

ABSTRACT

Devolution is a system of governance in Kenya implemented in the year 2013 with the aim of improving delivery of services to citizens. Devolved governments employ up to 50% of the total workforce in the country. Service delivery to people has not improved despite existence of county governments. Report by Ethics and Anti-corruption Commission of 2016 revealed abuse of office owing to lack of transparency, nepotism, favoritism and poor service delivery in several county governments including Bungoma. All these may be due to lack of proper human resource practices such as recruitment, selection, and appraisal and also characteristics of county workforce such as educational level, age and experience. Previous studies have pointed that lack of training affect employee performance and have not focused on employee characteristics and human resource practices particularly recruitment, appraisal and compensation. The purpose of the study was to analyze the effect of employee characteristics namely educational level, age and managers' experience on human resource practices in Bungoma County government. Specific objectives of the study were; to analyze the effect of educational level on human resource practices, to determine the effect employees age on human resource practices and to establish the effect of manager experience on human resource practices. The study was guided by interactive, Herzberg's motivation and Victor Vroom's expectancy theories. The study employed correlation cross-sectional study design. Study population was 100 employees and study applied saturated sampling. The sample size for the study was 90 employees and 10 being used in the pilot study. Structured questionnaire was used for collection of primary data. The questionnaire was reviewed by experts in human resource to achieve validity. The reliability test for the instrument was realized at 0.74 Cronbach. Linear regression of human resource practices and employee characteristics gave the following; educational level ($\beta=0.309$, $p=0.003$), age ($\beta=0.141$, $p=0.046$) and experience ($\beta=0.203$, $p=0.038$). The results showed that educational level, age and experience significantly affected human resource practices in Bungoma County. The regression model had an R square value of 0.757, indicating that the employee characteristics accounted for 75.7% variance in human resource practices. The study recommends that managers should consider educational level, age and experience of employees while recruiting as they are necessary for the implementation of human resource practices. The study findings may be of relevance to government in formulating human resource policies. Further research can be done on the effect on other employee characteristics such as marital status, professional training and gender on human resource practices.