the research that employees with special skills were likely to quit if they saw better opportunities. Therefore, it can be concluded that retaining employees only applies to those with special skills. This was also established by Ongori (2007) that employees with special skills can respond to gaps in rewards.

5.2.3 Relationship Between Rewards and Employee Retention

The findings revealed a positive relationship between rewards and retaining employees. The employees were of the view that better, enough, and timely rewards would greatly enhance their commitment to stay with the organization, i.e., Mukono District Local Government.

The findings are in line with the research that has been carried out over the years on the importance of rewards in retaining employees. For example, research carried out by Milkovich & Newman (2018) revealed that competitive pay is a significant factor in retaining employees. This relationship is also supported by research studies carried out in other nations. A research study carried out by Samuel & Chipunza (2009) in South Africa revealed that workers are more likely to be retained in organizations where fair compensation is offered. Moreover, Nawab & Bhatti (2011) revealed that reward satisfaction is a significant determinant in retaining employees in public institutions in Pakistan. Sector-specific studies also supported this finding. In the health sector, WillisShattuck et al. (2008) found that financial and non-financial rewards played a pivotal role in retaining health care professionals in developing nations. In the education sector, Bennell and Akyeampong (2007) indicated that poor compensation contributed to turnover in teachers.

Specific studies done in Uganda on the subject matter also supported the findings that poor compensation and lack of growth opportunities were major contributors to employees' intentions to leave the organization. The studies done in Uganda were done by Ssekamwa (2016) and Mugizi et al. (2019). The studies support the findings that rewards are fundamental in retaining employees in the Mukono District Local Government.

5.2.4 Other Factors Influencing Employee Retention

Other factors that influenced employee retention were also identified in the study, which included leadership, fairness in promotions, training, recognition, and public service values.

The respondents indicated that through supportive supervision and leadership, they were able to increase their commitment levels. Northouse (2021) indicated that leadership behavior that promotes trust and participation is positively related to retention levels. Training and development were also shown to encourage retention by improving employees' skills and boosting their confidence. This is consistent with Becker's Human Capital Theory (1993), which highlights training and development as a retention strategy.

A sense of serving the community was identified as a personal motivator for some employees. However, the respondents showed that intrinsic motivation alone cannot be a substitute for poor extrinsic rewards, as argued by Maslow (1943).

5.3 Conclusion

The study sought to examine the relationship between human resource management rewards and employee retention in Mukono District Local Government. The findings of the study led to the conclusion that rewards have a significant impact on employee retention. Although the reward program exists, its failure and irregularity make it less effective.

The study also concluded that employee retention in Mukono District Local Government is primarily affected by external factors such as job security and the lack of alternative employment opportunities rather than the satisfaction of rewards. Training, promotion, recognition, and compensation were identified as key factors that could help improve retention.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are recommended:

1. The government should enhance the reward program in local governments by reviewing salaries and ensuring that allowances are paid on time.
2. Mukono District Local Government should establish a clear and performancebased promotion program.

1. There is a need to enhance non-monetary rewards such as recognition, training, and career development programs.
2. Budgetary allocations for staff welfare and rewards should be prioritized.

Study Limitations

The research was qualitative in nature and was carried out on a single local government, which makes it difficult to generalize the results. The sample was small, and the results were based on self-perception, which may be prone to biases.

Recommendations for Further Research

1. Other districts should be studied to increase the generalizability of the results.
2. Future studies should investigate the determinants of staff turnover in local governments in Uganda.
3. Quantitative research could be undertaken to quantify the effect of rewards on employee performance.
4. Future studies should investigate the effect of performance appraisal feedback on employee retention.
5. Research on training schemes and their long-term effects on retention in local governments is recommended.

APPENDIX I: CHECKLISTS

Dear Sir/Madam

I am kedi Winnie mercy, a student at Uganda Christian University carrying out a study on the title; **Human Resource Rewards and Employee Retention in Local Governments in Uganda: A Case of Mukono district Local Government**. You are therefore selected to take part in this study and any information you will provide will be treated with utmost confidentiality it deserves. Note that this is done for academic purposes only.

Thank you for your cooperation

Section A: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents Tick where applicable

1. Gender of Respondents

Gender		
Male		
Female		

2. Age of Respondents

Age		
20-30years		
31-40years		
41-50years		
51-60years		
60years and above		

6 Education respondents.

Education		
Certificate		
Diploma		

Degree		
Postgraduate Diploma		
Master's Degree		

1. **Duration at the Station**

Duration in years		
Less than 1year		
1-3year		
4-6years		
7-9years		
10 years and above		

2. **Position of respondents**

Position of respondents		
Education officers		
Health officers		
Parish chiefs		

Town agents		
Finance officers		
Planning		
Production		
Works and technical services		
Records officers		
Statutory bodies		
Staff in works department		

Source: Primary Data, 2025 Section B: Employee Rewards monetary and nonmonetary rewards checklist in Mukono district Local Government

NON-MONETARY REWARDS.

CATEGORY	REWARDS /IDEA	YES	NO
Recognition and visibility	Employees receive public praise in a team/ company team		
	Employees get spotlight feature in the newspaper/internet publication		

	Employees receive a hand written thank you from a supervisor at work.		
Professional growth	Employees are nominated for an internal award at work.		
	Employees are given Opportunities to lead a meeting or present to leadership.		
	Employees are Funded an enrollment in a course training/workshop.		
	Workers are given opportunity to a Mentorship role to a junior colleague /hire.		
Autonomy and flexibility	There is additional payment of extra time.		
	Employees experience Flexible work hours.		
	Employees have Options to work remotely on a set period of time.		

Wellbeing personal	Employees receive Gifts baskets tailored to their personal hobbies.		
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MONETARY REWARD CHECKLIST

CATEGORY.	EMPLOYEES FEEDBACK	YES	NO
Base compensation.	Employees rewards are meaningful relative to their contributions and market standards		
	We receive a spot bonus feel timely and directly connected to our specific effort		
	The bonus we receive positively influences our decision to stay.		
Variable pay incentives	The performance goals are fair and transparent.		
	The bonus employees receive enhance team collaboration.		
	The bonus reward makes employees feel more connected to the company's success.		
	Employees allowances impact on their wellbeing or work life balance.		
Short and long-term incentives.	Employees perceive the bonus making feel more connected to the company success.		

	Employees allowances impact your wellbeing or work life balance.		
Equity and long-term incentives	Employees perceive it as. as a genuine appreciation or an expected entitlement.		
	Employees feel personally cared for by organization.		

EMPLOYEE RETENSION CHECK LIST

YES	COMPENSATION OF BENEFITS	NO
	Salaries and benefits are competitive in the industry	
	There is regular review and adjust compensation packages to reflect market trends	
	Employees receive additional parks offered to employees	
	Transparency regarding compensation structure	
	<p style="text-align: center;">CAREER DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES</p> Employees get clear paths for career development within organization	
	The company offers training programs for skill development	
	Employees receive challenging assignments to help them grow.	

	Employees receive mentorship coaching for career guidance.	
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TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

YES	On going training initiative to keep employees updated to industry	NO
	There is a budget allocation for employee training development	
	Employees can access online courses or educational resources	
	There are opportunities for cross functional training to broader skills	
	SUPPORTIVE MANAGEMENT	
	Managers equipped in the skills to lead and inspire teams	
	Managers provide regular feedback and coaching to their employees	
	There is an open doors policy for employees to discuss concerns in management	

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