THE ROLE OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP ON EMPLOYEE RETENTION AT SOUTH NYANZA SUGAR COMPANY IN MIGORI COUNTY, KENYA

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A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF
MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE IN LEADERSHIP

PAN AFRICA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

JUNE 2026

DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work and has not been submitted for academic credit at any other university or learning institution.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my late parents; Jenifer Owuor and Owuor Ochola, and to my wife; Pamela and my four children who have been on my side all the time by offering the needed support.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to start by thanking God for keeping me in good health during my post-graduate studies. I also thank God for provision by which I was able to meet the financial obligations, and His strength, which enabled me balance work and studies during challenging times.

My appreciation goes to PAC University for giving me the opportunity to study there and express my hope to serve as a good ambassador for the institution. Additionally, I express gratitude to my supervisors; Dr. Mulandi and Dr. Sambu for their invaluable guidance. Finally, special thanks go to the lecturers for their support, with particular recognition of Dr. Truphena Oduol, for ensuring smooth course operations and Dr. Tumuti, Dr. Metetei, Dr. Irungu, Dr. Nzinga whom I consider role models and mentors with great humility. Gratitude also goes to Dr. Jane Chiroma and Dr. Solomon Munyao for guiding us in the thesis writing process.

ABSTRACT

This research sought to highlight the experiences of employees at Sony Sugar Company in Kenya with servant leadership, with the aim to enhance understanding of its role on employee retention. Servant leadership contributes to employee empowerment, motivation, performance, and job satisfaction with a likelihood of contributing to employee retention. The study was based on the Theory of Servant Leadership, Job Embeddedness Theory and Leadership-Membership Exchange (LMX) Theory. This study adopted an interpretivist research philosophy and qualitative design, selecting a manageable sample size of 30 employees, representing 10% of South Nyanza Sugar Company (Sony Sugar) total workforce of 300. Purposive sampling was applied to select respondents and data was gathered using interviews. Data was analyzed through content and thematic analysis with results presented in tables and figures. The study revealed that servant leadership at South Nyanza Sugar Company (Sony Sugar) is a key factor contributing to employee retention, with all 30 participants expressing no intentions of leaving the organization. This was attributed to the inspiration and satisfaction derived from servant leadership practices. Among junior employees, all 25 participants confirmed that their leaders empowered them to perform efficiently, while the five managers agreed that servant leadership facilitated opportunities for professional growth. Additionally, servant leaders instilled positive motivation among employees, fostering a supportive environment that encouraged commitment. Employees felt a strong sense of belonging and loyalty to the organization, further underscoring the connection between servant leadership, employee commitment, and retention. To strengthen retention, the study recommends adopting servant leadership policies, prioritizing participative leadership, and providing manager training. Regular training sessions should be formalized to enhance employee skills, while policymakers should implement regulations promoting training, empowerment, and rewards. Future research should examine the feasibility of servant leadership in other manufacturing companies not in the agriculture sector to compere findings.

Key Words: *servant leadership, employee retention, employee empowerment, employee motivation, job satisfaction, employee commitment*

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

EE	Employee Engagement
ER	Employee Retention
HRM	Human Resource Management
JS	Job Satisfaction
LMX	Leader-Member Exchange
SL	Servant Leadership
SLP	Servant Leadership Practices
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
SYNSC	South Nyanza Sugar Company

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Servant leadership – Servant leadership is a leadership style where leaders focus on meeting the needs and fostering the development of their employees. By prioritizing trust, empathy, and collaboration, servant leaders create a supportive work environment that enhances employee well-being and engagement. In the case of this study, this approach is expected to improve employee retention, as employees who feel valued and supported are more likely to stay with the organization (Eva et al., 2021).

Employee empowerment – refers to the process of granting employees authority, autonomy, resources, and responsibility to make decisions in their work roles, thereby enhancing motivation, job satisfaction, engagement, and performance. The concept is theoretically grounded in Servant Leadership Theory and Psychological Empowerment Theory, which emphasize employee development, self-determination, and participation in organizational decision-making (Greenleaf, 1977; Spreitzer, 1995 & Kim et al., 2020).

Employee motivation and commitment – refers to the internal and external factors that stimulate employees' willingness, energy, and persistence toward achieving work-related goals. It is theoretically grounded in theories such as Expectancy Theory and Self-Determination Theory, which explain how individual needs, rewards, and perceptions influence work behavior.

Employee commitment, on the other hand, refers to the psychological attachment, loyalty, and sense of identification employees develop toward their organization. It is anchored in the Organizational Commitment Theory by John Meyer and Natalie Allen, which conceptualizes commitment through affective, continuance, and normative dimensions. In servant leadership contexts, leaders enhance both

employee motivation and commitment by prioritizing employee well-being, support, and professional development (Nguyen et al., 2022).

Employee performance – refers to the extent to which employees successfully achieve assigned work objectives through quality service delivery, productivity, efficiency, teamwork, innovation, and goal attainment. The concept is multidimensional, encompassing both task performance and contextual performance that contribute to overall organizational effectiveness. In servant leadership contexts, employees who feel valued, supported, and motivated are more likely to demonstrate higher levels of commitment and improved job performance (Gotsis & Grimani, 2021).

Employee retention – Employee retention refers to an organization's ability to keep its workforce engaged and reduce turnover over time. In the context of servant leadership, retention depends on how effectively leaders address employees' needs, empower them, and cultivate a supportive environment. This leadership style fosters trust, job satisfaction, and emotional commitment, which can lead to higher loyalty and long-term retention (Saleem, 2021).

Employee satisfaction - refers to the level of contentment employees have with their job, work environment, leadership, and growth opportunities. It is theoretically grounded in Frederick Herzberg’s Two-Factor Theory, which explains satisfaction through motivator and hygiene factors. Unlike motivation and commitment, employee satisfaction reflects employees’ positive evaluation of their work experiences and organizational environment (Ahmed et al., 2021).

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Introduction

This chapter defines servant leadership and provides a background on the research topic, the application of the relevant leadership styles across the globe, the research problem, and the purpose of the study. In addition, the chapter identifies the research objectives and the research questions, the justification of the study, and highlights the assumptions that were considered in this study. The chapter further discusses the scope of the study, the limitations, and the delimitations of the study. Finally, the chapter presents definitions in the context of South Nyanza Sugar Company.

Background of the Study

Employees form an integral part of organizations in the contemporary corporate world. The stability and growth of any organization is largely anchored on the quality of employees they have and the ability to keep those quality employees working for them. In the present times, organizations are striving towards developing a strong competitive edge in their respective markets, and significantly focus on ensuring employee satisfaction (Kuada, 2010). Employee job satisfaction goes a long way in contributing to their loyalty to their organization. Employee satisfaction encompasses the various factors and activities at the workplace that develop their sense of fulfilment and contentment. Besides ensuring that employees are well and equitably compensated, a flexible and healthy work environment, and enhanced work-life balance are important.

Organizations which are genuinely concerned about workers' welfare such as helping them to attain personal goals, creating a climate which gives them a sense of

belonging, develop their career, and get them involved in important organizational processes such as decision-making, improving employees' satisfaction levels (Economou & Chatzikonstantinou, 2009). Servant leadership is one of the ways employers engage employees through listening and passionately getting engaged in their well-being including their career development needs to empower them to make autonomous decisions and also prepare them in readiness for bigger roles in the organization. When employees see that they are valued and their future career progression is catered for in the organization through their leadership, it provides a sense of belonging and improved employee citizenship behaviour, which minimizes their desire to leave. Servant leadership puts employees' interests first and therefore contributes significantly to employee motivation, performance, empowerment, leading to high employee satisfaction levels (Economou & Chatzikonstantinou, 2009).

Over the years, different organizations have employed different leadership approaches in employee management and talent development to deliver the required results. Leadership styles such as authoritative, participative, transformational, democratic, strategic, and servant leadership in organizations have been applied and documented globally, regionally, and even locally (Muger, 2020; Quintana & Cabrera, 2014). In the contemporary marketplace, organizations need to have a consistent and stable availability of well-skilled, highly talented and high-performing employee base to remain competitive to consistently meet their set goals. One of the methods through which organizations attain their competitiveness is by putting employees at the centre of their strategies. Employee motivation, satisfaction, and commitment are integral in determining whether workers would remain loyal to their employer and the organization at large.

In today's highly dynamic, globalized, and competitive world, organizations are constantly faced with high rates of attrition because everyone in the market is targeting high performers (Ntenga & Awuor, 2018). The high rates of attrition in these organizations could also be associated with the lack of effective strategies to lead employees towards enhanced performance, satisfaction, and commitment to the employer. Employees significantly form part of the competitive strategy for most companies in highly competitive markets. With their high knowledge levels, training skills, and experience gained from the employer, companies that fail to retain their employees undergo massive losses in terms of the loss of talented, experienced, and highly skilled employees. Lack of leadership approaches that focus on employees exposes organizations towards losing such employees.

Employee retention significantly benefits both the employer and the employee by fostering stability, reducing recruitment costs, and enhancing organizational knowledge. Employers have the responsibility to ensure that their employees are motivated to continue working on their premises (Ramapriya & Sudhamathi, 2020). According to Herzberg's (two factors) Theory, employees are less motivated by extrinsic incentives, which include promotions, increases in pay, plush offices, and perks. Reasonably, employees are motivated by intrinsic rewards such as opportunities to grow through training and experience and challenging and interesting work (Ahmad & Azumah, 2012). Companies that offer intrinsic rewards to employees are most likely to retain their workers as they develop motivation and commitment towards serving the employer. Attaining both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards in the workplace enhances employees' motivation. Employee retention improves organizational competitiveness in the industry and reduces costs related to recruiting

new employees on a regular frequency. Leadership strategies that organizations practice determine whether an employee attains either intrinsic or extrinsic rewards.

In the United States and Europe, servant leadership has emerged as a highly effective approach for improving employee retention. Studies demonstrate that this leadership style enhances employees' sense of belonging and job satisfaction, both of which are critical factors in retention. Servant leaders prioritize the personal and professional growth of their employees, fostering environments that value trust, empathy, and collaboration. According to Eva et al. (2019), organizations that implement servant leadership are more likely to retain their employees because they create a supportive and empowering workplace where individuals feel emotionally and psychologically fulfilled. In these regions, where competition for talent is particularly fierce, companies that adopt servant leadership are better positioned to keep top talent as their workers feel valued, thereby, reducing turnover rates.

Moreover, in North America where industries face constant pressure to attract and retain highly skilled employees, the role of servant leadership becomes even more pronounced. Eva et al. (2019) highlight that, those organizations that empower their employees by meeting their professional and emotional needs, such as through the servant leadership model, are more successful in employee retention. Workers are more likely to stay in organizations where they feel appreciated, trusted, and given opportunities for personal development. This is particularly relevant in competitive labour markets, where employees have multiple job opportunities and are more inclined to remain in environments that promote their overall well-being. Therefore, servant leadership is a strategic asset for organizations aiming to maintain a stable and committed workforce in the U.S. and Europe.

In Asia, servant leadership is gaining traction as an effective approach to enhancing employee retention, particularly in countries like China and India, where organizational structures have traditionally been more hierarchical. Research by Li et al. (2020) demonstrated that servant leadership significantly fosters employee loyalty by focusing on their development, well-being, and overall satisfaction. This leadership style creates a supportive environment where employees feel valued and motivated, which naturally translates to higher retention rates. In contrast to the rigid top-down structures typical of many Asian organizations, servant leadership introduces a more people-centric approach that resonates with modern employees seeking both professional growth and emotional support.

Additionally, as economies in Asia continue to evolve and modernize, there is a growing shift toward leadership models that incorporate elements of care, empathy, and support, which are hallmarks of servant leadership. Despite cultural tendencies towards hierarchical leadership, employees in countries like India and China are increasingly drawn to leadership styles that demonstrate concern for their well-being and development. According to Li et al. (2020), this shift is becoming more prominent as companies recognize the need to retain talent in a competitive labour market. Therefore, servant leadership is proving to be not only effective but also essential for companies in Asia looking to build loyalty and reduce turnover in their workforce.

In the Middle East, servant leadership has shown significant positive effects on employee retention, particularly in industries where employee satisfaction and loyalty are critical to performance. Research by Alghamdi et al. (2021) highlights that in Saudi Arabia, servant leadership practices are directly linked to higher levels of employee engagement and retention. This is largely because employees feel their personal and professional aspirations align with those of the organization. When

leaders prioritize their employees' well-being and career growth, it cultivates a work environment that fosters trust and loyalty. Such alignment between organizational and individual goals contributes to a stronger sense of belonging, reducing turnover rates. Additionally, servant leadership in this region encourages a collaborative culture, which enhances job satisfaction and drives long-term employee commitment. Therefore, organizations that embrace this leadership style are better positioned to retain top talent in competitive industries.

In Africa, employee retention has become a critical challenge due to various factors such as economic instability, limited career growth opportunities, and competition for skilled labour. Studies in Kenya and across the continent indicate that servant leadership has the potential to foster employee retention by creating supportive work environments. Research conducted in South Africa highlights that servant leadership helps address the high turnover rates prevalent in many industries. As Shuping and Mokgoro (2021) argue, when leaders in African organizations demonstrate a genuine concern for employee welfare and professional growth, employees are more likely to remain with the company. In many parts of Africa, where leadership structures are often hierarchical, the shift toward a servant leadership model has been shown to foster a sense of belonging and loyalty among employees, improving retention rates.

According to Wong et al. (2019), for organizations to remain competitive today, they must have in place strategies and a leadership approach, which attract and retain top talents. Employee-centred leadership styles enhance their skills and ability to efficiently complete, hence creating a feeling of satisfaction. On the contrary, organizations, especially those operating in developing countries like those in the African continent apply leadership styles that are profit-based and exploit employees

at the expense of attaining huge revenues from their operations (Fadare, 2018). Employee turnover remains a significant challenge among many organizations in Africa and Kenya, particularly within small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Studies by Jacqueline and Nafula (2021) indicate that many organizations experience difficulties in retaining highly skilled and high-performing employees. Similarly, Ntenga and Awuor (2018) observed that leadership practices characterized by limited employee involvement and low concern for employee welfare contribute to increased turnover intentions among employees in Kenyan SMEs, including firms operating within Export Processing Zones (EPZs). In Sub-Saharan Africa, ineffective leadership approaches have been associated with weak employee engagement and reduced organizational attachment, factors that increase the likelihood of employee turnover (Ntenga & Awuor, 2018).

In Kenya, servant leadership has increasingly been recognized as an effective leadership approach for enhancing employee retention. According to Muriithi and Wachira (2020), servant leadership promotes employee loyalty by emphasizing empathy, personal development, open communication, and employee support. Such practices improve job satisfaction and strengthen organizational commitment, thereby reducing turnover intentions among employees. Conversely, leadership styles that emphasize authority and financial outcomes while neglecting employee welfare may contribute to dissatisfaction and employee turnover (Jacqueline & Nafula, 2021). Therefore, this study sought to examine whether Sony Sugar Company has experienced employee turnover challenges or whether it demonstrates effective employee retention practices through servant leadership.

The exclusivity of employees in designing working procedures and lack of engagement by the leaders creates discontent among the employees. More than 50%

of managers in these organizations think that empowering employees through skill development and training exposes them to better opportunities as their value and expertise improve (Ntenga & Awuor, 2018). As a result, they deem it fit to embrace the status quo by letting employees work with their limited skills without training and developing them through employee-centred leadership. Employees are expected to remain ignorant and less valued so that they do not seek better opportunities elsewhere, but remain loyal to those employers who only care about their financial gains.

The adoption of servant leadership and other employee-centred leadership approaches has been identified as an important strategy for addressing employee turnover in Sub-Saharan Africa and Kenya. Servant leadership emphasizes employee welfare, ethical behavior, empathy, and supportive workplace relationships, all of which contribute to improved employee loyalty and organizational commitment. According to Zenter (2016), organizations that practice servant leadership are more likely to create positive work environments that reduce employees' intentions to leave their organizations. Similarly, studies have shown that leadership styles characterized by employee support, open communication, and empowerment significantly enhance job satisfaction and retention among employees (Eva et al., 2019; Muriithi & Wachira, 2020).

High employee turnover has been associated with negative organizational outcomes such as reduced productivity, increased recruitment and training costs, loss of organizational knowledge, and disruptions in operational continuity. In many organizations, failure to retain skilled employees undermines organizational performance and long-term sustainability. Consequently, organizations are increasingly adopting leadership approaches that prioritize employee well-being and

development as a strategy for improving employee retention and maintaining a stable workforce (Li et al., 2020; Shuping & Mokgoro, 2021).Research report by Wiley Edge found that 63% of UK businesses experienced cultural deterioration due to high staff turnover. This led to complaints from remaining team members, development of toxic work environments, and decreased employee engagement (People Management, 2023). These findings indicate the critical need for companies to address employee retention proactively; thus, servant leadership which can improve employee retention. The impact of servant leadership on employees' retention has been explored in North America and Europe more explicitly than in other regions (Parris & Peachey, 2013). Servant leadership is a leadership approach in which the leader's role is to serve those they lead by addressing the followers' needs first before they can attend to their own needs.

A servant leader serves their followers' needs first and empowers them to achieve success in their roles at the workplace and in their personal needs (Harwiki, 2013). The servant leadership style was first coined by Robert Greenleaf as a leadership approach that prioritizes meeting the followers' needs and then helping leaders actualize their own needs (Spears, 2010). A servant leader commits towards serving and transforming his followers through empowering and motivating them (Crippen, 2017). The impact of the servant leadership approach is improved motivation and performance of those they lead, which translates to the success of the organizations. Servant leadership style enhances employees because it develops mutual trust, which enhances collaboration at all organizational levels, and creates a positive impact, which in turn increases productivity and enables the organizations to achieve their goals and objectives.

Servant leadership is concerned with serving the followers and making sure that the followers are empowered to grow in their careers and achieve their personal well-being. The style of servant leadership empowers their followers, motivates, and inspires them for optimal performance (Zenter, 2016). As a result, servant leadership creates self-drive, willingness, and enhances the capacity to perform tasks in the workplace, which is transformative to the employees. Servant leadership empowers and motivates employees to perform and get their loyalty because it creates a sense of belonging and ownership, with the desire to remain in the organization where they are treated well and are valued. In servant leadership, leaders incorporate the ideas of their followers thus creating a conducive working climate where employees feel valued and motivated to serve. Additionally, servant leaders believe that everyone is responsible enough, so no need for supervision. Employees bring equal value in contributing to organizational performance. The confidence servant leadership bestows on employees creates a positive working environment where everyone feels accepted and that their inputs are valued in the workplace (Parris & Peachey, 2013). Therefore, based on characteristics such as hands-off, delegating responsibility, honesty, and empowerment, servant leadership is a composite leadership style blending various ingredients, which makes a good leadership style. Consequently, servant leadership provides a desirable working environment for the employees based on these attributes, convinces workers to stay with their current employer, and thus reducing employee turnover.

The history of servant leadership measurement can be traced back to the conceptualization of servant leadership by Robert K. Greenleaf in 1970. Over the years, researchers have worked to operationalize and measure servant leadership characteristics systematically. The SL-28 scale, developed by Liden et al. (2008),

initially outlined 28 characteristics of servant leadership, focusing on behaviours such as emotional healing, empowering others, and helping subordinates grow. This version provided a comprehensive framework but was later refined to make it more concise and practical.

The SL-7 scale, introduced by Liden et al. (2015), condensed these characteristics into seven core dimensions: emotional healing, creating value for the community, conceptual skills, empowering, helping subordinates grow and succeed, putting subordinates first, and behaving ethically. This streamlined version maintains the essence of servant leadership, while making the measurement process more focused and manageable.

For this study, the four selected variables; employee satisfaction, motivation, commitment, and performance were identified based on the evolution of the Servant Leadership Theory and its measurement tools, which have developed over time to capture the essence and impact of this leadership style and are directly linked to the behaviours and outcomes highlighted in the Servant Leadership Theory and its measurement tools. These variables align with key characteristics of servant leadership, such as; empowering, helping subordinates grow, and putting employees first. They were chosen because they represent the practical outcomes of servant leadership behaviours, as supported by previous empirical studies (Liden et al., 2015).

Understanding the historical development of servant leadership measurement tools is essential for designing the study's thematic data analysis. By grounding the study's variables in the SL-7 characteristics, the research objectives become clearer and more relevant, as they reflect the measurable outcomes of servant leadership in the context of employee retention. When employees are satisfied, they are more likely to remain with their organization, leading to lower turnover rates. This satisfaction

stems from several measurable factors such as job security, a healthy work-life balance, competitive remuneration, and positive workplace relationships (Bakotic, 2020). Organizations that provide these elements foster environments where employees feel valued and engaged. In contexts where servant leadership is practiced, leaders focus on prioritizing the well-being of employees, ensuring that their personal and professional needs are met. By emphasizing empathy, support, and care, servant leadership promotes higher levels of job satisfaction (Sousa & van Dierendonck, 2020).

Employees who feel supported by their leaders in this way are less likely to seek an opportunity elsewhere, which in turn boosts organizational retention rates and overall productivity (Kim & Beehr, 2020). Employee motivation on the other hand is crucial in driving individuals to actively pursue organizational goals, as it encompasses both internal desires and external factors that propel employees forward. Research indicates that servant leadership, which focuses on empowering employees and fostering their growth, significantly enhances motivation levels within organizations. By providing autonomy and access to resources, servant leaders enable employees to align their personal aspirations with their professional responsibilities, thus increasing their engagement and productivity (Kim & Beehr, 2020). Key elements that contribute to heightened motivation include recognition of employee achievements, opportunities for personal and professional development, and clear, consistent communication from leadership. When employees feel acknowledged and see pathways for growth, their motivation intensifies, leading to increased loyalty and reduced turnover rates (Eva et al., 2019).

Moreover, creating an environment where employees are encouraged to develop their skills and take initiative not only boosts their motivation but also

strengthens their commitment to the organization. This is especially vital in competitive industries where retaining skilled workers is essential for sustained success. According to research, organizations that implement servant leadership principles are more likely to experience higher levels of employee satisfaction and retention, as employees feel more valued and invested in their work (Liden et al., 2014). Ultimately, the relationship between employee motivation and retention underscores the importance of effective leadership practices that prioritize the needs and aspirations of employees, fostering a culture of mutual growth and commitment.

Employee commitment represents the degree of dedication and loyalty that individuals exhibit toward their organization, influencing their willingness to remain and contribute positively to the workplace. Research indicates that servant leadership plays a pivotal role in enhancing this commitment by cultivating a strong sense of belonging and shared purpose among employees (Li et al., 2020). This leadership style emphasizes the importance of meeting the needs of employees, which fosters a supportive work environment conducive to commitment. Measurable aspects of employee commitment can be categorized into three distinct types: affective commitment, which reflects an emotional attachment to the organization; continuance commitment, which pertains to the perceived costs associated with leaving; and normative commitment, which encompasses a moral obligation to stay with the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991).

Committed employees tend to exhibit greater resilience and perseverance in the face of challenges, making them more likely to remain with their organization for extended periods (Xie et al., 2022). This sustained commitment not only benefits the employees themselves, leading to increased job satisfaction and professional growth, but also contributes to organizational stability and performance. Furthermore,

organizations that prioritize servant leadership can leverage these high levels of employee commitment to foster a positive organizational culture, drive productivity, and enhance overall employee retention rates. In essence, the interplay between servant leadership and employee commitment underscores the importance of cultivating strong interpersonal relationships within the workplace, which ultimately leads to a more dedicated and motivated workforce (Xie et al., 2022).

Finally, employee performance serves as a pivotal variable in understanding the dynamics between servant leadership and employee retention. Research indicates that servant leadership cultivates an environment that actively supports and encourages employees to achieve their best work, leading to enhanced performance outcomes (Lee et al., 2021). This leadership style empowers individuals by recognizing their contributions, providing necessary resources and fostering open communication, which in turn boosts their productivity and quality of work. Measurable aspects of performance can include productivity metrics, the quality of output, and the attainment of specific organizational goals, which serve as key indicators of how well employees are performing (Salanova et al., 2019).

High-performing employees who feel valued and empowered are more likely to remain loyal to their organization, which significantly reduces turnover rates (Meyer et al., 2020). This loyalty is often a direct consequence of their engagement and satisfaction levels, which are enhanced by servant leadership practices that prioritize employee well-being and development. Additionally, organizations that effectively leverage servant leadership can create a culture of high performance, where employees are motivated to align their personal goals with those of the organization. In conclusion, the relationship between servant leadership and employee

performance contributes to retention and overall organizational success, as engaged and high-performing employees drive business outcomes (Meyer et al., 2020).

Despite the growing body of research on servant leadership in African and East African organizations, there is limited understanding of its specific effects on employee retention within Kenya's corporate landscape. Similarly, the extent to which servant leadership style improves employee retention at South Nyanza Sugar Company (Sony Sugar) in Kenya, which operates across the East African region, remains unclear. Given the company's regional significance and distinctive leadership style, this study examined how servant leadership impacts employee retention at South Nyanza Sugar Company. Understanding this relationship is crucial for addressing retention challenges in similar organizations within the region.

Problem Statement

According to the findings of Fadare (2018), 75% of organizations in Africa adopt delegative, authoritarian, and participative leadership styles. In Kenya, 65% of employees do not envision working in directive leadership environments for over a decade (Jacqueline & Nafula, 2021). Many managers in Sub-Saharan Africa and East Africa focus on exercising authority to achieve team, personal, and organizational goals within strict timelines (Otara, 2011). This leadership approach, primarily aimed at maximizing capitalist objectives, often results in employees seeking more inclusive and supportive work environments (Abugre & Anlesinya, 2020). As a result, over 65% of workers in African firms frequently switch jobs in search of better workplace conditions.

Despite having policies promoting employee involvement, Kenyan companies predominantly favour authoritative leadership styles that prioritize control and efficiency over inclusivity (Fadare, 2018). Employers find authoritarian leadership

effective in meeting organizational objectives, especially in traditionally structured societies (Muger, 2020; Jacqueline & Nafula, 2021). However, limited employee participation in decision-making fosters feelings of undervaluation and dissatisfaction (Njiri et al., 2021).

According to Nthenya (2016), sugar companies in Kenya have experienced employee turnover challenges similar to those faced by other African-based organizations. However, over time, some of the companies have successfully reduced their turnover rates due to their ability to retain employees. This shift has been attributed to the management's inclusive approach, which fosters employee engagement and participation in organizational operations. Despite this improvement, there is still lack of employee retention in sugar factories, and South Nyanza Sugar Company (Sony Sugar) is not an exception with significant consequences on operational efficiency and organizational culture. High turnover rates lead to increased recruitment and training costs, especially in the sugar production industry, where specialized skills and expertise are critical for maintaining effective operations (Mujahid & Khan, 2020).

Moreover, employee turnover often results in the loss of invaluable institutional knowledge and expertise. Experienced employees bring critical insights into production processes and quality control, which are vital for maintaining productivity and operational efficiency. Their departure can disrupt workflows and lead to a decline in performance quality, further complicating the operational landscape (Meyer et al., 2021). Frequent turnover can also negatively impact the morale and engagement of the remaining employees. The departure of colleagues can create an unstable work environment, leading to decreased motivation among the staff that remains. This situation can initiate a vicious cycle, where disheartened employees

actively seek more stable working conditions elsewhere; exacerbating turnover rates (Abugre & Anlesinya, 2020).

In addition to internal challenges, high turnover can cause operational disruptions in sugar factories, where teamwork and consistency are crucial for success. New hires often require time to acclimate to the specific processes involved in sugar production, which can lead to inefficiencies and potential production delays (Nthenya, 2016). The link between employee retention and customer satisfaction is also significant. When turnover rates are high, the quality of service can decline, leading to dissatisfied customers. In the competitive sugar industry, maintaining strong customer relationships is essential for long-term success and market position (Muger, 2020).

Lastly, high turnover can damage an organization's reputation within the industry. Companies recognized for poor employee retention may find it challenging to attract top talent, which can further exacerbate staffing issues and hinder overall growth (Mwita & Tefurukwa, 2018). Addressing these challenges through effective leadership practices, such as servant leadership, could significantly improve employee retention, thereby enhancing organizational performance and sustainability within the sugar industry. Therefore, this study applied and examined the effects of servant leadership on employee retention at South Nyanza Sugar Company.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study was to explore how servant leadership practice contributes to employees' retention at South Nyanza Sugar Company

Specific Objectives of the Study

i. To explore how servant leadership influences employee satisfaction and subsequently encourages employee retention at South Nyanza Sugar Company, Kenya.
ii. To investigate how servant leadership influences employee motivation and subsequently fosters employee retention at South Nyanza Sugar Company, Kenya.
iii. To explore how servant leadership influences employee commitment and subsequently strengthens employee retention at South Nyanza Sugar Company, Kenya.
iv. iv. To examine how servant leadership influences employee performance and subsequently promotes employee retention at South Nyanza Sugar Company, Kenya.

Research Questions

i. How does servant leadership influence employee satisfaction to encourage employee retention at South Nyanza Sugar Company, Kenya?
ii. How does servant leadership influence employee motivation to foster employee retention at South Nyanza Sugar Company, Kenya?
iii. In what ways does servant leadership influence employee commitment to strengthen employee retention at South Nyanza Sugar Company, Kenya?
iv. How does servant leadership influence employee performance to promote employee retention at South Nyanza Sugar Company, Kenya?

Assumptions of the Study

In conducting this study, a number of assumptions were made to guide the research process and ensure the credibility of the findings. Firstly, it was assumed that

the participants had a genuine interest in engaging in the study. This implies that their motivations were rooted in a desire to share their experiences rather than to impress their managers or supervisors, which could bias their responses. Establishing trust with participants is crucial in qualitative research so as to encourage honest and open communication.

Secondly, the researcher assumed that all participants would respond truthfully and as accurately as possible to the research questions. This reliance on the honesty of the participants aligns with the qualitative research assumption that data is co-constructed through interactions between the researcher and participants. It is essential to recognize that participants may have different interpretations of their experiences, leading to subjective accounts that reflect multiple realities.

Additionally, the researcher assumed that participants shared similar experiences with the phenomenon of servant leadership within the organization. This assumption was critical for understanding the commonalities and nuances of their experiences, as qualitative research often seeks to explore phenomena within specific contexts. Moreover, it was assumed that the inclusion criteria used for selecting participants were accurate and effective, ensuring that all individuals had relevant experiences and knowledge about servant leadership. This assumption was vital for the validity of the study, as it supported the notion that the findings are representative of the targeted population.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant for several reasons, particularly in the context of enhancing workplace dynamics and improving organizational performance. The research aims to shed light on the crucial role that leadership styles play in influencing

employee experiences and organizational commitment; as such, organizational leaders and management: This study could provide valuable insights for organizational leaders and management teams at South Nyanza Sugar Company. Understanding how servant leadership affects employee retention may enable them to adopt leadership strategies that prioritize employee well-being and satisfaction. By implementing these practices, leaders can create a more engaging and supportive work environment, ultimately leading to lower turnover rates and enhanced organizational loyalty.

Human Resource Professionals: Human resource practitioners would benefit from this study by gaining a deeper understanding of the factors that contribute to employee retention in the context of servant leadership. The findings can guide HR strategies and initiatives, such as designing targeted training programs for leaders and developing policies that promote servant leadership behaviours. This would help cultivate a positive organizational culture that aligns with employees' needs and expectations.

Employees: Employees at South Nyanza Sugar Company (Sony Sugar) may experience the benefits of this study indirectly through improved leadership practices. As management adopts servant leadership qualities, employees are likely to see increased support, recognition, and empowerment in their roles. This can lead to higher job satisfaction, motivation, and commitment, fostering a sense of belonging and loyalty to the organization.

Policy Makers and Government Agencies: The findings of this study can inform policymakers and government agencies regarding effective leadership practices in state-owned enterprises. By advocating for the integration of servant leadership principles in public sector organizations, policymakers can contribute to

the establishment of a more productive and stable workforce, ultimately enhancing public service delivery.

Academic Community: This study adds to the existing body of literature on leadership and employee retention, particularly within the Kenyan context. Academics and researchers can use the insights generated from this study as a foundation for future research, exploring servant leadership in various sectors or different organizational environments. This contribution to scholarship can foster a greater understanding of the complexities of leadership and its impact on employee dynamics.

Industry Practitioners: Other organizations within the agricultural sector and beyond can draw lessons from this study's findings. By examining the role of servant leadership in employee retention, industry practitioners can benchmark their leadership approaches and adopt similar strategies to boost employee engagement and loyalty, ultimately enhancing organizational performance across the sector.

Justification of the Study

The study on "Role of Servant Leadership Practice on Employee Retention" at South Nyanza Sugar Company, Kenya, is vital for several reasons. First, the agricultural sector, particularly sugar production industry, faces significant challenges related to employee turnover. High turnover rates can negatively impact productivity, operational efficiency, and organizational culture (Mujahid & Khan, 2020). Understanding the dynamics of servant leadership could provide insights into how this leadership style contributes to employee retention, thereby; contributing to a more stable workforce.

Second, servant leadership has been recognized as an effective approach to fostering employee satisfaction, motivation, and commitment (Sousa & van Dierendonck, 2020; Kim & Beehr, 2020). By examining the specific effects of servant leadership at South Nyanza Sugar Company, this study aims to highlight how leadership practices can create a supportive work environment that enhances employee morale and loyalty. This is particularly crucial in Kenya, where many organizations still employ authoritarian leadership styles that may not align with the evolving needs and expectations of the workforce (Jacqueline & Nafula, 2021).

Furthermore, the research contributes to the growing body of literature on leadership in the African context, where servant leadership practices are gaining attention as potential solutions to challenges in employee retention (Abugre & Anlesinya, 2020). It could also provide practical recommendations for management at South Nyanza Sugar Company (Sony Sugar) and similar organizations, emphasizing the importance of adopting leadership practices that prioritize employee well-being. Ultimately, the findings from this study could contribute to broader organizational strategies and policies, leading to enhanced employee retention and organizational performance in the sugar industry.

Scope of the Study

The scope of this study was designed to achieve depth and relevance, focusing specifically on servant leadership's impact on employees' empowerment, motivation, performance, and job satisfaction at South Nyanza Sugar Company. By examining only 30 employees, the research concentrated on a manageable sample size, allowing for in-depth analysis and insights within the specific context of the company. Conducting the study over a two-month period was practical, given the busy

schedules of employees, balancing thorough data collection with the limitations of time and respondents' availability.

The findings were limited to the study period, acknowledging that shifts in leadership styles could occur with personnel changes, making the results most applicable to the time frame of the research. Additionally, selecting employees with a minimum of ten years of tenure ensured that the participants had substantial experience within the company, thus providing more reliable and informed responses. This choice reflects an understanding that longer-tenured employees would better evaluate the impacts of leadership styles, despite potential limitations in reaching a larger sample size due to turnover or other career changes outside the company leadership.

Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

The study's findings were limited to South Nyanza Sugar Company (Sony Sugar) as other companies practising servant leadership in the region or country were not involved in this study. This implied that the findings of the study might not be applied by other companies or used to explain the contribution of servant leadership on employees' performance and commitment in other organizations. However, this limitation can be removed because nearly every organization borrows a lot from others, which could create similarities in the impact of servant leadership on employee retention.

The findings of the study were limited to South Nyanza Sugar Company's servant application in Kenya. The research findings are relevant to the company in Kenya and the lessons learnt, recommendations, and knowledge may not apply to any organization of similar structure and operations outside the country. The factors that

could have led to the outcomes of the research are unique to South Nyanza Sugar Company (Sony Sugar).

The research used the purposive non-probability sampling method, a method which does not give every employee an equal chance to participate in the study. This sampling method creates some room for biases such as preferring certain clusters of the population, which may have potential contribution on the study outcome.

This study used a small sample of only a few participants that proportionately represented the entire workforce in the organization. This limited the application of the findings in the entire organization. The study's findings might not have a direct effect on those employees with less than ten years of experience in - South Nyanza Sugar Company (Sony Sugar) Ltd. However, the effect might not be significant if the leadership style is well grounded in the organizational culture such that all the employees are treated the same way irrespective of how long they have served in the organization.

Chapter Summary

The chapter began by presenting the challenges faced by South Nyanza Sugar Company (Sony Sugar) in retaining skilled employees amidst increasing turnover rates in Kenya's sugar industry. It posits that servant leadership, which emphasizes serving others, empowering employees, and fostering a supportive work environment, could be instrumental in addressing retention issues. The chapter has also articulated the research problem, highlighting that high turnover disrupts organizational stability and hampers performance. It further details specific objectives, including examining the relationship between servant leadership and employee motivation, performance, and job satisfaction, which are key factors in retention. Finally, the chapter has

explained the study's significance, assumption, limitation and delimitation of the study.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The past decade has seen a growing emphasis by organizational scholars on value-based leadership styles, including servant leadership (Eva et al., 2019 & Lee et al., 2020). Servant leadership, introduced by Robert K. Greenleaf, shifts the focus of leadership from power and authority to service and empowerment. Researchers have developed several frameworks and measures to define servant leadership characteristics and examine their impact in diverse organizational settings (Newman et al., 2017). The literature review focuses on the following key areas: servant leadership characteristics in enhancing employee satisfaction, employee empowerment and motivation, and the role of servant leadership and employee retention.

Through the analysis of past studies, this chapter develops a theoretical framework that informs the research concepts. Based on the evaluation and findings of past studies on the application and the role of servant leadership on employee retention, the researcher developed the research gap. Further, the chapter addresses the research gap and informs future studies on the topic and related concepts. Lastly, the chapter provides a detailed conceptual framework that visually explains the expected relationship between the key variables of the research.

Theoretical Review

Servant Leadership and Employees' Motivation

Jain, Gupta and Bindal (2019) define employee motivation as a significant factor that persuades employees to give their best in the execution of duties while helping the organization to achieve its objectives effectively. Motivation could either be positive or negative. Positive motivation inspires employees to commit towards

expanding their output to help the organization. On the contrary, negative motivation is what demotivates employees and reduces their output in the workplace. However, Kuranchie-Mensah and Amponsah-Tawiah (2016) described employee motivation as a factor of inspiration where employers provide incentives to inspire employees to give their best towards the attainment of the set goals. The performance of employees is based on the incentives or actions that employers put in place to motivate employees towards an effective and reliable effort towards the successful completion of the tasks assigned to the workers.

According to research conducted by Harwiki (2013), in Indonesia, the implementation of a servant leadership style in cooperate organizations encourages the development of positive relationships with their employees. In this study, 660 employees, 40 managers, and 4-unit businesses participated in the research. The population was divided through clustering, which enhanced the researcher's capacity to examine the relationship between servant leadership and employee motivation and withdrawal intentions.

Servant leadership empowers employees in various capacities to serve others within and beyond their workplaces. As a result of servant leadership application in the various cooperatives in Indonesia, employees in the respective organizations develop a sense of belonging and motivation to work and serve the employer (Crippen, 2017).

Servant leadership in cooperatives creates the opportunity for leaders to emphasize their exchanges with the followers, which builds a strong emotional relationship between them, which consequently motivates the followers (Khatri & Dutta, 2018). The case of these Indonesian cooperatives reveals that employees who feel that their leaders are committed to empowering them, will in turn commit to

going the extra mile in carrying out their tasks at the workplace. Employees immensely contributed to the existence of the cooperatives in the marketplace and environment as the communities and other social structures revered the impacts that these organizations had on the surrounding communities.

According to doctoral research conducted by Mitterer (2017), leaders who support employees create a sense of belonging to the employees and improve their commitments to the employer. In this study, 381 participants responded to questions related to the impact of servant leadership on employee retention. The study found that the employees develop the spirit to perform their duties effectively without being pressured to perform and achieve their goals within the set timelines. The trust development between the leaders and the followers creates the motivation to perform the respective responsibilities and duties with little or no supervision (Zhong et al., 2020). Employees' trust in their leaders comes as a result of the servant leadership approach that the leaders apply in the workplace. According to the study by Quintana et al. (2014), hospitality and business linked leadership style to the performance of individual employees and the overall organizational performance. They also found that the practice of transformational leadership such as servant leadership inspired and motivated the employees beyond their individual interests because those leaders are seen as good examples by the employees, and which in turn greatly contributes to their behaviour change and impacts the quality of their service delivery (DeConinck et al., 2018). Servant leaders motivate employees in these workplaces to achieve maximum outcomes.

In addition, Mitterer (2017) explains that, in the United States Healthcare Sector, nurses and other healthcare workers work in very strenuous work environments and require very understanding, participative, and servant leaders to

achieve their respective goals. In the US healthcare facilities where leaders apply transactional leadership approaches, servant leadership specifically experience a more motivated employee base and records considerably high performance in the workplace. The research included the study by Lee et al. (2013), which concluded that leadership styles that support employees improve the employees' motivation and ability to achieve their duties and obligations within the stipulated timeframes (Mitterer, 2017). The employees develop a sense of belonging and thus the confidence to commit and serve the healthcare organizations in the United States of America.

According to a study conducted by Khatri and Dutta (2018), there has been an increased push on all the organizations in the hospitality industry to increase their activities in change initiatives and come up with new structures which can lead to improved performance (Khatri & Dutta, 2018). The hospital administrators and managers have discovered that for several reasons, such as unreliable appraisal systems, subjectively administered rewards and poor managerial skills which link the performance of employees to compensation, make transactional leadership style not able to achieve the desired organizational performance. The author puts it that transformational leadership is a social process, which drives the followers' behaviour and maintains a group culture, which encourages them to pursue their goals, which are aligned with the organizational objectives. The group behaviour comes as a result of the transformational leader's guides and creates a direct effect on the group's performance and effectiveness.

According to the findings of Hattab and Kornelius (2021), in the Indonesian healthcare sector, employees are motivated towards realizing organizational objectives due to the close relationship they have with their leaders and the ability to track their performance improvement. The study denotes that a servant leader has a

strong heart and mind that enable them to serve their followers, thus the inspiration to perform under such leadership. The study involved 729 healthcare workers in Undata Regional General Hospital in Palu, Indonesia. A total of 258 respondents provided feedback to the research questions, which formed the basis of the study.

The study revealed that in Indonesia, healthcare organizations, such as Undata Regional General Hospital, that practice servant leadership through supportive relationships with the employees create a high follower commitment to duty, greater employee loyalty, job satisfaction and high productivity in the organization (Hattab & Kornelius, 2021). The attainment of the set goals and objectives for the individuals and the organization results in increased sales and sales revenue, and increased market share, which leads to more profits and growth for the organization.

So, because the leadership style plays a role in the way the employees undertake tasks in the organization, leaders should always create a conducive environment which will inspire and motivate employees to excel. A supportive climate recognizes each person's needs and what they aspire to be and have, through effective two-way communication, creating an environment, which allows the free flow of information from all corners and levels in the organization.

Moreover, the servant leadership approach improves employees' motivation. Employee motivation creates inspiration and commitment on the side of the employees to commit to the organization (Thacker, 2018). Employee motivation instils the belief and satisfaction that the current employers are the right people to propel them to their dreams. Employee motivation develops a feeling of fulfilment that attaches the employees to the organization. As a result, employee motivation that results from servant leadership leads to retention, as they are inspired to continue working with the employer.

The first need of an employee is to be well-equipped to perform their functions. Servant leadership empowers the followers with the right training to have appropriate skills to carry out their duties and creates a conducive work environment, which motivates the employee to perform even beyond expectations (Thacker, 2018). This gives job fulfilment, and because the servant leader puts the followers' interests before theirs, it means that even compensation matches responsibility. These combined factors create overall employee satisfaction. Such conditions make the employees believe that their career growth and welfare are wholly taken care of, and so there will be no desire to leave the organization, which results in employee retention. Considering that one of the effects of servant leadership is the fulfilment it brings to followers, it means that positive outcomes of servant leadership are easily nurtured by just focusing on the needs of the followers (Saboe, 2010).

Servant Leadership and Employee Retention

Silva et al. (2019) define employee retention as prevention of employee turnover by reducing the number of people who leave an organization for varied reasons. Companies, which are interested in employee retention, provide a friendly, positive, and accommodative working environment for the workers (Mustamil & Najam, 2020). Human resource managers are currently concerned about employee retention as the process of recruiting, training, and building professional brands is highly costly to the companies. However, Kossivi et al. (2016), claim that employee retention is a psychological perception that moulds workers' decisions to leave or stay in an organization. They reason that all the factors of employee retention are psychologically processed; thus, their impact depends on the mental expectations of a worker. The argument by Kossivi et al. (2016) may be a bit contrary to the general contribution of elements of employee retention elucidated by Silva et al. (2019);

Osman-Gani and Paik (2016), however, there is concurrence that employee retention is a decision that employees make based on their psychological contentment and fulfilment in the workplace.

Employee retention involves the strategies and processes that organizations initiate to improve employee satisfaction and reduce employee turnover. The ability to retain employees in an organization characterizes employee retention in a particular institution (Alafeshat & Tanova, 2019). Employee motivation and satisfaction are some of the ways organizations achieve employee retention. Creating a satisfying and friendly work environment attracts new talent and motivates them to stay in the organization longer, as opposed to a case where employees are not satisfied (Ding et al., 2012). Leadership approaches are integral in the creation of a friendly and accommodative environment that motivates employees to remain committed to one employer.

Servant leadership creates an empowered and satisfied workforce. The ability to resonate with the employees' needs and satisfaction develops employee loyalty and thus employee retention (Olesia et al., 2014). The motivation to work in an organization reduces employees' intention to withdraw their services from an organization. A satisfied worker implies an emotionally attached employee and thus high employee retention rates. Organizations practicing servant leadership emotionally connect with the employee's thus reducing turnover in such organizations. (Le Ng et al., 2016)

Furthermore, Le Ng et al. (2016) explain that servant leadership negatively relates to employees' intention to withdraw from institutions. Managers play significant roles in ensuring that the employees are connected and satisfied with the work environment and the processes undertaken in the organization. This argument is

furthered by Prakasch and Ghayas (2019), who demonstrated the relationship between servant leadership and employees' turnover intentions. According to these scholars (Prakasch & Ghayas, 2019), servant leadership creates a connection between employers and leaders under whom they work in their respective organizations. Consequently, employees find it hard to leave an organization as they are contented and connected with each other and the organization as a whole.

The ability to contribute to the success of an organization and be recognized improves employees' retention to the organization. Employees develop a sense of connection with the success and identity of the organization, thus leading to sometimes 'lifetime' commitment to the institution (Ding et al., 2012). The employees do not see a reason to leave the organization and seek better employment opportunities elsewhere (Thacker, 2018). One of the main contributions of servant leadership to employees is the ability to be recognized in the institution. The institutions with servant leaders directly involve employees in the work processes and the results reflect the employees' input. As a result, the employees get the recognition they deserve for their efforts and thus improve their satisfaction levels in the institution.

Servant Leadership and Employees' Performance

With reference to Diamantidis and Chatzoglou (2018), employee performance refers to the ability of an employee to attain and fulfil their work-related duties while executing the required tasks and ensuring that they achieve their expected performance level by the employer. In concurrence, Utin and Yosepha (2019), explain that employee performance entails following instructions at work and working within the guided parameters to ensure that the entire work is undertaken effectively. Servant leaders have a special way of influencing employees' character, work ethics, all of

which inspire them to work and commit towards the realization of the tasks and fulfil all the requirements. So, servant leadership is therefore having the pre-requisite elements for employee retention.

According to Saleem et al. (2020), employees who are inspired and motivated commit to achieve high performance in the organization. Creating the right working environment capacitates employees to fulfil their work requirements and attain self-goals as well. Servant leadership is one of the mechanisms through which employers create an enabling environment for employees. Kohntopp and McCann (2018) argue that the confidence levels attributed to servant leadership and an accommodative workplace environment improve employees' performance levels. As supported by DeConinck et al. (2018), servant leadership is associated with work morality and ethics, which directly impacts organizational performance from the employees' efforts. Further, there is the aspect of cognitive trust that develops among the employees in organizations where servant leadership is practised (Huning et al., 2020). Employees who believe in the leadership approach and tactics in the workplace develop work ethics and behaviour that resonate with the organizations' cultures. Once the employees develop behaviours that align with the organizational culture, the results are impressive as they perform swiftly within the set codes of the organization.

In addition, Brohi et al. (2018) illuminated that servant leadership initiates psychological reasoning and satisfaction that improves the employees' commitment to the workplace. Servant leadership invokes a sense of belonging and commitment towards improving the organizational performance of an individual (Huning et al., 2020). The motivation and satisfaction that come with servant leadership guides employees to develop a commitment to duty. Employees who commit to the organization require very little supervision and this translates to high performance.

Kohntopp and McCann (2018) concur with Brohi et al. (2018) by arguing that when organizations do not spend many resources on supervision, they record very high performance from the employees. Employees are self-driven to work towards realizing the organizational goals and diligently deliver. Based on the findings of this study, most of the successful organizations in Europe and the United States such as Google apply transformational leadership such as servant leadership approaches. The employees have a high work-life balance and are satisfied with the working conditions that the employers provide leading to employee loyalty and attachment to the organization.

As explained by Melchar and Bosco (2010), servant leadership encompasses positivism and ethics in the workplace. Organizations that put value in serving others even within their ranks achieve positive outcomes and promote followers to transform into servant leaders, creating a servant leadership culture. As servant leadership is practised in organizations, employees feel the impact and connection with the organization even more, thus improving their commitment to organizational values and maintaining high performance. Servant leadership empowers employees to coordinate and perform tasks with confidence keeping in mind that they have the support of the leaders in their respective positions (DeConinck et al., 2018). As a result, empowered employees achieve high results in the workplace. According to the study on ‘the impact of servant leadership style on employee empowerment’ by Murari and Gupta (2012), servant leaders empower employees to have confidence and developing their skills enables them to perform duties proficiently. In most globalized organizations such as Nike, Google, and Tesla, employers emphasize employee empowerment through servant leadership (Thacker, 2018). Servant leaders instil skills

and initiate knowledge acquisition and application to enhance employees' commitment.

Based on the above arguments, servant leadership improves employees' performance through the employee development programs and focus that organizational leadership offers to employees, and psychological stature and contentment that invigorates them as supported (Alafeshat & Tanova, 2019). A well-performing employee achieves their dream in the workplace and works with very minimal challenges as they are empowered to efficiently deliver. An accommodative and friendly working environment, which servant leadership creates, encourages employees to perform and attain their set goals. The ability to fulfil one's goals as well as those of the organization creates a feeling of fulfilment and satisfaction that encourages the employees to commit their futures to the employer (Achen et al., 2019). Employee performance, as a contribution of servant leadership, creates the desire to continue working for the employer, thus employee retention.

Servant Leadership and Employee Satisfaction

Employee satisfaction may be a broad term coined and used mainly by HR managers. Employee satisfaction has a very precise impact on employee retention in the workplace. In reference to Elrehail et al. (2019), employee satisfaction refers to the level of contentment or gratification with the operations and activities in a workplace towards attaining their professional goals and that of the company. Even though the parameters of employee satisfaction are diverse such as compensation, management, workload, attitude, and availability of resources, organizational leadership is a vital determinant of satisfaction. According to Sharif et al. (2011), human resources management practices including leadership directly impact employees' turnover intentions. Organizations with horizontal management structures

where employees are involved in the decision-making processes and other operations are most likely to record low employee turnover cases. Servant leadership creates a platform where employees are engaged and valued which positively impacts their satisfaction levels, leading to high employees' retention rates.

Besides, servant leadership works towards improving employee commitment, satisfaction, and sense of belonging (Thacker, 2018). Servant leadership characterizes effective management of employees and ethical consideration of their situations in the workplace. The employee management strategies which epitomize a sense of belonging initiate employees' intention to commit to the employer longer and possibly for a lifetime (Alafeshat & Tanova, 2019). According to the principles of Robert Greenleaf in defining servant leadership and the associated impacts, indicated that businesses are expected to produce better and high-quality services and products as well as being greater social assets (Spears, 2010). As social assets, businesses are expected to be socially impacting the lives of the employees and the communities around them. The social impacts involve helping the employees achieve their social goals and motivating them to commit towards the realization of the organizational and personal goals as well.

Unsatisfied employees are most likely to develop the intention to leave their employees and seek better and more satisfying work environments. According to the study by Caffey (2012), leaders who empower and serve their followers with humility increase the employees' intention to stay in the organizations longer. Serving others with humility improved their commitment to stay in an organization longer due to their enhanced sense of belonging (Olesia et al., 2014). An improved sense of belonging creates a feeling that the employees are welcomed, appreciated, and cared for in the organization. Coupled with empowerment and motivation, a strong sense of

belonging creates the right work environment and increases employees' loyalty to the organization, which in turn inspires them to perform better, job satisfaction, leading to high retention rates. Servant leaders help create positive work environments thus giving employees a reason to stay longer and experience satisfying work environments and positive working relations (Huning, Hurt & Frieder 2020). Servant leadership creates a stronger sense of belonging and a higher satisfaction level, which reduces employees' thoughts of leaving a company (Ding et al., 2012). Organizations with servant leaders provide a perfect work environment where employees are satisfied and motivated to commit to long-term service.

According to the study by Elrehail et al. (2019), in the examination of Northern Cyprus as a case study, servant leadership practices are a factor in the employee-based human resources management process. In Northern Cyprus, human resource management practices and organizational leadership impact employees' satisfaction levels. The study used structural equation modelling and AMOS, where 439 questionnaires were answered by employees working in five-star hotels in Northern Cyprus. The study revealed that servant leadership propels employees to achieve their objectives and dreams in the workplace. Servant leadership supports the development of employees and aids them in developing essential skills to perform excellently in the workplace (Achen et al., 2019). As a result of the contribution of servant leadership to employee performance and development, workers become satisfied with the working environment and the contribution of the employer to their development. A satisfied employee commits to work for the employer whom they feel significantly contributes to their development. As a result, servant leadership, which contributes to employee satisfaction, directly contributes to employee retention.

Further, Mutia and Muthamia (2016) reveal that in the African continent, leadership is characterized by a missed leadership approach where leaders do not wholly and independently use servant leadership within their ranks (Mutia & Muthamia, 2016). However, in the few instances, where departments within organizations practice servant leadership, employees are inspired to perform their duties with very little reservations (Kohntopp & McCann, 2018). They explore the work environment with confidence that with their skills and leaders' support guarantee high performance. The inability to holistically initiate servant leadership in African organizations renders the practice a bit contradictory in terms of achieving personal goals at the workplace and meeting the organizational goals (DeConinck et al., 2018). The study highlights that in the few cases where leaders apply servant leadership, they perform well in line with the set organizational goals in the workplace.

Theoretical Framework

This study was based on a multi-theoretical framework that collectively explains how leadership styles influence employee retention. The framework integrates Servant Leadership Theory, Job Embeddedness Theory, and Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory, while also incorporating Institutional Theory to account for broader organizational and environmental influences. Additionally, insights from Spiritual Leadership Theory and Authentic Leadership Theory are considered as complementary perspectives to enrich the understanding of ethical, values-driven leadership

Theory of Servant Leadership

In 1970, Robert K. Greenleaf first defined and proposed servant leadership as a theoretical framework that backed leaders' primary role and motivation as service to others whom they lead. Based on this theoretical framework, Greenleaf went ahead to

define servant leadership as a leadership approach that puts serving others as a top priority for leaders. Further, he described servant leadership as putting more emphasis on serving others, integrating them in decision-making, and promoting a sense of belonging or community among the employees or those led in an organizational set-up (Greenleaf, 1977).

Based on the determined attributes and focus of servant leadership by Robert Greenleaf, the following characteristics have been associated with servant leadership: Listening - which refers to a commitment to intently listen to others, coupled with periods of reflection. Servant leaders require listening to accurately understand others and create solutions considering the situations that others are in through listening and accommodating their sentiments. Empathy - which is an effort to psychologically project a person's consciousness into another's by understanding and accepting others for who they are. Servant leaders never reject others regardless of their contrary positions and situations. Healing- According to Greenleaf, healing is to make whole and servant leaders recognize a shared human desire to become whole as a person and support others to be whole. Servant leaders focus on helping others overcome emotional wounds. Awareness – Based on Greenleaf's definition, awareness incorporates both general awareness and self-awareness all of which contribute to an understanding of issues related to power, ethics, and values. Greenleaf further postulates that no leader would see opportunities without being aware (Liden et al., 2008).

Persuasion – Servant leaders rely on convincing others based on the merit of arguments rather than on coercion or manipulation. Servant leaders build consensus with others as a group by gently and persistently persuading them to adopt certain courses of action in the organization. Conceptualization – Servant leaders can think

beyond the present-day realities, dream big, and conceive solutions to challenges that are not present at the time. Foresight – According to Greenleaf, foresight or prescience is the ability of servant leaders to think beyond the average guess and understand lessons from the past, as well as the present times' realities. Foresight involves the ability to project and consider the likely consequences of a decision for the future. Stewardship – Servant leaders behave with the understanding that they have been entrusted with running the organization as a whole and moving it towards impacting society as a whole. Servant leaders commit themselves towards enhancing harmony between society and the organization through positive impact in a holistic perspective (Ehrhart, 2004).

Commitment to the growth of people – Servant leaders foster institutional building that improves the welfare, capacities, and abilities of workers by recognizing that their intrinsic value goes beyond the intangible contributions of workers. Servant leaders have a strong commitment to growing others and making them taller than they would otherwise. Building community – Servant leaders have the desire to create a true community within the organization that modern institutions have eroded (van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015).

Based on the characteristics of servant leadership, there are functional attributes that show the impact of this leadership style on people. The functional attributes are the intrinsic characteristics of servant leadership, which express the direction and impact of this leadership approach and the consequent impact on employees. Concerning the theoretical framework of this study, the functional attributes relate to the codes that translate to the common themes that can be deduced from the practice of servant leadership in relation to its impact on employees. The functional attributes of servant leadership include empowerment, vision, role

modelling, appreciation, and service to others, pioneering, and stewardship, delegation of duties, integrity, and encouragement. Servant leadership practice impacts employee satisfaction, motivation, and commitment to continue working for the employer (Shaw and Newton, 2021).

Empirical studies have further established a link between servant leadership and employee retention. Liden et al. (2008) demonstrated that servant leadership significantly enhances employee engagement and retention through its impact on organizational trust, employee motivation, and professional development opportunities. In a similar vein, research by Shaw and Newton (2021) showed that organizations with servant leadership-oriented cultures have lower turnover rates, as employees in such environments report higher satisfaction levels and a sense of purpose. In applying servant leadership at South Nyanza Sugar Company, leaders would not only be addressing immediate retention challenges but would also be laying a foundation for a loyal workforce motivated to contribute to long-term organizational goals. This approach aligns with studies indicating that employees are more likely to remain with organizations where leadership practices reflect support, fairness, and a commitment to development (van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015).

While servant leadership shares ethical foundations (Greenleaf, 1977), it does not fully capture the intrinsic, values-driven, and identity-based mechanisms through which leaders influence employee retention. Ethical leadership typically emphasizes normative conduct and adherence to moral principles (Brown, Treviño, & Harrison, 2005), but spiritual and authentic leadership delve deeper into the psychological and existential dimensions of work namely, employees' need for meaning, purpose, transparency, and a coherent sense of self in relation to their organization (Fry, 2003; Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Therefore the researcher incorporated Spiritual Leadership

Theory (Fry, 2003) and Authentic Leadership Theory (Avolio & Gardner, 2005) as complementary perspectives, this study to acknowledge that employee retention is not solely a function of ethical treatment but also of whether employees find their work spiritually fulfilling and their leaders genuinely transparent (Rego, Sousa, Marques, & Pina e Cunha, 2012). These theories do not replace servant leadership; rather, they enrich it by addressing aspects of human motivation and relational integrity that servant leadership implies but does not fully theorize (van Dierendonck, 2011).

Spiritual Leadership Theory posits that effective leadership creates intrinsic motivation by fostering three interdependent elements: vision (a compelling sense of destination), hope/faith (the desire and expectation that the vision can be realized), and altruistic love (a sense of wholeness, harmony, and care among organizational members) (Fry, 2003). When these elements are present, employees experience both a sense of calling believing their work has purpose beyond material reward and a sense of membership feeling understood, appreciated, and accepted as part of a community (Fry, Vitucci, & Cedillo, 2005). These outcomes directly align with servant leadership's emphasis on building community and healing (Greenleaf, 1977), but spiritual leadership theory provides a more explicit framework for understanding how leaders cultivate existential meaning and emotional connectedness (Pawar, 2009).

In the context of employee retention, spiritual leadership explains why individuals remain with an employer even when external job opportunities offer similar or better tangible benefits: the organization provides a source of identity, purpose, and relational belonging that is not easily replicated (Milliman, Czaplewski, & Ferguson, 2003). When servant leaders integrate spiritual leadership practices, they move beyond service-oriented behaviors to actively nurture the inner lives of

employees, thereby deepening emotional bonds and reducing turnover intentions (Chen & Li, 2013).

Authentic Leadership Theory focuses on leaders who are self-aware, relationally transparent, balanced in processing information (soliciting dissenting views before making decisions), and guided by an internalized moral perspective rather than external pressures (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing, & Peterson, 2008). Authentic leaders do not merely act ethically; they genuinely know who they are, openly share their values and limitations, and invite input without defensiveness (Gardner, Cogliser, Davis, & Dickens, 2011). This authenticity fosters psychological safety, which is the shared belief that the workplace is safe for interpersonal risk-taking, such as speaking up about concerns or admitting mistakes (Edmondson, 1999).

For employee retention, psychological safety is critical because employees who feel they cannot be honest or vulnerable with their leaders often disengage and eventually leave (Hirak, Peng, Carmeli, & Schaubroeck, 2012). While servant leadership encourages empathy and listening (Liden et al., 2008), authentic leadership theory explicitly theorizes how leader transparency and consistency build trust over time (Clapp-Smith, Vogelgesang, & Avey, 2009). When combined with servant leadership, authentic leadership strengthens the ethical and relational foundations of leader-employee interactions: employees not only feel served and valued but also perceive their leaders as genuine and reliable (Leroy, Palanski, & Simons, 2012). This perception reduces uncertainty about the future of the employment relationship, directly lowering turnover intentions (Laschinger & Fida, 2014).

Together, Spiritual Leadership Theory and Authentic Leadership Theory address dimensions of leadership that go beyond traditional ethical frameworks

(Brown & Treviño, 2006). Ethical leadership typically answers the question, "Is the leader doing the right thing?" (Brown et al., 2005). Spiritual leadership answers, "Does the leader help me find meaning and belonging?" (Fry, 2003). Authentic leadership answers, "Is the leader real and trustworthy?" (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). When integrated with servant leadership's core focus on serving others, empowerment, and stewardship (Greenleaf, 1977; van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015), these complementary theories provide a holistic explanation of employee retention. An employee is likely to stay when they are served by their leader (servant leadership), find purpose and community in their work (spiritual leadership), and trust that their leader is transparent and consistent (authentic leadership) (Rego et al., 2012; Chen & Li, 2013). In the context of South Nyanza Sugar Company, where retention challenges may stem from both practical dissatisfaction and deeper disconnection from organizational purpose, applying all three theories allows for a more nuanced diagnosis and intervention (Mitchell et al., 2001; Holtom & Darabi, 2018). Leaders who embody service, spiritual meaning, and authenticity are better positioned to create a workforce that remains committed not out of necessity but out of genuine attachment to the organization's vision, relationships, and leadership integrity (Liden et al., 2008; Avolio, Wernsing, & Gardner, 2018).

Job Embeddedness Theory

As stated in the Job Embeddedness Theory as defined by Mitchell and colleagues, when employees have a strong link or are embedded in the company, then they are most likely to stay in the company (Mitchell et al., 2001). The Job Embeddedness Theory describes the attachment factors in a work environment that may convince employees to stay put with an employer, leading to employee retention.

This theory creates a dimension of six attachment dimensions including; fit, links, and sacrifice both in community and the organization (Holtom & Darabi, 2018). According to the theory, fit refers to the perception of shared values as well as goals that employees share with the organization. Whenever an employee encounters a stronger fit in the organization, then they develop a strong bond with the employer.

Further, Mitchell et al. (2001), explain that the links dimension relates to the informal and formal means of connecting with the company. An employer with work-related links refers to co-worker relationships as well as those related to connecting with those at higher hierarchies such as managers and supervisors. In other instances, employees develop off-the-work links with the employer. Off-the-work links refers to the connection of an employee's hobbies, community, or church organizations. These links create a perceived aspect of sacrifice for the employees, which lead to a strong psychological connection with the organization.

Lastly, Mitchell et al. (2001), define the dimension of sacrifice as the psychological perception of financial stress they would face from quitting work in the organization. The effects of breaking bonds due to quitting work and ceasing to connect with colleagues determine whether one will stick to an employer or quit easily. When the employee is more connected to the workplace, colleagues, and community, the more it is difficult for them to quit and vice versa. All these dimensions of job embeddedness theory motivate employees to stick to an employee (Watson, 2018). The thought of leaving an employer is based on the weakness of these dimensions defined by Mitchell and her colleagues. There is a close relationship between the theoretical concepts of job embeddedness theory with employee satisfaction, motivation, and commitment levels. Employees with a very strong link, fit, and sacrifice to the organization are less likely to leave that particular organization

(Ghosh & Gurunathan, 2015). Servant leadership plays an integral part in attaining the dimensions of the job embeddedness theory. Servant leadership creates social interaction between leaders and employees, which enhances commitment and satisfaction levels, as well as employee retention (Ghosh & Gurunathan, 2015).

Job Embeddedness Theory provides a valuable framework for understanding employee retention. It explains why individuals choose to stay in their jobs, focusing on factors beyond mere job satisfaction. The theory suggests that employees remain in an organization when they feel embedded in three primary dimensions: fit (compatibility with the organization), links (connections with other employees), and sacrifice (the perceived costs of leaving the organization) (Mitchell et al., 2001). Job embeddedness is particularly relevant in studying the role of servant leadership on employee retention, as servant leadership practices often enhance employees' sense of connection, alignment, and community within an organization (Ng & Feldman, 2010) in the context of South Nyanza Sugar Company.

Leadership-Membership Exchange (LMX) Theory

In addition to the above-identified theoretical concepts, servant leadership enforces the Leadership-Membership Exchange (LMX) Theory, which explains how leaders develop relationships with subordinates and how they maintain their positions in their respective groups (Erdogan & Bauer, 2015). Servant leadership facilitates the development of a positive relationship that fosters the continuity of a healthy relationship with the employees. The Leadership-Membership Exchange Theory explains the development of trust between the leader and followers in an organization (Zhong et al., 2020). The employees trust the leader and they will commit to

achieving the set objectives in the workplace without much supervision (Osman & Nahar, 2015).

In addition, leaders earn employees' trust through humility, which creates a good climate for effective communication. The leaders' commitment to helping and guiding employees to execute their assigned tasks creates a picture of humble personalities, which consequently creates a sense of worth and belonging among the organization's workforce (Martin, 2019). As a result of this commitment towards helping employees, servant leaders strengthen their connection with the employees.

Moreover, it is worth noting that servant leadership involves demonstration of active concern about the welfare and needs of others, which is an exhibition of empathy (Jit et al., 2017). By showing care and concern for others and their needs, employees feel not only accepted but also valued, and integrity which makes servant leaders be seen as role models. Employees develop a sense of belonging and value towards the development and growth of the organization. Empathy enhances the development of trustworthiness between the leader and followers (Martin, 2019). A trustworthy relationship with the leader creates conviction and a sense of satisfaction in employees (Alafeshat & Tanova, 2019). The workers then automatically commit towards the realization of the set objectives and commit their future to the organization. The theory explains that employee-based leadership styles such as servant leadership improve the followers' satisfaction and commitment levels. Effective application of servant leadership improves employees' motivation and thus high retention levels.

Servant leaders seek to improve and develop the skills in employees first before they can embark on themselves, which is empowering employees to perform their roles effectively. With this approach, employees develop affective and cognitive

trust with the leaders and the organization at large (Saleem et al., 2020). The employees develop trust based on the contribution of the leadership structure to their development. The organization's workforce becomes attached to the processes and entities in the workplace. The organization becomes like a home that harbours their aspirations (Alafeshat & Tanova, 2019).

Cognitive trust is associated with the reasoning that the organization is the best place to be based on the benefits and potential to develop even further (Sougui et al., 2015). When an employee has a manager who cares about their success and happiness both in their career and life, they would hardly think of leaving to go and work somewhere else (Goler et al., 2018). The employees reason that the organization presents them with the opportunity to further develop their careers and become even more competent in the industry. As a result, servant leadership inspires employees to commit their future to the employer, thus high employee retention.

This theory emphasizes the importance of the relationship quality between leaders and followers, proposing that high-quality exchanges foster better outcomes, including increased job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and employee retention. In this theory, leaders form differentiated relationships with each member, creating "in-groups" and "out-groups" based on mutual trust, respect, and obligation. Employees in the "in-group" generally experience higher levels of support and access to resources, resulting in more positive work experiences (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). When applied to South Nyanza Sugar Company, LMX Theory suggests that servant leadership practices can enhance employee retention by fostering high-quality leader-member relationships that prioritize employees' well-being and development. This approach aligns well with servant leadership's emphasis on empathy, listening, and

support, encouraging leaders to develop deeper, trust-based relationships that strengthen employees' connection to the organization (Epitropaki & Martin, 2013).

Further, servant leadership can mitigate the adverse effects of the "out-group" by cultivating a more inclusive and equitable approach to leader-member exchanges, which is likely to contribute positively to employee retention at South Nyanza Sugar Company. By prioritizing each employee's needs and focusing on ethical and supportive leadership, servant leaders may reduce feelings of exclusion among employees and foster a stronger sense of belonging (Liden et al., 2008). Research supports that when employees perceive a high-quality relationship with their leader, marked by trust and support, they are more committed to their roles and less likely to consider leaving (Harris et al., 2009). Therefore, integrating servant leadership practices with LMX principles can create an environment where all employees feel valued and engaged, ultimately enhancing retention rates by encouraging employees to remain committed to their roles within the organization.

Institutional Theory

This theory was incorporated to account for the macro-level forces that shape organizational leadership practices and employee retention outcomes. Institutional theory examines how organizations are influenced by their external environment, including regulatory pressures (laws and regulations), normative pressures (professional standards and cultural expectations), and cognitive pressures (shared beliefs and taken-for-granted assumptions) (Scott, 2014). Organizations adopt certain practices such as servant leadership not only for efficiency or effectiveness but also for legitimacy within their institutional environment, seeking approval from stakeholders such as industry regulators, labor unions, and local communities

(DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). This perspective is essential because employee retention cannot be fully understood through individual leader behaviors alone; broader institutional contexts often determine which leadership practices are encouraged, rewarded, or sustained over time (Boxenbaum & Jonsson, 2017).

Institutional factors such as industry norms in the sugar-processing sector, labor regulations governing Kenyan agribusiness, community expectations rooted in local cultural values, and historical organizational practices inherited from past management regimes collectively shape both leadership behaviors and employee retention outcomes (Kipley & Lewis, 2018). For example, if servant leadership practices align with broader societal values such as communal care (harambee spirit), respect for workers' dignity, and long-term relational commitment all prevalent in many Kenyan communities then such practices gain legitimacy and are more likely to be sustained, thereby enhancing employee retention (Koinange, 2020). Conversely, institutional constraints such as rigid government policies on sugar pricing, economic pressures from fluctuating market demands, or deeply entrenched hierarchical traditions within the organization may moderate the effectiveness of servant leadership by limiting leaders' autonomy to implement employee-cantered practices (Mwaura & Kihoro, 2019).

Including institutional theory allows the study to account for these external forces beyond individual leader-employee interactions, recognizing that even the most committed servant leader operates within a system of rules, norms, and beliefs that enable or constrain their ability to retain employees (Scott, 2014).

Moreover, institutional theory explains how organizations facing similar environmental conditions tend to become more similar over time through processes of coercive, mimetic, and normative isomorphism, which has direct implications for

employee retention strategies (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Coercive isomorphism occurs when regulatory bodies mandate certain labor practices; mimetic isomorphism happens when organizations copy successful peers; and normative isomorphism arises from professional networks and training that diffuse standard practices across an industry (Boxenbaum & Jonsson, 2017). Adoption of servant leadership for retention purposes may be driven not only by internal logic but also by pressure to conform to industry standards, avoid regulatory sanctions, or emulate competitors with lower turnover rates (Kipley & Lewis, 2018). Ultimately, institutional theory complements the micro-level theories of servant leadership, job embeddedness, and LMX by situating them within the broader organizational field, providing a complete picture of how external legitimacy pressures interact with internal leadership behaviors to shape whether employees choose to stay or leave (Scott, 2014).

Conceptual Review

The role of servant leadership on employee retention is multifaceted, encompassing various dimensions that reflect its impact on organizational dynamics. In the context of South Nyanza Sugar Company, Kenya, this review explores the relationship between servant leadership practices and employee retention through the lens of key independent variables: employee satisfaction, employee motivation, employee commitment, and employee performance.

Employee Satisfaction

Servant leadership significantly shapes employee satisfaction by fostering a supportive and empowering work environment. Leaders who prioritize the well-being and growth of their employees create a culture where individuals feel valued and respected (Liden et al., 2014). High levels of satisfaction reduce turnover intentions

and promote long-term organizational loyalty (Hom et al., 2017). Moreover, when employees perceive their leaders as genuinely concerned about their needs, their sense of psychological safety and workplace engagement is heightened, further solidifying their decision to stay within the organization (Eva et al., 2019).

Employee Motivation

Employee motivation is another critical outcome of servant leadership. By addressing individual needs and aspirations, servant leaders inspire employees to align personal goals with organizational objectives (Eva et al., 2019). Motivated employees exhibit increased levels of creativity, innovation, and proactive behaviour, which are essential for organizational growth (Deci & Ryan, 2017). Additionally, servant leaders' ability to provide clear direction while supporting autonomy fosters intrinsic motivation, a key driver of sustained employee engagement and productivity (Ryan & Deci, 2020).

Employee Commitment

Servant leadership improves employee commitment through trust, transparency, and ethical practices. Committed employees exhibit a stronger emotional attachment to the organization, reducing the likelihood of voluntary turnover (Northouse, 2021). This commitment also fosters a sense of shared purpose and collaboration. For instance, when leaders actively involve employees in decision-making processes and recognize their contributions, employees develop a deeper sense of belonging and ownership within the organization (Liden et al., 2014). Such commitment not only stabilizes the workforce but also supports long-term strategic objectives.

Employee Performance

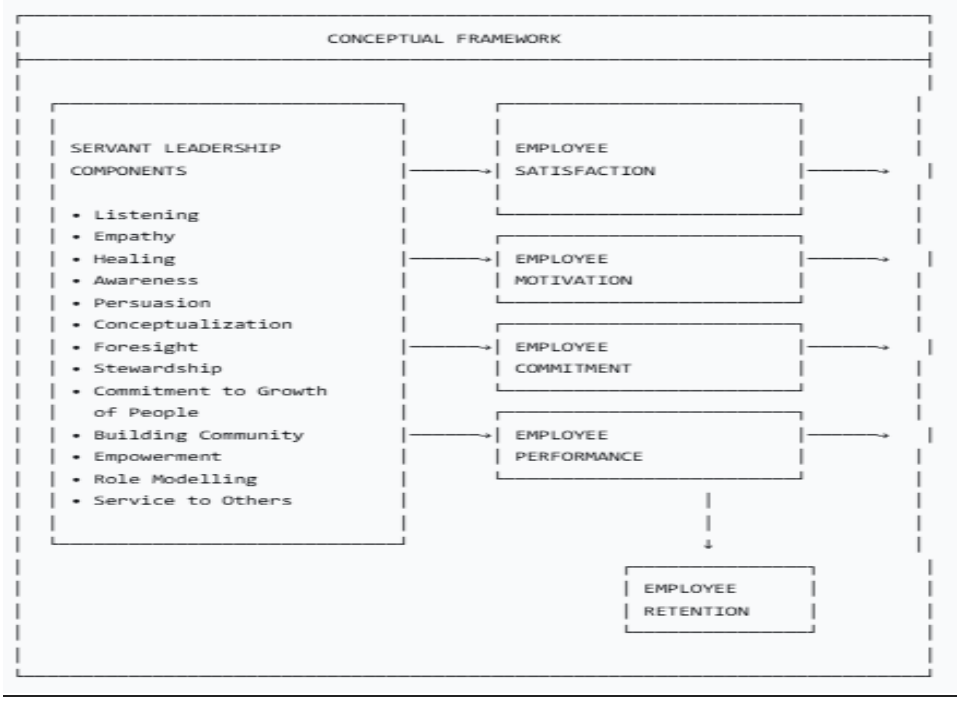
The link between servant leadership and employee performance is well-documented. By investing in the professional development of their team members, servant leaders drive improved performance outcomes (Greenleaf, 1977). This investment includes mentoring, training, and providing opportunities for skill enhancement, which collectively enhance individual and collective productivity (Hunter et al., 2013). Enhanced performance not only benefits individual employees but also contributes to organizational competitiveness and sustainability. Furthermore, servant leadership fosters a high-performance culture by setting clear expectations, offering constructive feedback, and celebrating achievements, thus motivating employees to consistently perform at their best (Spears, 2010).

Conceptual Framework

Servant leadership is the independent variable, while employee retention is the dependent variable. The application of servant leadership in an organization, through empathy, stewardship, empowerment, and persuasion of managers and other leaders leads to a satisfying work environment. Servant leaders practice empathy, stewardship, persuasion, and listening to their followers. All these aspects of servant leadership lead to employees' loyalty and commitment, as well as employee retention in the organization. With servant leadership practice, employees are motivated, perform exemplarily, and are satisfied with their encounters in the organization leading to employee commitment and retention in the workplace.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework



The conceptual framework illustrates the relationship between independent variables (dimensions of servant leadership practices) and the dependent variable (employee retention). This framework helps visualize how various aspects of servant leadership may impact employees' decisions to remain within the organization. Typically, servant leadership includes elements such as employee satisfaction, employee motivation, employee commitment, and employee performance, all of which can be used as independent indicators. These elements of leadership practice are thought to foster a supportive, purpose-driven, and empowering work environment that enhances employee retention. Employee retention, the dependent variable, is directly informed by these aspects, as satisfied, motivated, committed, and high-performing employees are more likely to stay with the company.

The conceptual framework shows that servant leadership practices fosters employee retention, with the independent variables representing specific areas where servant leadership contributes to retention outcomes. This framework, as illustrated in Figure 1, provides a structured approach to investigating how targeted leadership

practices can cultivate a stable and committed workforce at South Nyanza Sugar Company.

Research Gaps

Despite extensive studies on servant leadership and its impact on organizational outcomes, several research gaps remain that are pertinent to understanding its role on employee retention, particularly in the context of South Nyanza Sugar Company, Kenya. These gaps include contextual and empirical dimensions, which this study sought to address.

Although servant leadership is increasingly recognized globally, there is insufficient research examining its application in Kenyan organizations, particularly in the sugar industry, which faces unique challenges such as labour unrest and high turnover rates. Similarly, existing studies on servant leadership largely focus on sectors such as healthcare, education, and technology. Research in manufacturing and agribusiness sectors like South Nyanza Sugar Company (Sony Sugar) remains limited, leading to a gap in understanding how servant leadership can address industry-specific retention challenges.

Additionally, South Nyanza Sugar Company (Sony Sugar) operates in a complex environment characterized by fluctuating market dynamics, political factors, and employee dissatisfaction. Existing research does not account for how these unique factors mediate the relationship between servant leadership and retention. Moreover, most studies rely on global or regional data, which may not adequately reflect the cultural, economic, and organizational nuances of South Nyanza Sugar Company. There is a need for localized research to develop context-specific insights.

Addressing these research gaps will provide a more comprehensive understanding of servant leadership's role in enhancing employee retention at South Nyanza Sugar

Company (Sony Sugar) with the findings contributing to both academic literature and practical strategies for leadership development and talent management in Kenya's sugar industry.

Summary of the Chapter

This chapter has reviewed literature on the impact of servant leadership on employees' motivation in various organizations across Europe, Asia, and America. Some of the major contributors to servant leadership on employee motivation, satisfaction, and retention captured in the review include the following. The study by Quintana, Park and Cabrera (2014) linked leadership style to the performance of individual employees and the overall organizational performance. In building the theoretical framework, leadership-membership exchange theory was applied in explaining how servant leadership relates to employee motivation, satisfaction, and retention. The study by Harwiki (2013) proved that the implementation of servant leadership in Indonesian organizations improved positive relationships with employees. Mitterer (2017) also found that leaders who support employees create a sense of belonging to the employees and improve their commitments to the employer, thus the contribution of servant leadership. The study by Kohntopp and McCann (2018) proved that servant leadership have a mechanism of building trust between leaders and employees, which improves performance levels in the workplace. The research by Olesia et. al (2014) places servant leadership at the centre of improving employees' satisfaction and loyalty, which leads to employee retention. The study by Le Ng, Choi and Soehod (2016) proved that servant leadership negatively relates to employee turnover. According to Thacker (2018), servant leadership improves employee commitment, satisfaction, and sense of belonging. Many studies have researched the impact of servant leadership on employee performance, motivation,

satisfaction, and retention in various organizations. As a result, the reviewed literature directly associated the application of servant leadership style in organizations with employee retention. However, there is limited research on the contribution of servant leadership to employee retention in Kenyan state corporations especially those in the sugar industry. Chapter Three presents the research methodology applied in the study.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter identifies the appropriate data collection methods, research design, research strategy, defining the research instruments, sampling methods, and sample population. In addition, the chapter presents the data collection process or procedure, data analysis, research limitations, and ethical considerations that ensured that the research process met its objectives. The chapter further discusses approaches used to determine the relationship between servant leadership and employees' satisfaction, commitment, and employee retention.

Research Philosophy

Research philosophy refers to how the research is conducted based on the research strategy and instruments employed to attain the research objectives (Dieronitou, 2014). Research philosophy describes the approach and belief in which the research data is collected, analysed, and applied in explaining the relationship between the variables. There are three main research philosophy designs used in social science studies namely; positivism, interpretivism, and pragmatism. Interpretivism is an approach to research where the researcher subjectively interprets the phenomenon based on its natural surroundings (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The knowledge of the subjects being studied and the environment significantly steers the nature and the understanding of the phenomenon under the study. Social actions create a social phenomenon, which is a response to people's understanding of nature and existence. Based on the philosophical approach of subjectivism, the researcher captured the participants' perception of the effect of servant leadership practice on employee retention at South Nyanza Sugar Company. According to Creswell and

Creswell (2017), stories are collected from individuals using a narrative approach by doing interviews to determine their personal experiences.

According to research onion design developed by Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2009), interpretivism and positivism are two main research philosophies. Interpretivism philosophy explains how people make sense of everything that surrounds them as well as based on their experience and knowledge. As a form of subjectivism ontological assumption, interpretivism philosophy reasons that reality is socially constructed (Melnikovas, 2018). Since the study involved gathering data on employees working at South Nyanza Sugar Company, the research was best suited to adopt an interpretivist philosophical approach. Interpretivism enables the researcher to engage participants and collect data based on their experiences, knowledge, perceptions, thoughts, and opinions on the impact of servant leadership on their desire to commit to the employer for the longest time possible or quit for better employers in other organizations.

This study adopted an interpretivist research philosophy, as this approach allows for a deeper understanding of the subjective experiences of employees within the organization. Interpretivism is particularly relevant in social science research focused on understanding human behaviour, perceptions, and the meaning individuals assign to their experiences within specific contexts (Saunders et al, 2019). This philosophy posits that social reality is constructed by individuals' interactions and perceptions, making it ideal for exploring how servant leadership may shape employee retention in a unique organizational setting.

In applying interpretivism, the study could adopt qualitative methods, such as in-depth interviews, to capture detailed insights into how employees perceive servant leadership and its role on their motivation and desire to stay with the organization. By

doing so, the research aligns with the interpretivist belief that knowledge is context-dependent, acknowledging the complex and socially constructed nature of employee experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Given that leadership style and employee retention involve nuanced personal and organizational factors, interpretivism facilitates a nuanced exploration of these dynamics, which may offer actionable insights for enhancing employee retention through servant leadership practices.

Research Design and Methodology

Sileyew (2019) points out that research design presents a plan and framework to answer the research question. The research design provides guidelines through the essential steps to complete the study. The research design logically integrates various research components and dimensions to coherently achieve the research objectives as well as solve the research problem by answering the research questions (McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015). The research was based on a constructivist philosophical worldview because the information forming the data to be collected originated from the respondents' narratives based on their experiences in the organization. The research adopted qualitative research methods. Qualitative research design enables researchers to study human motivations, opinions, behaviours, and themes. Consequently, through qualitative research design, the researcher was in a position to realize the interpretivism philosophical position by capturing the participants' views, experiences, perceptions, thoughts, and opinions.

Qualitative research design allows the researcher to directly interact with the participants. As a result of this privilege, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon being studied (Queirós et al., 2017). Through interviews, the researcher answers and explains the way servant leadership causatively relates to employee retention (Rahman, 2020). Using interviews, the researcher collected non-

numerical data to explain the concepts, experiences, and thoughts of why the population involved in the study behaves in a certain way in workplaces where servant leadership is practised. Interviews are most appropriate for developing an informed hypothesis on a research topic. The researcher conducts interviews collecting data on the participants' experiences and opinions based on the questions captured in the interviews.

In this study, the researcher adopted the qualitative research design using interviews. Qualitative research enables the researcher to collect data from a small sample size like in the case of this study, to examine a specific phenomenon. Through qualitative research design, research studies explain the participants' feelings and determine how these feelings encourage their responses to the research question (Rahman, 2020). Using interviews, the researcher developed specific insights related to the contents of the research questions. In this study, qualitative research design through its open nature provided an opportunity to collect more valuable data. Interviews used both open-ended and close-ended questions. The researcher inquired more about why the participants responded in a particular way. During the interviews, the researcher also observed the respondents' body language as well, to see if there was free will or fear as they responded to the questions. Consequently, through the interviews, the researcher was able to determine the authenticity of the information given.

According to Queirós et al. (2017), using interviews enables the researcher to understand the situations and contexts for collecting particular data. The data collected reflects the reality of the people involved in the study that cannot be captured in quantitative research methods. Qualitative research design and methods suit this research due to its capacity to explicitly describe and capture the participants'

feelings, opinions, in-depth insights, and experience on how servant leadership impacts their working experience (Queirós et al., 2017). The data collected provided adequate content that explained the relationship between servant leadership and employee retention and related factors as contained in the research questions.

Qualitative research methods have been applied in various studies on servant leadership. For example, the research conducted by Kolb (2018) justified the use of qualitative research design and methods by stating that it guaranteed the participants the flexibility to respond to the interview questions, thus effectively answering the research questions. Kolb (2018) used qualitative research design and methods to enable the participants to express themselves and provide deep content data that effectively determined the relationship between the research variables. The descriptive data collected using interviews improves the content and quality of data used to determine the relationship between the variables. As a result, qualitative research design provides researchers with an in-depth understanding of each respondent, thus coming up with well-analysed data.

Population and Sampling

Population

Population is the group of people or objects that are subjects of study in relation to the research objectives and variables. Population is a large pool or collection of people or objects, which is the focus of the study in a research process (Banerjee & Chaudhury, 2010). The population provides the researcher with the sample on which the study was done. A sample population refers to the individuals or objects selected to represent the entire population in a research study (Taherdoost, 2017). Population sampling allows researchers to select a workable number of the population to be involved in the study. An entire population cannot be used for

purposes of any study due to the large numbers, complexity, and limited timeframes to complete research. The sample population must be explicitly defined so that the researcher is clear about the factors to be considered or included and those that are excluded from the sample population (Majid, 2018). For example, a study must describe the conditions such as height, weight, age, income, dead or alive, retired, working on contract or permanent and pensionable, self-employed, or healthy among other factors that the sample population meets (Martínez-Mesa et al., 2016). A sample population is shaped by the ability to consider the identified factors as mentioned herein. For the current study, the participants were selected based on the following criteria:

i. Employees must have worked in the company for at least ten (10) years.
ii. The employees that participated in the study must have been willing to freely participate in the research process.
iii. The managers must have worked in the company for at least 10 years.

Sampling Frame

Sample frame refers to the specific source of respondents where a sample is drawn from in a research study (Taherdoost, 2016). The sample frame defines the population from which the researcher draws his or her sample and describes the specific factors and features to consider in sampling. In this study, the sample frame included employees working at South Nyanza Sugar Company (Sony Sugar) headquarters. Since the research was based on the effects of servant leadership on employee retention at South Nyanza Sugar Company (Sony Sugar) headquarters, the study considered a sample frame from the employees working in this particular facility only.

The sampling frame was drawn from employees who had worked with the company for a minimum of ten years to ensure adequate experience and knowledge of the organizational culture and leadership practices. Additionally, participants were required to have no familial or close relational ties to the company's owners or senior leaders to avoid potential biases in responses. Only employees who voluntarily agreed to participate were included, ensuring openness and commitment to the research process. This sampling frame was carefully defined to capture the role of servant leadership on employee retention among a stable and experienced subset of employees, which aligns with the study's focus on long-term retention. By concentrating on these employees at the South Nyanza Sugar Company (Sony Sugar) headquarters, the study could accurately reflect the impact of servant leadership practices within the organization's core operational environment.

Sampling

Sampling refers to the technique of identifying and selecting a subset of the target population or individual members of the target population to estimate the characteristics of the entire population based on the statistical inferences made (Elfil & Negida, 2017). Sampling helps in coming up with a subset of the population that researcher can effectively deal with to perform the study. Some of the most commonly applied sampling methods are probability and non-probability sampling techniques. Probability sampling techniques refer to cases where the researcher gives all members of the target population an equal opportunity to participate in the study. Examples of probability sampling include simple random, systematic, stratified, and clustered random sampling methods (Taherdoost, 2016). On the contrary, non-probability sampling involves techniques that do not guarantee all the members of the

target population equal chances of participating in the study. The non-probability sampling techniques include convenience, snowball, and judgmental sampling methods (Ayhan, 2011).

Sampling Technique

For purposes of this study, the researcher adopted a non-probability purposive sampling simple technique. Non-probability sampling technique is where the researcher identifies specific population members that meet the particular criteria and selects them to participate in the study. Unlike in random sampling, non-probability sampling does not give every member of the population equal opportunity to participate. Therefore, in this sampling technique, the possibility that one participates in the study relies exclusively on their qualification or ability to meet the set criteria (Taherdoost, 2016). For instance, in this study, the researcher purposely selected employees at South Nyanza Sugar Company. The employees of this company form a crucial cohort for the study due to their ability to sufficiently respond to the questions in the study in their organization. Purposive sampling was applicable in this study because the researcher had a definite sample population and that he used his discretion to identify the sample population that met the set variables for the study.

To select respondents for the study transparent and rigorous approach was designed to focus on participants with adequate experience to provide meaningful insights on leadership practices while also widening the selection pool to enhance the study's representativeness. Given the state-owned nature of South Nyanza Sugar Company, the criterion regarding non-affiliation with senior leaders was removed. Since the researcher realized that verifying familial relationships in such a setting is not only impractical but could also create unnecessary barriers to participant

inclusion. Instead, the selection process focused on securing employees' professional perspectives on servant leadership, regardless of any unrelated personal affiliations.

The selection was further refined to ensure fairness and diversity. First, HR identified all employees who met the tenure requirement. Then, from this list, participants were randomly selected to avoid bias. Random selection, facilitated by a random number generator, ensured that all eligible employees had an equal chance of being chosen. Following this, each randomly chosen participant was invited to join the study voluntarily, and confidentiality assurances were provided to encourage honest and unbiased responses.

Sample Size

Sample population refers to the selected individuals of the population who participated in the study. The sample size should not be too small such that it does not adequately represent the entire population (Elfil & Negida, 2017). A small sample size would yield results that do not represent the entire population whereas, a very big sample size may over represent the target population and have very small margins of error in the final results of the study (Mocănașu, 2020). As explained by Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), taking 10% of the population as a sample perfectly represents the views and contributions of the target population.

According to Gentles et al. (2015), a sample size that represents a median of 10% or 15% is effective for qualitative research sampling. For this study, a sample size of 10% of the total employee population was chosen to ensure manageability, while allowing for meaningful analysis. With 300 employees at South Nyanza Sugar Company (Sony Sugar) Ltd., the calculated sample size was 30, representing a subset that is both feasible to work with and statistically relevant. This sampling strategy helps balance resource constraints with the need for sufficient data to identify trends and insights into how servant leadership practices affect employee retention.

Participants were selected using purposive sampling, meaning only employees who met the inclusion criteria had worked with the company for at least ten years, had

no close relationship with senior leaders, and demonstrated the willingness to participate were included. This method ensured that the selected participants had the necessary experience and objectivity to provide reliable insights. After selecting the 30 qualified employees, the research exclusively focused on them for subsequent stages, enabling in-depth engagement and streamlined data collection specifically aligned with the study's objectives.

Based on the purposively selected participants, 25 were employees at the lower levels, while 5 were at management level. They were selected based on the requirements to meet several key criteria. First, they needed to have a minimum of ten years of experience working at South Nyanza Sugar Company (Sony Sugar) to ensure that they possessed sufficient familiarity and insight into the organization and its leadership practices. Another important criterion was the willingness of employees to participate freely in the research process, ensuring that all contributions were voluntary and genuine. Similarly, managers who were included in the study were also required to have at least ten years of tenure with the company. This requirement ensured that participating managers had substantial experience and familiarity with the leadership dynamics and could provide informed perspectives on the role of servant leadership practices on employee retention (Jain et al., 2019).

Consequently, their belief in the practice of servant leadership style is very important in its implementation to achieve the desired goals, in this case, employee retention by having a motivated workforce. Interviewing the middle-level managers significantly informed the researcher on how the organization applies the servant leadership approach and how they resonate and benefit from the servant leadership approach in the workplace. The managers implement the policies that promote the organizational culture that eventually determine how the employees feel about their

organization, and their desire to work for the employer for a long period (Mwita & Tefurukwa, 2018).

Practically speaking, ethics represents “fair dealing” essential to developing loyalty and trust in a relationship, which includes open communication (Ciulla, 2014). The researcher also interviewed the employees to find out how they felt about the work environment, how they were treated, and whether that was consistent and if indeed this motivated them to perform and be loyal to the organization. The responses were determined to establish the possible impacts of servant leadership on employee retention in the organization. The real power of a vision is unleashed only when most of those involved in an enterprise or activity have a common understanding of its goals and direction. That shared sense of a desirable future can help motivate and coordinate the kinds of actions that create transformations (Kotter, 2012).

Table 1

Population and Sample Size

Population component	Population Size	Sample Size	Percentage (%)
Management Level	25	5	16.67
Lower Level	275	25	83.33
Total	300	30	100

Research Instruments

Interviews were selected as the research instrument for this study to facilitate a detailed exploration of the role of servant leadership on employee retention at South Nyanza Sugar Company. Interviews offer a structured and flexible method for gathering qualitative data, which was essential given the study’s focus on capturing the experiences, perceptions, and opinions of employees regarding servant leadership

practices. Interviews are highly effective for qualitative research, particularly when seeking to understand complex relational dynamics, such as leadership's role on retention. As Jamshed (2014) explains, interviews facilitate a direct interaction between the researcher and participant, creating an environment for an in-depth exchange that unveils deeper insights compared to quantitative measures.

Semi-structured interviews were adopted specifically to balance structure and flexibility, as they allowed the researcher to guide the conversation with predetermined questions while also encouraging participants to elaborate on certain points. This approach was exemplified by Jit et al. (2016) in their study on servant leadership and conflict resolution, which used semi-structured interviews to gather nuanced, experiential data from participants. This structure was particularly suitable for the small sample size and allowed for direct interaction and real-time clarification of concepts to ensure accurate, rich data (Muhammad, 2016). Moreover, face-to-face interviews, each lasting approximately 20-30 minutes, enabled close interaction with participants, fostering a comfortable environment for candid responses. By capturing diverse viewpoints on servant leadership, this approach ensured that data collection aligned closely with the research objectives, supporting a comprehensive understanding of servant leadership's role in employee retention.

Data Collection Methods

Data collection involves processes of gathering and measuring data from the sample size involved in the study and based on the variables being tested in the study. Data collection is undertaken systematically to effectively answer the research questions, evaluate outcomes, and test hypotheses in the study (Muhammad, 2016). The main objective of data collection is to record quality evidence on the research questions, which will be used to develop a rich analysis of data and thus provide a

convincing answer to the research questions. Data collection methods are the techniques which researchers use to capture data from the subjects of study or the research sample size (Gill et al., 2008). In research studies where primary data is collected and used to analyse the study variables, primary data collection methods are adopted. The methods of primary data collection include questionnaires, surveys, observation, interviews, case studies, focus group discussions or interviews, link analysis, diaries, and experimental methods among others.

In this study, data was collected using interviews. The interview process involves setting questions to be asked and the interviewer asking these questions to the interviewee either physically or remotely (Jamshed, 2014). Interviews provide the researcher with a structured process of engaging the participants in the study based on the set questions. For example, in the study by Jit et al. (2016), "Servant leadership and conflict resolution: a qualitative study," the researchers used interviews to collect data from the population sample involved in the study. In collecting the data, the researchers used semi-structured interviews to gather experiential data from the participants.

Using interviews, the researcher gathered data that explain the relationship between the independent and dependent variables in the study. Using the interviews enabled the researcher to gather in-depth data from the participants. The researcher also collected participants' diverse views, opinions, and thoughts on the variables studied. Based on the main research questions, interviews supported the researcher in gathering data on the effect of servant leadership practice on employee retention at South Nyanza Sugar Company.

Interviews involve asking a set of questions and receiving answers from the participants (Muhammad, 2016). The researcher used face-to-face interviews.

Interviews suited the study since the number of participants was relatively small compared to cases where quantitative data could be required. Interviews allowed close interaction with the participants to understand and gather data based on their thoughts, opinions, and behaviours on the impact of servant leadership on employees' retention at South Nyanza Sugar Company. Semi-structured interviews were used to gather data from the respondents on various issues. Semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to ask additional questions in the middle of the interview or at the end to gain clarification on some of the issues the researcher could require additional information. Semi-structured interviews have a set of questions that the researcher asks all the respondents in a given order but still has room to ask additional questions for purposes of clarification.

The researcher had a research assistant, who helped with the logistical arm of the data collection process. With an acknowledgement letter from the university, the researcher was permitted by the human resources director at - South Nyanza Sugar Company (Sony Sugar) to carry out the study in the organization. With the help of the HR director, the researcher accessed different departments in the organization and identified the targeted workers. The researcher fully briefed the participants and after obtaining their consent, the researcher organized for face-to-face interview sessions. All the interview sessions were recorded in audio format. Each interview question was read and explained by the researcher in cases where the respondents did not understand the concepts contained therein. Each interview session took between 20-30 minutes.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability refers to the extent to which a study is reliable or consistent. To measure the consistency of the study, the researcher determines and applies the

dependability and credibility of the participants' response (Taherdoost, 2016). In the case of this study, all 30 participants were employees of South Nyanza Sugar Company (Sony Sugar) and had worked for not less than 10 years at the organization.

The researcher employed multiple strategies to enhance credibility, transferability, dependability, consistency, and reproducibility. Reliability viewed as the consistency and dependability of the study was established by focusing on participants with extensive experience at South Nyanza Sugar Company, each having worked for at least ten years, thus ensuring credible insights into the company's servant leadership practices. Dependability and credibility were further reinforced by examining the consistency of participant responses, where the similarity of responses to interview questions was used as an indicator of reliable data.

For instance, the alignment in participant responses regarding motivation, where several respondents acknowledged its importance for a sense of belonging, reinforces the study's transferability by confirming that similar organizational practices could yield comparable results in similar contexts. These measures support the study's overall consistency and reproducibility, as similar approaches and conditions would likely result in similar findings if repeated with other samples.

Data Analysis

Data analysis refers to the process of examining and interpreting the collected data. Data analysis interprets the collected information from the research process to give it more meaning (Belotto, 2018). Analysis of qualitative data involves reading and interpreting the data based on the similarity between the various responses, disconnects, examining the patterns, and interpreting the themes contained in the collected data. Some of the data analysis methods applicable in qualitative research

include content analysis, thematic analysis, discourse analysis, and interpretative phenomenological analysis.

Content analysis involves the use of a coding technique as well as structured classification of large data volumes, which identifies the repetitions, and patterns of the words used, as well as the relationships of these words as derived from the collected data (Mohamed et al., 2016). In specific contexts, content analysis examines who responded how and to whom, as well as the effects of what they said. Content analysis adopts the descriptive approach in coding, thus giving quantitative accounts of the codes used in the analysis. The quantitative accounts of the codes are then expressed descriptively based on the types of words used and the implied meanings in the contexts in which they are used.

The second qualitative data analysis method is discourse analysis. Discourse analysis emphasizes the type of language used to pass the meaning of the words used in responding to the research questions (Mohamed et al., 2016). Discourse analysis examines how concepts are used as well as the actual words. This method of analysis uses the text structure to discover the socio-physiological traits of the speaker. One of the fields where discourse analysis is applied is in business contexts and scenarios where it is used to analyse the manifested phenomena by exploring conversations in business organizations.

Lastly, thematic analysis is used to analyse the themes used in texts from respondents. Thematic analysis searches for themes that emerge as important in describing the phenomena in the text. Thematic analysis of data involves searching across the collected data to identify, analyse, and post the patterns repeated in the qualitative data collected (Nowell et al., 2017). The phenomena in research are the major concepts and occurrences, and the relationship between variables. Through

thematic analysis, researchers develop theories that link various cases in the study and find common patterns across the events the research participants report (Mohamed et al., 2016). Based on the contexts, researchers derive and combine meanings from the respondents' statements. One of the powers of thematic analysis is that it has the potential to flexibly analyse and provide rich content in the case of analysing interviews. Based on the flexibility of thematic analysis, the researcher used thematic analysis to analyse the collected data from the interview sessions.

The study adopted an inductive thematic analysis approach, which focuses on deriving patterns, themes, and meanings directly from the data rather than testing a pre-existing theory. In this qualitative study, data were collected through interviews, observations, and document reviews, after which the researcher systematically coded the data to identify emerging themes related to servant leadership and employee commitment. The thematic analysis process involved moving from specific participant accounts to broader categorical themes, allowing the lived experiences of employees at South Nyanza Sugar Company (Sony Sugar) to shape the findings. Ultimately, this inductive approach enabled the study to build a contextual understanding of how servant leadership influences employee commitment, rather than imposing predetermined theoretical assumptions onto the data. To effectively conduct thematic analysis, the researcher adopted Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework. In the first phase, the researcher focused on achieving data saturation the point during data collection when no new information, themes, or insights were emerging from participants at South Nyanza Sugar Company. The researcher continued conducting interviews and reviewing documents until repetition of ideas became evident and additional data yielded no novel findings related to servant leadership and employee commitment. Once saturation was confirmed, the

researcher transcribed all responses and read the transcriptions keenly to note down all the ideas contained in the data. This systematic approach ensured that the data corpus was comprehensive and that further data collection would not contribute additional understanding to the emerging themes.

In the second phase, the researcher began generating initial codes from the data. The initial codes are the initial list of ideas that are interesting to the researcher. Codes could be in the form of semantic or latent features of the data collected and that which could be assessed in meaningful ways regarding the phenomenon being studied (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Further, in the third phase, the researcher began searching for themes. From the collected codes, the researcher identified relevant and related data extracts that combined to create a certain theme related to the research questions based on the data collected. The researcher determined the relationship between the codes to come up with the themes. To attain this objective, the researcher used visual representations that showed the relationship between different codes generated in the data.

Further, in phase four, the researcher reviewed the themes. The review of the identified themes involved taking a deeper review of these themes. The review was guided by the need to determine whether the themes were to be combined, refined, or even discarded (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In this step, the data are made to cohere together as the researcher simultaneously identifies the distinctions between the themes. In addition, in the fifth phase, the researcher defined and named themes. In this step, the researcher identified the themes in subthemes and defined the themes as contained in the data collected. The theme names were provided and the working definitions for each were outlined to explain the process of defining and naming the themes identified from the data.

Lastly, in the sixth phase, the researcher produced the report using the themes identified and defined above. In this step, the research provided a final analysis of the themes, which informed the report-writing process (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The thematic analysis write-up tells the readers the complicated contents of the data collected convincingly and proves the merit and validity of the thematic analysis. In this phase, the researcher presented the results of the study concerning the themes, research questions, and the literature reviewed in Chapter Two.

In applying the thematic analysis, all the responses to the interview questions were cross-examined and analysed based on the categorization of the data. The researcher used MS Word and Excel tabulation to analyse the qualitative data gathered from the interviews. The MS Word feature of organizing, arranging, and coding textual data was applied to the collected data and codes were generated. In addition, Excel's frequency distribution feature was used to arrange and tabulate the themes and codes generated from the responses. With the thematic analysis method, the researcher classified the data based on the responses and the codes associated with the data set (Nowell et al., 2017). Based on the categorized coding of the data, the researcher analysed the thematic frequencies among the responses given by the respondents, which led to a valid explanation and conclusion. Further, in analysing the data, the researcher considered the following themes: employee performance, employee satisfaction, employee motivation, and employee retention. The results were compared with those in the literature reviewed in Chapter Two.

Based on the responses of the interviewees, the researcher identified the common themes of employee motivation, satisfaction, performance, sense of belonging, and retention. The researcher classified themes that were explained in relation to their effects on the variables of the study. According to Roberts et al.

(2019), the identification of codes, which are thematic words or descriptions, provides researchers with context on how the variables interact with each other (Roberts et al., 2019).

Research Limitations

The study's findings were only applicable to South Nyanza Sugar Company (Sony Sugar) since the research exclusively involved the organization's employees. The results of the study cannot be generalized or used to interpret the effects of servant leadership in the entire industry or the whole region.

The study was limited to a small sample of 30 participants and therefore might not be generalized for the entire organization including other regions outside the country. The applicability of the research findings is limited to the participants alone.

The data collection and reporting expose the research to biases associated with self-reporting. Biases such as selective memory, attribution, exaggeration, and telescoping are likely to affect the quality and accuracy of data collected from the research process.

Ethical Considerations

Informed consent was prioritized by sending consent letters to participants, inviting them to participate voluntarily in the study, thereby ensuring that each participant was fully aware of the nature and purpose of the research. This process guaranteed that participation was based on informed and voluntary agreement, respecting the autonomy of each individual involved.

To maintain confidentiality and anonymity, all personal data provided by respondents was omitted from the reported findings, and participants were assigned coded identities such as letters (A, B, C, etc.) to conceal their identities. Additionally,

the researcher stored all data on a password-protected hard drive, which was securely locked, ensuring that no unauthorized parties could access this sensitive information.

Voluntary participation was emphasized, as no participant was compelled to join the study, and all interactions were conducted in a supportive, comfortable environment, minimizing any risk of emotional or physical harm. Privacy was further protected by hiding respondents' identities to prevent any potential workplace repercussions.

Respect for participants was evident in the careful approach to conducting interviews in a secure environment, with a clear boundary between the researcher and the participants. This respect extended to safeguarding participants from harm, with risk assessments carried out to address and mitigate any possible emotional or physical harm.

The principles of beneficence and justice were upheld by prioritizing participants' well-being and ensuring equitable treatment throughout the study. Transparency and honesty were maintained by accurately acknowledging all information borrowed from other scholars, ensuring appropriate credit was given to previous research, thus fostering ethical academic integrity.

Summary of the Chapter

This chapter has covered the research implementation process beginning with the research design, data collection method, research strategy, defining the research instruments, sampling methods, sample population, data collection process or procedure, data analysis, research limitations, and ethical considerations. The research adopted a qualitative research design. Semi-structured interviews were used to gather data from the respondents on various issues related to the research objectives. The target population involved employees in different hierarchies at South Nyanza Sugar

Company. The research adopted a purposive non-probability sampling to ensure that the study involved only those persons who could provide vital information to respond to the research questions. The data collection process involved conducting interviews, recording data, and safely storing the stored electronic data. The chapter has also explained how the researcher analysed and interpreted the collected data. The research limitations and ethical considerations are discussed.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Introduction

This chapter presents the results from the data collection exercise as well as the discussion concerning the interpretations of the findings. The research questions from which the results were collected sought to achieve the following objectives: (1) to explore how servant leadership influences employee satisfaction and subsequently encourages employee retention at South Nyanza Sugar Company, Kenya, (2) to investigate how servant leadership influences employee motivation and subsequently fosters employee retention at South Nyanza Sugar Company, Kenya, (3) to explore how servant leadership influences employee commitment and subsequently strengthens employee retention at South Nyanza Sugar Company, Kenya, and (4) to examine how servant leadership influences employee performance and subsequently promotes employee retention at South Nyanza Sugar Company, Kenya.

In this chapter, the researcher presents the findings from the data collected and discusses these results based on the research objectives. The chapter also presents demographic characteristics of the respondents, descriptive analysis, thematic coding, and a summary of findings.

Demographics Characteristics of the Respondents

This section analyses the characteristics of respondents across five categories: gender, age, education and income level and employment status.

Gender

Table 2 provides a breakdown of the participants by gender representation of the respondents, including both frequency and percentage.

Table 2

Gender Representation

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	18	60%
Female	12	40%
Total	30	100%

In these findings, out of 30 respondents, 18 were male, making up 60% of the respondents, while 12 were female, representing 40%. This distribution ensured that both genders are represented, allowing for balanced insights into the role of servant leadership practices on employee retention.

Age

Table 3 shows the percentage and the frequency distribution of age among the participants from which the study was conducted. The age of the participants ranged between 25 to 61 years. The highest percentage was between ages 30-39 years at 30% with the lowest between 60-69 years at 10%. The age distribution between 40-49 and 50-59 years was equal at 23.3% per category. The age distribution between 60-69 years was the lowest at 10%. With the majority of participants falling between ages 30-39, the data showed that the sample was youthful with sufficient experience in their respective positions in the company.

Table 3

Participant's Age Distribution

Age	Frequency of Distribution	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percent
20 – 29	4	13.3	13.3	13.3
30 – 39	9	30.0	30.0	43.3
40 – 49	7	23.3	23.3	66.6
50 – 59	7	23.3	23.3	90.0
60 – 69	3	10.0	10.0	100.0
Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Level of Education

The data in this category shows the education levels of the study's participants. 6.7% had a primary education level, 26.7% secondary education level, 23.3% college certificate level, 20% college diploma education, 13.3% university degree (Bachelor) education, 10% university degree (Masters) education, and no participant had a university degree (Doctor of Philosophy) level of education. With the majority of the participants attaining at least secondary level education, the majority were literate and could easily understand and effectively respond to the interview questions presented to them.

Table 4

Participant's Level of Education

Education Level	Frequency of Distribution	Percentage	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Primary (KCPE/ CPE)	2	6.7	6.7	6.7
Secondary (KCSE)	8	26.7	26.7	33.4
College Certificate	7	23.3	23.3	56.7
College Diploma	6	20.0	20.0	76.7
University Degree (Bachelor)	4	13.3	13.3	90.0
University Degree (Masters)	3	10.0	10.0	100.0
University (Doctor of Philosophy)	0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Income level

Table 5 shows the frequency and percentage of distribution of levels of income of participants. The majority representing 30.0% earned between KShs. 10,000 – 19,999, those earning between KShs. 1 – 9,999 were 13.3%, and those earning between KShs. 20,000 – 29,999 were 20.0%, 13.3% earned between KShs. 30,000 – 39,999, while 6.7% earned between KShs. 50,000 – 59,999, and lastly those who earned KShs. 60,000 and above represented 6.67%.

Table 5

Income Level of the Respondents

Income level (KShs.)	Frequency of Distribution	Per cent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1 – 9,999	4	13.3	13.3	13.3
10,000 -19,999	9	30.0	30.0	43.3
20,000 – 29,999	6	20.0	20.0	63.3
30,000 – 39,999	4	13.3	13.3	76.6
40,000 – 49,999	3	10.0	10.0	86.6
50,000 – 59,999	2	6.7	6.7	93.3
60,000 and above	2	6.7	6.7	100.0
Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Employment Status

Table 6 shows the distribution and frequency of participants' employment status with those under contract representing 50%, permanent and pensionable at 33.3%, those subcontracted at 16.7%, while there was no participant under the unspecified category. Table 6 shows the participants' employment status in the company.

Table 6

Employment Status Distribution

Employment status	Frequency of Distribution	Per cent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Permanent and pensionable	10	33.3	33.3	33.3
Contract	15	50.0	50.0	83.3
Sub-contracted	5	16.7	16.7	100.0
Unspecified	0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Descriptive Analysis

Data analysis and identification of common themes

The formulation of the interview questions was based on the research objectives. After presenting the participants with the interview questions, the researcher then collected the data based on the participants' responses. The collected data was then associated with the codes that the data was expected to attain. Based on the coding and identified themes, the data analysis was conducted based on the theories of servant leadership as discussed by Robert Greenleaf; The Job Embeddedness Theory by Mitchell et al (2001), The Social Exchange Theory, and The Leadership-Membership Exchange Theory as explained in the literature review section. Firstly, the Servant Leadership Theory provides opportunities for leaders to serve others as a primary call, which motivates those led to continue working in the organization. Job Embeddedness and Leadership-Membership Exchange theories are

entrenched and prove the relationship between servant leadership and employee satisfaction, motivation, and retention in an organization.

Propositions and Generation of Codes

Based on the various contents contained in the literature review as revealed in the conceptual and theoretical framework, the researcher developed the following propositions:

Proposition 1: Leaders who support employee satisfaction are most likely to empower employees in their organizations leading to employee retention.

Proposition 2: Organizations with leaders who are motivated towards growing others beyond the normal growth levels are most likely to attract and retain employees.

Proposition 3: Employees who encounter stronger fit in organizations due to the organization's commitment to growing a cohesive workforce and community are most likely to commit to the employer longer than they imagined when joining the institution.

Proposition 4: When leaders who endear to employees performance by considering employee inputs lead to employee retention since employees develop a sense of belonging and a feeling of value to the organization.

Proposition 5: Servant leaders who commit to creating a holistic impact on the organization and the society at large are most likely to persuade employees to continue working in the organization that contributes to such an immense impact.

Generation of Codes (Codebook)

Taking into consideration the propositions developed in the section above and the theoretical framework developed in the literature review, the researcher developed codes that were used to code the raw data. Based on the theory of servant leadership, the propositions produced the following coded themes vision, role modelling, employee empowerment, service to others, stewardship, growing others beyond the

normal growth, delegation of duties, and encouragement. The themes were coded as follows:

- Rm = role modelling
- Emp = employee empowerment
- So = service to others
- Stw = stewardship
- Go = growing others by supporting them to realize their potential
- Dod = delegation of duties
- Ecnt = encouragement

Using the codes developed from the propositions, the codebook could be expanded to have additional components. Each code had a label or name, a definition, a description of how the particular code occurred, and qualifiers and exclusions which guided the researcher in determining if a piece of information qualified to be included or not. After collecting the data, the researcher applied the coding memorandum to determine which data sets met the criteria to be included in the codes. Appendix X shows the coding memorandum developed for the emergent codes.

Employees' Satisfaction and employees' Retention at South Nyanza Sugar Company

The researcher sought to find out how employee satisfaction through servant leadership contributed to employee retention. The results are as captured in Table 7.

Table 7

How Servant Leadership Improves Employees' Satisfaction

Respondents	Code	Frequency	Percentage
G	Decision Making. Involving employees in decision-making	1	3
Z1 and Z4	Stewardship. Careful and responsible management of employees and resources.	2	6.67
P, Q and Z4	Delegation. Delegating responsibilities based on skills and talents	3	10
O and Z5	Motivation. Motivating employees through competitive and timely remuneration	2	7
H, S and Z2	Promotion. Promoting employees on merit	3	10
M, D, F and N	Provision of sufficient and up-to-date resources and equipment. Availing required resources to complete tasks.	4	13
C and E	Role Modelling. Passing on knowledge, values, expertise, and skills to others.	2	7
K and J	Study Leave. Giving employees opportunities for further studies to improve their education levels	2	7

A, B, I, L, R, T, U, V, W, X, Y, Z1 and Z3	Training. Identifying employees needs and organizing training for them to acquire the necessary skills necessary to perform their roles effectively	13	43
	Total	30	100

Delegation and employee empowerment

The findings from the study indicate that delegation significantly contributes to employee empowerment, with 10% of respondents recognizing it as a key practice that enhances their productivity and commitment to the organization. Delegation involves assigning specific responsibilities to employees based on their skills and capabilities, fostering a sense of trust and value within the workforce. The responses from participants, such as Respondent Z4, highlight that South Nyanza Sugar Company's leadership actively identifies and nurtures employee talents. By providing the necessary resources and programs, management creates an environment where employees can develop professionally. This proactive approach not only empowers employees but also reinforces their loyalty and retention within the organization.

Employee Q’s testimony further illustrates how delegation can enhance skill acquisition and job satisfaction. Exposure to various positions in sugar processing enables employees to broaden their skill sets, thus making them feel more competent and fulfilled in their roles. This process of empowerment through delegation aligns with the notion that employees who are trusted with responsibilities are more likely to feel valued and motivated, which is essential for retaining talent.

The findings of this study resonate with the conclusions drawn by Al-Jammal et al. (2015), who emphasized that delegating tasks allows employees to develop new skills and capabilities. Empowered employees often take on more diverse and challenging tasks, which can lead to increased morale and motivation. When employees perceive that their contributions are valued, they are more inclined to perform at their best. This feeling of being trusted not only boosts individual performance but also fosters a positive organizational culture where employees feel connected to their work.

The delegation of meaningful tasks is particularly significant as it leads to higher job satisfaction. Employees who experience empowerment through delegation find their roles more fulfilling, which can decrease turnover rates. When workers feel engaged and content in their positions, they are less likely to seek employment elsewhere. This connection between delegation, empowerment, and job satisfaction underscores the importance of servant leadership practices at South Nyanza Sugar Company, where leaders focus on the growth and well-being of their employees.

In the framework of servant leadership, the delegation of duties serves as a key strategy for empowering employees. By emphasizing the development of their team members, leaders at South Nyanza Sugar Company (Sony Sugar) cultivate a culture of support and growth. This servant leadership approach not only enhances employee skills but also builds strong relationships based on trust and mutual respect.

Moreover, as employees become empowered through delegation, they are more likely to exhibit higher levels of engagement and commitment to their organization. The opportunity to take ownership of their tasks fosters a sense of belonging and purpose, further reinforcing their desire to remain with South Nyanza

Sugar Company. When employees feel that their leaders prioritize their professional growth, they are more inclined to invest their efforts into the organization's success.

Contribution of training on employee satisfaction

The findings of the study indicate that training contributes significantly to employee empowerment and professional growth, with a notable high number of respondents recognizing its importance in enhancing their capabilities and satisfaction.

Training programs are essential for equipping employees with the necessary skills to perform their tasks effectively and advance their careers. Participant B's assertion that the company organizes training and skill acquisition opportunities highlights the proactive approach South Nyanza Sugar Company (Sony Sugar) takes in supporting its workforce. This commitment to employee development is a hallmark of servant leadership, where leaders prioritize the growth and well-being of their employees.

According to Saina and Tuei (2015), training is a vital avenue for employees to enhance their skills, preparing them to take on new responsibilities and challenges. The study's findings suggest that employees who receive regular training feel more competent and confident in their abilities. This boost in competence directly correlates with job satisfaction, as employees are empowered to meet and exceed their professional goals.

The data presented in Table 6 reinforces the idea that training is the most practiced method of empowering employees at South Nyanza Sugar Company. Employees recognize that enhanced skills lead to improved job performance, aligning with Yamoah's (2013) findings that training equips employees to handle their tasks more effectively. This improvement in performance contributes to a greater sense of satisfaction among employees, as they feel more capable and engaged in their work.

Training not only helps employees master their current roles but also prepares them for future opportunities within the organization. By exposing employees to new concepts, technologies, and best practices, training creates pathways for career advancement. Employees who perceive their professional development as supported are more likely to be engaged and satisfied with their jobs, thus increasing their likelihood of remaining with the company.

Servant leaders play a pivotal role in facilitating training initiatives by identifying the skill needs of their employees and ensuring that appropriate resources are allocated for skill development. This alignment between organizational goals and individual aspirations fosters an environment where employees feel valued and empowered. As Nawaz et al. (2014) note, training that resonates with employees' personal and professional objectives enhance job satisfaction and foster a greater sense of commitment to the organization.

Furthermore, the empowerment gained through training extends beyond technical skills; it encompasses soft skills such as communication, teamwork, and leadership. These skills are crucial for fostering a collaborative workplace culture and enable employees to express themselves effectively, collaborate with colleagues, and lead initiatives. As employees develop these competencies, they become more capable of making autonomous decisions, which can positively impact the organization’s performance and culture.

When employees feel that their training and development are prioritized, they are more likely to experience job satisfaction, which is a critical factor influencing retention. Satisfied employees tend to be more engaged, motivated, and committed to their organization. This connection highlights how servant leadership practices,

particularly in fostering training and development, can significantly enhance employee satisfaction and retention at South Nyanza Sugar Company.

Job position exchange and employee satisfaction

Job position exchange provides employees with opportunities to interact with various colleagues, acquire new skills, and gain diverse experiences that enhance their professional growth. This practice not only contributes to individual career development but also aligns with the principles of servant leadership, which emphasizes the growth and well-being of employees.

The role of job position exchange in employee empowerment and satisfaction

Job position exchange allows employees to experience different roles within the organization, thereby expanding their skill sets and knowledge bases. Participant H's observation that South Nyanza Sugar Company (Sony Sugar) organizes internal job exchanges underscores the company’s commitment to fostering a culture of learning and development. This initiative reflects the servant leadership approach, where leaders actively seek to empower their employees by providing them with opportunities for growth.

According to Li et al. (2012), job position exchange facilitates employees' ascent up the professional ladder by enabling them to gain varied experiences across different job roles. By participating in these exchanges, employees are better positioned to understand the overall operations of the organization, which enhances their ability to navigate complex workplace challenges. This comprehensive understanding not only equips employees with the necessary skills to perform their roles effectively but also increases their job satisfaction as they feel more competent and valued within the organization.

The diverse experiences gained through job position exchange contribute significantly to employee satisfaction. When employees have the opportunity to

explore different positions, they often discover new interests and strengths, which can lead to greater job engagement and fulfilment. This sense of satisfaction is crucial in the context of employee retention; satisfied employees are less likely to seek opportunities outside the organization.

Moreover, job position exchange fosters a sense of community and collaboration within the organization. As employees interact with colleagues from different departments and roles, they build relationships and networks that enhance their sense of belonging. This social aspect is vital for employee satisfaction, as it creates an inclusive work environment where individuals feel supported and connected.

Servant leadership plays a pivotal role in facilitating job position exchanges at South Nyanza Sugar Company. Leaders who embody servant leadership principles prioritize the development of their employees and actively promote initiatives that enable skill enhancement and professional growth. By encouraging job position exchanges, servant leaders demonstrate their commitment to employee empowerment and satisfaction, creating a positive feedback loop that enhances retention.

When employees perceive that their leaders are invested in their growth through initiatives like job position exchange, their satisfaction levels increase. This satisfaction reinforces their commitment to the organization and diminishes the likelihood of turnover. Additionally, as employees feel more satisfied and engaged, their performance levels improve, further enhancing the organization's overall effectiveness.

Job position exchange serves as a vital mechanism through which employee satisfaction can enhance the relationship between servant leadership and employee retention at South Nyanza Sugar Company. By providing employees with

opportunities to expand their skills and gain diverse experiences, the organization fosters a culture of empowerment and satisfaction. Servant leaders who prioritize such initiatives not only enhance employee satisfaction but also contribute to higher retention rates, creating a stable and committed workforce that is essential for organizational success.

Stewardship and employees' ability to meet professional objectives

Stewardship involves the responsible management of employees and resources, emphasizing leaders' commitment to fostering their teams' growth and well-being. The insights gathered from the study highlight how effective stewardship practices can lead to enhanced employee satisfaction, thereby influencing retention positively.

The Role of Stewardship in Employee Empowerment and Satisfaction

The data collected indicate that employees perceive their managers as active participants in problem-solving, significantly impacting their professional experiences. When leaders engage with employees to address challenges, they not only provide immediate solutions but also empower employees by equipping them with skills and knowledge to tackle similar issues in the future. This proactive involvement fosters a sense of belonging and commitment among employees. As one participant noted, this collaborative approach enhances their perception of being valued, leading to a deeper emotional connection to the organization.

This finding aligns with the research by Wesley (2010), which emphasizes that effective stewardship instils confidence in employees. By encouraging employees to participate in finding solutions, leaders cultivate a collaborative environment that is essential for professional growth. Employees who feel their contributions are recognized and valued are likely to experience higher levels of job satisfaction, which is a key determinant of retention.

Stewardship plays a significant role in helping employees achieve their professional goals. The recognition by two participants in the study that stewardship contributes to their professional development underscores the importance of leadership in navigating career paths. The statement from a leader at South Nyanza Sugar Company (Sony Sugar) that they help employees identify and pursue their career aspirations illustrate a commitment to employee development. This approach not only aligns with servant leadership principles but also directly impacts employee satisfaction.

When leaders take the initiative to facilitate career development, it enhances employees' perception of their roles within the organization. This empowerment through stewardship reinforces the idea that the company is invested in their personal and professional growth. Employees who perceive that their leaders care about their career trajectories are more likely to remain committed to the organization, leading to lower turnover rates.

The findings suggest that stewardship significantly drives employee retention through its effect on satisfaction. When employees feel supported by their leaders in their professional development, their job satisfaction increases. This heightened satisfaction results from employees' belief that they are integral to the organization, fostering loyalty and a desire to stay.

Moreover, the collaborative environment created by stewardship encourages open communication and trust between leaders and employees. This trust is critical for employee retention, as it cultivates a workplace atmosphere where individuals feel secure and valued. Employees who trust their leaders are less likely to seek opportunities elsewhere; as they are more likely to believe that their needs and aspirations will be met within the organization.

As the study indicates, stewardship not only empowers employees to achieve their professional objectives but also creates a culture of collaboration and support. This culture is essential for fostering employee satisfaction, which, in turn, shapes their decision to remain with the company. Therefore, implementing effective stewardship practices is crucial for enhancing employee satisfaction and ensuring long-term retention at South Nyanza Sugar Company.

Employee Motivation and Employee Retention at South Nyanza Sugar Company

The researcher asked the participants the questions, in what ways does servant leadership contribute to employees' motivation at South Nyanza Sugar Company? Additionally, in a statement-question format, the researcher posed the question, employee motivation encourages them to commit to the employer, and in what ways do your managers inject positive energy in you as their followers? The results are show;

Figure 2

Ways Managers Inject Positive Energy into Employees



Motivation and Employee Empowerment

In the context of South Nyanza Sugar Company, the role of employee motivation on retention is significant, with motivation acting as a foundational element in empowering and energizing the workforce. According to study findings, motivation directly contributes to a supportive environment that both recognizes employee achievements and promotes personal growth. For example, as indicated by participant M, the company's practice of rewarding high-performing employees with financial incentives boosts motivation and inspires a commitment to achieving excellence. This financial recognition creates a sense of accomplishment, motivating employees to remain loyal to the organization, as they see their efforts rewarded and valued tangibly.

Moreover, as respondent Z5 highlighted, South Nyanza Sugar Company (Sony Sugar) actively supports employee self-actualization by providing learning and development opportunities that allow employees to refine their skills and grow professionally. This aligns with the idea that motivated employees experience greater fulfilment in their roles, which translates to a stronger commitment to the organization. By offering pathways for growth, the company not only enhances job satisfaction but also addresses employees' intrinsic needs for self-improvement, thereby strengthening retention.

The study findings align with Engidaw's (2021) insights that motivation is a key contributor to increased productivity and employee engagement. When employees are motivated, they are more inclined to embrace challenges, innovate, and contribute positively to their work environments. Engidaw's research supports the notion that motivated employees cultivate positive attitudes and resilience, leading to greater empowerment and adaptability. This resilience, developed through ongoing motivation, empowers employees to manage job demands and view challenges as

learning opportunities, furthering their professional development and reducing turnover.

In addition, South Nyanza Sugar Company's motivation practices enhance retention by fostering a positive organizational culture. When employees experience appreciation and growth, they develop a sense of belonging that ties them to the company. The intrinsic motivation derived from personal achievements and external rewards reinforces employees' loyalty and satisfaction with their roles, making them less likely to seek opportunities elsewhere. This aligns with the Job Embeddedness Theory, where employees who are motivated and feel valued are more deeply embedded within the organization's culture and mission.

Study leave and employee motivation

Provision of study leave as a motivational strategy significantly encourages employee retention by fostering professional growth and enhancing job satisfaction. The findings of this study highlight how study leave allows employees to pursue further education, which not only equips them with new knowledge and skills but also enhances their capabilities to handle more complex roles within the organization. This opportunity is vital for employees aiming to meet their professional objectives, as indicated by the experience of employee T, who noted that the company's support for further education contributes to skill enhancement and prepares them for advanced positions.

The emphasis on study leave aligns with Kauhanen's (2021) assertion that such opportunities are instrumental in enabling employees to acquire essential skills relevant to their job functions. This support not only empowers employees but also creates a workforce that is better equipped to meet organizational demands. By allowing employees to gain qualifications that are increasingly necessary in a competitive job market, South Nyanza Sugar Company (Sony Sugar) cultivates a

culture of continuous learning and professional development, which can lead to improved job performance and organizational loyalty.

Moreover, employee's remarks underscore the management's encouragement for employees to pursue academic advancement, signalling a commitment to their career growth. When employees perceive that their employer invests in their development, it fosters a sense of belonging and loyalty to the organization, further enhancing retention. This feeling of being valued contributes significantly to job satisfaction, as employees recognize that their aspirations for professional growth are acknowledged and supported.

The findings resonate with Gatimu and Kagiri's (2017) research, which illustrates the positive relationship between study leave and employee empowerment. By facilitating skill acquisition and knowledge enhancement, study leave empowers employees to contribute more effectively to the organization's success. Employees who feel empowered are more likely to take on additional responsibilities and engage with their work meaningfully, thereby reinforcing their commitment to the company.

Furthermore, the opportunity for continuous learning through study leave not only boosts employee competence but also fosters innovation and creativity. An informed workforce, equipped with fresh ideas and approaches acquired during their studies, is more adept at addressing workplace challenges. This capacity for innovation can lead to improved processes, products, and overall organizational performance.

Thus, the role of employee motivation on retention at South Nyanza Sugar Company (Sony Sugar) is significantly enhanced through the provision of study leave. By supporting employees in their pursuit of further education, the company not only aids in their professional development but also cultivates a motivated and committed

workforce. This strategy contributes to job satisfaction, loyalty, and ultimately, a reduction in employee turnover, as employees are more likely to remain with an organization that invests in their growth and development.

Contribution of career development and growth

The findings highlighting that career development and growth have the most significant impact on employee empowerment (30.3%) reveal a crucial link between employee motivation and retention. This data illustrates that when employees see tangible opportunities for advancement, they become more committed to their roles and the organization.

Participant C's response about the leadership's commitment to helping employees identify their potential underscores the importance of supportive management in career progression. This perspective reflects a core tenet of servant leadership, which focuses on empowering employees and fostering their growth. By recognizing and nurturing the talents of their workforce, management not only enhances individual performance but also builds a more motivated and engaged team.

Biore's (2015) assertion that organizations that invest in professional development foster employee satisfaction which aligns with the experiences reported by employees at South Nyanza Sugar Company. As employees advance through education and skill acquisition, they gain a sense of accomplishment that further fuels their motivation. This cycle of empowerment leads to higher job satisfaction, as employees feel valued and recognized for their contributions.

Moreover, the focus on career development through training and job rotation not only equips employees with the necessary skills to perform their current jobs effectively but also prepares them for future roles within the company. This approach cultivates a culture of continuous learning, where employees are encouraged to develop a broader skill set, thereby enhancing their job security and loyalty to the

organization. Employees who perceive clear pathways for advancement are less likely to seek opportunities elsewhere, resulting in higher retention rates.

Additionally, the empowerment that stems from career development contributes to a stronger sense of belonging within the organization. When employees feel that their growth is supported, they develop an emotional connection to their workplace, increasing their commitment and reducing turnover intentions. By prioritizing professional development and recognizing employee potential, the company not only fosters a motivated workforce but also enhances retention through increased job satisfaction and commitment. This alignment of employee goals with organizational objectives is a testament to the effectiveness of servant leadership practices in promoting a dedicated and empowered workforce.

Role modelling

The findings indicate that a notable percentage of participants (6.67%) recognize the impact of role modelling on their ability to achieve professional objectives. This acknowledgment underscores the effectiveness of servant leadership practices within the organization. Role modelling, as highlighted in this study, is about learning from the values, skills, behaviours, and actions exhibited by others in the workplace. It facilitates the development of essential skills and behaviours that are crucial for task completion and overall job performance. Participant E's comment about managers taking the lead in clarifying expectations exemplifies how effective role models can enhance employee performance. When leaders demonstrate what is expected and embody the values of the organization, they not only set clear standards but also create an environment where employees feel motivated to strive for excellence.

The study's findings align with Cunneen et al. (2021), who noted that observational learning can significantly inspire employees to perform at higher levels.

When employees see their leaders actively engaging in the behaviours and values that the organization promotes, it cultivates a culture of motivation and accountability. This inspiration leads to increased effort and a commitment to meeting organizational goals, which is vital for retention.

Additionally, the findings suggest that role modelling contributes to employee empowerment, with 7% of respondents recognizing its significance. Respondent C's stated that “the management shows us how to work towards our goals and this plays a critical role in guiding and mentoring us.” This guidance not only facilitates task completion but also instils confidence in employees, empowering them to tackle challenges more effectively. When employees feel supported by role models, they are more likely to develop a sense of ownership over their work and remain committed to the organization.

Furthermore, the aspirational aspect of role modelling is significant. Positive role models in the workplace inspire employees to envision their own success and encourage them to aspire to higher levels of performance. This aspiration can lead to greater job satisfaction, as employees feel a connection to the success of their role models and are motivated to emulate their achievements.

Role models also provide practical guidance on navigating workplace challenges. By sharing their experiences and strategies for overcoming obstacles, role models equip employees with the tools necessary to manage difficulties effectively. This mentorship is particularly beneficial in high-pressure environments, where employees may face various challenges that could otherwise lead to frustration or disengagement.

Employee Commitment on Employee Retention at South Nyanza Sugar Company

To investigate the impact of employees' commitment to remain loyal to South Nyanza Sugar Company, the researcher asked the question, managers' ability to listen to their employees enhances their sense of belonging in the workplace, in what ways do the managers help you have a sense of belonging and valued in the workplace? The responses are captured in Table 8.

Table 8

Ways Managers Contribute to Employees' Sense of Belonging

Respondents	Code	Frequency	Percentage
A and U	Decision Making. Involving employees in decision-making	2	6.7
H	Employee Motivation. Motivating employees through competitive and timely remuneration	1	3.3
C	Growing others (employees). Propagating knowledge down to others, ensuring that they have the requisite resources to perform their tasks, and can grow their potential themselves	1	3.3
W and Z1	Role Modelling. Passing on knowledge, values, expertise, and skills to others.	2	6.7
B, D, F, I K, L, M, N, P,	Sense of belonging. Creating a sense of acceptance for employees and	20	66.7

Q, R, S, T, V, X, Y, Z2, Z3, Z4, and Z5	assuring their security, support, inclusion, and identity in the workplace.		
E	Service to others (employees). Serving the interests of others and ensuring that their needs are accomplished first before leaders can realize theirs.	1	3.3
O, G, and J	Stewardship. Careful and responsible management of employees and resources.	3	10.0
	Total	30	100.0

Sense of belonging

The study findings emphasize the critical role of employee commitment in enhancing retention. Servant leadership practices, which focus on fostering a supportive environment where employees feel valued and included, directly impact commitment levels. Participant U highlighted the value placed on their input, saying, "My manager listens to my contributions, issues raised, and considers us in decision-making on matters that affect the employees." This active inclusion not only demonstrates the manager's respect but also builds a culture where employees feel essential to the organization's decisions, goals, and success.

A sense of belonging emerged as a significant factor for retention, as 20 out of the 30 participants indicated that this feeling encouraged them to remain with the

company long-term. By cultivating an environment where employees feel cared for and valued, servant leadership creates a space where staff see the organization as “the most desired place to work.” Such a culture of appreciation and belonging translates into loyalty, as employees are less inclined to seek external opportunities when they feel recognized and supported within their current workplace.

Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of forums where employees can engage with management and express their views. These interactions enhance employees' belief that their insights are valued, reinforcing their commitment to the organization. Employees from different departments, especially those in lower ranks, noted that these interactions contribute to a nurturing work environment where they can develop professionally. This “massive incubator of skill development,” as some respondents described it, reinforces the notion that the organization is invested in their growth, leading to a reciprocal commitment to the company’s success and longevity.

Thus, South Nyanza Sugar Company’s approach, characterized by servant leadership, directly fosters a sense of ownership and dedication among employees. By prioritizing inclusive decision-making, providing a supportive environment, and nurturing skill development, the company successfully builds commitment, which is vital for employee retention. Employees are inspired to stay not only because they feel valued but also because they have avenues for growth and feel integral to the company's future.

Positive energy and employee commitment

A positive work environment nurtured by servant leaders inspires employees to build strong, constructive relationships with their leaders, instilling a deeper sense of motivation to remain with the organization. This supportive environment fosters goodwill, creating an attractive workplace culture that not only retains existing staff but also draws in top talent who are inspired by the positive public image shaped by

committed employees. When employees feel valued and empowered, they are more likely to pledge long-term loyalty, which, in turn, supports continuity of the organization's culture, ensures high productivity, and facilitates the achievement of organizational goals.

The study reveals that support from servant leaders makes tasks feel more manageable, cultivating a work environment that employees find satisfying and enjoyable. Employees at South Nyanza Sugar Company (Sony Sugar) expressed a strong sense of loyalty, with many indicating their desire to stay with the company until retirement. They attribute their commitment to the supportive, fulfilling work environment, which enables them to accomplish both organizational and personal objectives. This ease in task completion contributes to a sense of professional fulfilment and satisfaction, strengthening their dedication to the company.

Furthermore, servant leadership at South Nyanza Sugar Company (Sony Sugar) creates a workplace that is friendly, accommodating, and conducive to professional growth. Employees experience the positive impact of servant leadership first-hand, as it offers them a balanced work environment where they enjoy professional development opportunities, flexible working conditions, and a positive rapport with management. The exchange of commitment for satisfaction and growth illustrates the reciprocal nature of servant leadership, where employees feel valued and are, therefore, motivated to remain loyal to the company.

Overall, South Nyanza Sugar Company's servant leadership approach effectively builds employee commitment by fostering an environment that promotes satisfaction, growth, and positive interactions. This commitment, in turn, is a powerful driver of employee retention, ensuring that employees see the organization as a long-term professional home where they can thrive.

Decision-making

At South Nyanza Sugar Company, servant leadership significantly fosters employee commitment by promoting a participatory and inclusive culture, which in turn enhances employee retention. The findings reveal that employees who engage with management and have a voice in organizational decisions experience a stronger connection to the company. This inclusive approach not only values employees' perspectives but also fosters a positive work environment that supports open communication and a collaborative atmosphere. Through interactive programs, servant leadership empowers employees to contribute directly to the operations and policies that shape their work, reinforcing their sense of belonging and increasing their attachment to the organization.

The servant leadership model at South Nyanza Sugar Company (Sony Sugar) aligns closely with job embeddedness theory, which emphasizes the role of employee connectedness in retaining talent. By involving employees in decisions, especially those that plays a role in their roles and work environment, the company strengthens employees' attachment to their jobs. As they identify with the organization and feel that their contributions are valued, employees gain a sense of satisfaction that cultivates a lasting commitment to the company.

According to the study's findings, employees feel empowered and autonomous when included in decision-making processes, which fuels their motivation and job satisfaction. For instance, respondent G noted that, “South Nyanza Sugar Company (Sony Sugar) provides opportunities for us to interact with management, allowing our needs and concerns to be heard and addressed.” This inclusive approach provides employees with the autonomy to alter workplace outcomes directly, which enhances their ownership over their roles and builds a sense of responsibility. This empowerment, coupled with the freedom to bring forward ideas and participate in

workplace improvements, leads to increased job satisfaction, higher morale, and greater loyalty to the organization.

Furthermore, the findings align with Charles et al. (2021), who emphasize that employee autonomy and control in decision-making contribute to job satisfaction and personal growth. Employees who are given a platform to contribute ideas and innovate tend to find more meaning in their work, which fosters long-term loyalty. As employees are involved in the decision-making process, they are more likely to feel satisfied and committed, enhancing not only their retention but also organizational productivity through creative problem-solving and innovative contributions.

Employee Performance and Employee Retention at South Nyanza Sugar Company

Towards realizing this objective, the researcher asked the question, the ability of an employee to attain and fulfil the goals in their work-related duties encourages them to commit towards working for the employer for a long period. In what ways do your managers foster a positive work environment? The responses are shown in figure 3.

Figure 3

How Managers Foster a Positive Working Environment



Service to others

In examining the role of employee performance on employee retention at South Nyanza Sugar Company, the data highlights how servant leadership, characterized by a commitment to serving employees' needs, plays a vital role. Servant leaders prioritize the development and well-being of employees before addressing their own needs, which in turn fosters a deeper sense of belonging and loyalty among the workforce. This approach, where leaders actively support employees' growth, motivates individuals to stay committed to the organization and enhances their performance.

Respondents noted that leadership involvement in guiding employees through the production process instils a sense of confidence and satisfaction, as it ensures they are well-prepared to meet organizational goals. For instance, respondent J emphasized the impact of social services provided by the company, such as access to schools, hospitals, housing, and recreational facilities, which fulfil primary needs and reduce the incentive to seek employment elsewhere. This dedication to addressing employee welfare demonstrates a form of service that goes beyond traditional compensation, further solidifying the relationship between servant leadership and employee retention.

Furthermore, the company's investment in employee empowerment through permissions for further studies and attendance at training sessions illustrates a commitment to aligning employees' career goals with organizational objectives. Leaders' willingness to support skill development creates synergy between the employees' personal aspirations and the company's mission. Such alignment fosters a positive work environment, as employees feel encouraged to communicate openly and work creatively within their roles, knowing their professional needs and personal development are valued.

Managers also noted that this participative leadership style, which encourages collaboration and open communication, strengthens the organizational culture and inspires a high level of employee commitment. By continually serving the needs of employees, South Nyanza Sugar Company (Sony Sugar) demonstrates how a servant leadership approach can directly contribute to employee retention by fostering a workplace where employees feel valued, empowered, and motivated to invest in the company long-term. This approach aligns well with the study's findings, underscoring how servant leadership practices not only boost employee satisfaction and performance but also solidify loyalty to the organization.

Positive energy and employee Performance

The study findings demonstrate how servant leadership, specifically through fostering positive energy and involvement, directly impacts employee performance and retention. The responses indicate that the company’s management actively collaborates with partners to provide training and development opportunities, broadening employees' skills and work experiences. This focus on growth and empowerment allows employees to see their roles as part of a larger, supportive environment that values their professional development, which is essential for retention.

Employee participation in decision-making processes further solidifies this commitment to servant leadership. Managers create time to listen to employees, ensuring that their voices are heard and their contributions considered in organizational decisions. According to data presented (Appendix X), a significant portion of participants acknowledged that management’s efforts to include employees in decision-making and provide ongoing motivation contribute to a positive work environment. This participation fosters a sense of belonging and strengthens

employees' emotional ties to the organization, enhancing both their performance and their commitment to stay.

Moreover, training and development initiatives were highlighted by seven participants as essential to creating a productive and enjoyable work environment. Through these initiatives, employees feel valued and equipped to succeed in their roles, contributing to a more motivated and engaged workforce. Servant leadership practices that focus on employee development, therefore, create a workplace culture where employees feel energized and supported, leading them to invest more effort and remain loyal to the company.

The study's findings underscore that servant leadership at South Nyanza Sugar Company (Sony Sugar) cultivates positive working relationships and a collective sense of purpose. By fostering an environment of interactive engagement and support, managers build a foundation of trust and satisfaction that translates to lower turnover intentions. In this way, the leadership's approach enhances employee retention by ensuring that employees feel respected, empowered, and deeply connected to the organization.

Provision of sufficient and up-to-date resources and equipment and employee performance

The study revealed that the provision of adequate, up-to-date resources significantly impacts employee performance and retention. Servant leadership here is evidenced by managers prioritizing employees' operational needs, ensuring that the tools and resources required to perform their jobs are readily available. According to respondent F, managers "empower us by providing us with the resources and tools we require," underscoring how critical resource availability is to employee empowerment and productivity. This approach supports employees in meeting job expectations and

builds a sense of security and capability, which strengthens their connection to the organization.

Respondent M's observation that "leaders and managers empower us by guiding us and availing tools we require" aligns with Kimolo's (2013) findings, which highlight the role of updated resources and technology in boosting productivity. Access to efficient, modern equipment not only enhances task completion but also inspires employees to be more creative and innovative. When employees can work with resources that make their roles easier, they're likely to feel more satisfied and motivated to stay with the organization, viewing it as a supportive environment that values their needs and career growth.

Furthermore, the availability of resources aligns closely with the servant leadership principle of prioritizing employees' needs before addressing the leader's own goals. Managers' investment in up-to-date resources reflects their commitment to enhancing employees' work quality and job satisfaction, which are essential for high performance. Employees, when equipped with effective tools, can complete tasks efficiently and explore innovative approaches, which reinforces their sense of accomplishment and fosters long-term loyalty to the organization.

In this way, the servant leadership approach at South Nyanza Sugar Company (Sony Sugar) cultivates a high-performance culture; reducing turnover intentions by ensuring employees are well-supported and encouraged to achieve their best. The company's dedication to resource provision creates an environment where employees are motivated to contribute meaningfully to organizational goals, which is critical for retention in a competitive industry.

Promotion of employee performance

The study findings highlight how merit-based promotion impacts employee performance and commitment, key factors in retention. Promotions serve as

acknowledgment of employees' contributions and potential, which bolsters their motivation to excel in the workplace. As respondent S notes, "The commitment of leaders towards unlocking our potentials as employees has seen a majority of the people we were recruited together with move to higher ranks, including myself." This progression is more than just an elevation in title—it signifies trust in the employee's abilities, fostering a sense of empowerment and achievement.

Participant Z2's response reflects the company's structured approach to promotion, where employees are trained for potential vacancies and internal recruitment prioritizes promoting existing staff. This approach aligns with servant leadership principles, wherein leaders emphasize personal development, ensuring employees feel recognized and valued. Research by Rajalingam et al. (2015) supports these findings, suggesting that promotion increases employees' responsibility and thereby fosters a deeper connection with their work and organization.

Through promotion, employees are empowered by greater autonomy and control over their roles, which can increase their commitment to the organization. For instance, promoted employees are often tasked with higher-level responsibilities and have a broader decision-making scope, impacting not just their work but that of their teams. Such elevated roles offer opportunities for skill development, enabling employees to pursue self-actualization through alignment with their personal and professional aspirations. Promotion becomes both a motivator and a tool for retention, as employees recognize the company's commitment to their career growth, resulting in a reciprocal loyalty to the organization.

Thus the South Nyanza Sugar Company's focus on merit-based promotion under servant leadership nurtures a motivated, empowered workforce that sees growth within the organization as attainable. This internal pathway for advancement, coupled

with the opportunity for continuous skill development, not only improves performance but solidifies employees' decision to remain with the company.

Summary of the Chapter

This chapter presented and discussed findings aligned with the four research objectives, showing that servant leadership has a significant influence on employee satisfaction, motivation, commitment, and performance at South Nyanza Sugar Company, all of which subsequently contribute to employee retention. The results indicated that delegation, training, and stewardship enhance employee satisfaction; financial incentives, study leave, and career development opportunities improve motivation; inclusive decision-making and a sense of belonging strengthen employee commitment; and service-oriented leadership practices, provision of resources, positive energy, and merit-based promotion improve employee performance.

The inductive thematic analysis revealed a strong and consistent relationship between servant leadership practices and employee retention. Participants indicated that employees are more likely to remain in organizations that support their growth, provide training and guidance, and model effective leadership behaviour. The findings collectively confirm that employee satisfaction, motivation, commitment, and performance act as key mediating mechanisms through which servant leadership influences retention outcomes at South Nyanza Sugar Company.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

Servant leadership practice is an approach of leadership that focuses on the employees and enhances their aptitude to perform and attain satisfaction in the workplace according to Ding et al. (2012). Employees have elicited enhanced satisfaction levels in organizations practising servant leadership. As a result, the majority of employees in such organizations have committed themselves to the employers. Servant leadership consequently, impacts employees' retention in such organizations. The main objective of this discussion chapter is to explore the impact of servant leadership practice on employees' retention at South Nyanza Sugar Company. This chapter presents a summary of the findings captured in Chapter Four. Secondly, the chapter will adduce conclusions based on the findings and come up with recommendations based on the gaps identified.

The main objective of this study was to determine how servant leadership practice at South Nyanza Sugar Company (Sony Sugar) contributes to employees' retention in the organization. In realizing the broad objective, the researcher formulated the specific objectives. The specific objectives of the study were (1) to explore how servant leadership influences employee satisfaction and subsequently encourages employee retention at South Nyanza Sugar Company, Kenya, (2) to investigate how servant leadership influences employee motivation and subsequently fosters employee retention at South Nyanza Sugar Company, Kenya, (3) to explore how servant leadership influences employee commitment and subsequently strengthens employee retention at South Nyanza Sugar Company, Kenya, and (4) to

examine how servant leadership influences employee performance and subsequently promotes employee retention at South Nyanza Sugar Company, Kenya.

Summary of findings

Employees' satisfaction and employee retention at South Nyanza Sugar Company

Out of all the 30 participants involved in the study, none of them had turnover intentions since servant leadership gave them inspiration and satisfaction in the organization. All 30 participants were inspired to stay with their current employers for the foreseeable future.

On whether servant leadership empowers employees to effectively perform their duties at South Nyanza Sugar Company (Sony Sugar) all the 25 junior employees who participated in the study believed that their servant leaders empowered them to perform efficiently in the workplace.

On whether the managers believed that servant leadership enabled them to empower employees and provide them opportunities for professional growth, all 5 participants in the managerial cadre agreed that servant leadership enabled them to give employees opportunities for professional growth.

As a result, servant leadership practice correlates to high employee retention in the organization.

Employees' motivation and employee retention at South Nyanza Sugar Company (Sony Sugar).

In determining the contribution of servant leadership to employees' motivation, the study revealed that servant leaders instil positive energy in employees. Out of all the lower-level employees who participated in the study, none of them dissociated employee motivation with servant leadership. All 25 participants believed that servant leadership created a feeling of motivation while working for the company.

In addition, the study found out that managers practising servant leadership create a positive and friendly working environment by committing towards ensuring that employees accomplish their duties in the workplace efficiently. All the 25 low and mid-level employees who participated in the study revealed that their managers' actions in relation to servant leadership practice motivated them to continue working for the company.

Summarily, servant leadership practice correlates to employees' motivation, and thus their commitment to continue working for the employer.

Employee Commitment and Employee Retention at South Nyanza Sugar Company

In determining the role of servant leadership on employers' commitment to the organization, the study found that all the 25 low and mid-level employees who participated in the study believed that their leaders motivated them to commit to the organization.

In determining the impact of managers' actions on employee motivation, the study found that all 5 managers concurred that those servant leadership activities created a sense of commitment to the employees. The managers who participated in the study revealed that creating a conducive work environment created a feeling of satisfaction for employees who consequently committed to working for the company for the longest time possible.

Further, the study found that none of the 25 low and mid-level employees, who participated in the study disassociated employee's sense of belonging from servant leadership. All the 25 low and mid-level employees believed that servant leadership enhance their sense of belonging and thus a reason to commit towards working for the employer.

In determining how servant leaders' actions concerning creating a sense of belonging among employees, the study found that all the 25 low and mid-level

employees who participated in the study agreed that their managers' actions enhance their commitment to the employer to the unforeseeable future.

Based on these findings, servant leadership correlates to high employee commitment levels to the employer and thus, high employee retention at South Nyanza Sugar Company.

Employee Performance and Employee Retention at South Nyanza Sugar Company

In determining the mediating role of employees' performance between servant leadership and employee retention at South Nyanza Sugar Company, the study found that all 25 low and mid-level employees who participated in the study associated servant leadership with a positive work environment.

Further, the study found that all the managers who participated in the study concurred that their actions as guided by servant leadership philosophy created a positive work environment. The managers also agreed that they work together with employees to create synergy between the ranks, and this improves positive working relations and thus the desire to continue working for the company.

Based on these findings, servant leadership correlates to a positive work environment and the commitment to continue working for the company.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions are drawn in alignment with the four objectives. The study concludes that servant leadership has a direct and positive influence on employee satisfaction at South Nyanza Sugar Company. Servant leadership practices such as delegation, training, and stewardship enhance employees' satisfaction levels by making them feel valued, competent, and supported. Satisfied employees, in turn, develop lower turnover intentions and express a strong desire to remain with the organization. Therefore, servant leadership promotes employee retention through its positive effect on employee satisfaction.

Furthermore, the study concludes that servant leadership significantly enhances employee motivation at South Nyanza Sugar Company. Servant leaders instill positive energy in employees through financial recognition, study leave opportunities, career development pathways, and a supportive work environment. Motivated employees demonstrate greater engagement, resilience, and commitment to organizational goals. Consequently, servant leadership promotes employee retention through its positive effect on employee motivation.

In addition, the study concludes that servant leadership fosters strong employee commitment at South Nyanza Sugar Company. By creating a sense of belonging, involving employees in decision-making, and providing a supportive and inclusive work environment, servant leaders build emotional connections between employees and the organization. Committed employees view the organization as a long-term professional home and express loyalty that reduces turnover intentions. Thus, servant leadership promotes employee retention through its positive effect on employee commitment.

Finally, the study concludes that servant leadership enhances employee performance at South Nyanza Sugar Company, which in turn supports retention. Through service to others, provision of adequate resources, merit-based promotion, and fostering positive energy, servant leaders enable employees to perform their tasks effectively and creatively. Employees who perform well and feel supported in their roles develop greater satisfaction and loyalty to the organization. Therefore, servant leadership promotes employee retention through its positive effect on employee performance. Taken together, these four conclusions confirm that servant leadership positively influences employee retention through the interconnected mechanisms of

satisfaction, motivation, commitment, and performance, all of which work in concert to create a work environment where employees feel valued, supported, and empowered to remain with the organization long-term.

Recommendations of the study

In this subsection, this study recommends actions and steps that South Nyanza Sugar Company (Sony Sugar) should take in terms of policy and managerial practice. It also points out areas where future research could focus.

Policy recommendations

Kenyan organizations should adopt policies that enhance employee-employer relationships through leadership approaches such as servant leadership. Based on this study, the majority of Kenyan employers do not embrace participative leadership styles that could enhance their relationship with employees. Policies that focus on employee welfare and needs in the workplace should be implemented to improve employees' satisfaction and reduce their turnover intentions. Implementation of such policies will increase employees' commitment and quality in production, all of which will improve an organization's competitiveness.

In addition, Kenyan policymakers such as the legislature should come up with work-based policies that make it compulsory for employers to train, empower, and reward employees for their achievements. Currently, there are very few organizations in the country that practice the servant leadership approach or worker-centred policies. Such policies will foster good employee-employer relationships and increase employees' satisfaction levels in the workplace.

Managerial practice recommendations

South Nyanza Sugar Company (Sony Sugar). should hire and train managers with servant leadership skills. Even though the company practices servant leadership, a significant number of managers in different departments are not aware of the leadership philosophy they are applying in the organization. Hiring and training leaders on servant leadership will enhance employees' productivity, commitment, and reduce their turnover intentions. As a result, the organization will enjoy the continuity of its culture, positive work environment, and enhanced competitiveness over its rivals.

Further, the organization should formalize employee training and empowerment to have a motivated, committed, and satisfied workforce. The training should empower employees both at work and outside the organization. Based on the study's findings, the training sessions were conducted sparsely with some of the low rank employees indicating that training should be done with more regularity. Increasing the frequency of training will enhance employees' skills and productivity.

Theory-based recommendations

The servant leadership approach should be adopted in organizations as it enhances employees' embeddedness in the organization. The servant leadership approach creates a positive work environment, employee satisfaction, and enhanced commitment to the employer. As a result, the high level of satisfaction will enhance their connection and sense of belonging in the organization. Employee embeddedness is a crucial promoter of employee retention as they do not have reasons to seek better working conditions.

Future research recommendations

Further research could be conducted on the feasibility and possibility of practising servant leadership purely in managing local companies located in the rural areas of Kenya. There is inadequate research to support the feasibility of practising servant leadership in companies located in rural areas of the country such as South Nyanza Sugar Company (Sony Sugar). The findings of such studies would widen the knowledge on the importance of practising servant leadership in such local and rural-based companies.

Lastly, future research could focus on the challenges of practising servant leadership in Kenyan organizations. According to the study, there are very few Kenyan organizations that recognize and practice servant leadership (Mulongo, 2020). Researchers should come up with solutions to reduce barriers to practising servant leadership in Kenyan organizations.

Summary of Chapter

This chapter has summarized the findings, presented a discussion of the findings, and deduced conclusions based on the objectives of the study. In addition, the chapter has made recommendations based on the findings of the study.

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Appendices

Appendix I: Questionnaire and Interview Questions

a. Questions for Employees

The purpose of this interview is to collect first-hand information from the employees and managers on the impact of servant leadership on employee retention at South Nyanza Sugar Company (Sony Sugar). The employee in the organization forms a very important part of the company and what they feel about the company policies, the decisions taken, and the organizational engagements and activities play a big role in its overall performance. It is for this reason that I would like to take some of your time for a conversation on the impact of servant leadership practice in the organization in a structured interview. The interview contains questions on your experience of servant leadership in the company. There are open-ended questions to allow optimal conversation. The responses you provide in this interview will remain confidential as there will be no place in the study where you will be identified by your names, work numbers or identity numbers. The recorded data will be kept in a computer hard drive with security access codes, which only the researcher is capable of accessing. As an employee at South Nyanza Sugar Company, you are requested to respond to the questions in the sections below:

Section 1: Demographic Data of Participants

1. Education
    a) Primary Level (KCPE) ☐
    b) High School (KCSE) ☐
    c) College Certificate ☐
    d) College Diploma ☐
    e) University Degree (Bachelor) ☐
    f) University Degree (Masters) ☐
    g) University (Doctor of Philosophy) ☐
2. Income level
    a) Ksh. 0 – Ksh. 9,999 ☐
    b) Ksh. 10,000 – Ksh. 19,999 ☐
    c) Ksh. 20,000 – Ksh. 29,999 ☐
    d) Ksh. 30,000 – Ksh. 39,999 ☐
    e) Ksh. 40,000 – Ksh. 49,999 ☐
    f) Ksh. 50,000 – Ksh. 59,999 ☐
    g) Ksh. 60,000 and above ☐
3. Employment
    a) Permanent and pensionable ☐
    b) Contract ☐
    c) Sub-contracted ☐
    d) Unspecified ☐

Kindly provide your response in full statements in this section:

Research question 1

In what ways does servant leadership help in empowering employees to effectively perform their roles at South Nyanza Sugar Company?

1). Employee empowerment creates a feeling that their career goals are secured at the organization. In what ways do managers empower you to meet your professional objectives?

2). How do the actions of your managers in (1) encourage you to continue working for South Nyanza Sugar Company (Sony Sugar)?

Research Question 2

What is the role employees' motivation at South Nyanza Sugar Company?

3). Employee motivation encourages them to commit to the employer. In what ways do your managers inject positive energy in you as their followers?

4). How do your managers' actions in (3) above contributes to your continued working at South Nyanza Sugar Company (Sony Sugar)?

Research question 3

How does servant leadership impact employees' commitment to remain loyal to South Nyanza Sugar Company (Sony Sugar)?

5). Managers' ability to listen to their employees enhances their sense of belonging in the workplace, in what ways do the managers help you have a sense of belonging and value in the workplace?

6). How do your managers' actions in (5) above make you feel obligated to serve in this company for a considerable length of time?

Research Question 4

In what ways does servant leadership contribute to employees' performance and retention at South Nyanza Sugar Company (Sony Sugar)?

7). The ability of an employee to attain and fulfil the goals in their work-related duties encourages them to commit towards working for the employer for a long period. In what ways do your managers foster a positive work environment?

8). How do your managers' actions in (1) above encourage you to work longer at South Nyanza Sugar Company (Sony Sugar)?

Questions for Managers/Leaders

The following interview questions are meant for the completion of a research project where your company is involved as the subject of study. The study examines the impact of servant leadership on employees' retention. As a manager at South Nyanza Sugar Company (Sony Sugar) Nairobi, your leadership approach and role in the implementation of company policies are significant. It is for that reason that I would like to kindly request you to participate in the study by responding to some open-ended questions. Your personal details will not be included in the response paper as the research will give you identities that cannot be associated with you such as letters, A, B, C, and D. The recorded data will be kept in a computer hard drive with security access codes, only accessible to the researcher. The responses will be used to compose the research paper and determine whether the application of servant leadership impacts employees' retention at South Nyanza Sugar Company (Sony Sugar).

Therefore, I kindly request you to respond to the following questions:

Research question 1

In what ways does servant leadership help in empowering employees to effectively perform their roles at South Nyanza Sugar Company (Sony Sugar)?

1). Employee empowerment creates a feeling of satisfaction in the workplace, how do you as a manager provide employees with opportunities for professional growth?

2). How do your roles in (1) above encourage employees to continue working for South Nyanza Sugar Company (Sony Sugar)?

Research Question 2

What is the role of servant leadership on employees' motivation at South Nyanza Sugar Company?

3). Employee motivation encourages them to perform even more exceedingly and commit to the employer. What actions do you take as a leader to impart positive energy to employees?

4). How do your actions in (3) above persuade employees to work for South Nyanza Sugar Company (Sony Sugar) into the unforeseeable future?

Research question 3

How does servant leadership impact employees' commitment to remain loyal to South Nyanza Sugar Company (Sony Sugar)?

5). Employees' contentment and satisfaction create their resolve to commit to their employers. In what ways do you mentor employees to create a feeling of never wanting to leave South Nyanza Sugar Company (Sony Sugar)?

6). How do your actions in (1) above motivate employees to work longer in South Nyanza Sugar Company (Sony Sugar)?

Research Question 4

In what ways does servant leadership contribute to employees' performance and retention at South Nyanza Sugar Company (Sony Sugar)?

7). The ability of an employee to attain and fulfil their goals as contained in respective duties encourages them to commit towards working for the employer for a long period. As a leader, how do you ensure that employees are highly performing in their workplaces?

8). How do your actions in (7) above encourage employees to continue working at South Nyanza Sugar Company?

Appendix II: Consent Form

Title of Study: Effect of Servant Leadership Practice on Employee Retention at South Nyanza Sugar Company (Sony Sugar).

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

Achola Mak'Owuor

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PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this research study is to determine the effect of servant leadership practice on employees' retention at South Nyanza Sugar Company (Sony Sugar). Before you decide to participate in this study, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take your time and carefully read the following information. If there is anything which is unclear or in case you need more information, please feel free to ask the researcher.

STUDY PROCEDURES

Using interviews, the researcher will collect data that explain the relationship between the independent and dependent variables in the study. Using the interviews will enable the researcher to gather in-depth data from the participants. The researcher will also collect participants' diverse views, opinions, and thoughts on the variables studied.

The researcher will take up to 30 minutes with each participant, asking questions and recording the responses using audio.

RISKS

If at any time you feel exposed to some risks by participating in this study, you are

free to decline to answer any or all questions, or even terminate your involvement at any time as you choose to.

BENEFITS

There will be no direct benefit to an individual participating in this research study, but the study will contribute to the body of knowledge particularly on servant leadership in the corporate organization.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All your contributions to this study will be kept anonymous, and you are required not to write any of your identification details on this survey to help keep your comments on this research survey anonymous. To maintain your confidentiality, the researcher has made every necessary measure including the following, to keep your confidentiality:

- The researcher will use on all research notes and documents, only code names or numbers for those who have participated in the research study as he shall have assigned.
- The researcher will keep locked in his file cabinet and in his personal possession, any information which can identify those who participated in the study, the notes, and interview transcripts.

Unless the researcher is under a legal obligation to report specific incidents such as abuse and suicide risks, the participants' data will remain in strict confidence.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If at any time during the study, you have a question, or by participating in this study get some adverse effects because of your participation in this study, please feel free to contact the researcher using the contact information provided above. Similarly, should you have questions on your rights on having participated in this study or have

problems, which you do not feel comfortable discussing with the researcher, please contact NACOSTI (National Science Technology, and Innovation) on +25420400700.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

It is voluntary for you to participate in this study and the decision to take part in this study is solely yours. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part in this study. Should you agree to participate in this study, you will be requested to sign a consent form before we proceed. You are also free to withdraw from the exercise at any time of the exercise even after signing the consent and will not be compelled to give any reason for your action. Your withdrawal from the study will not in any way affect any existing relationship with the researcher. If your withdrawal comes before the exercise is completed, the data which you have contributed will either be destroyed or returned to you to ensure that they are not used for the purpose of this study.

CONSENT

Having read and understood the information provided and having had the opportunity to ask questions, I have understood that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and without cost. I understand that I will be given a copy of this consent form. I voluntarily agree to take part in this study.

Participant's signature _____ Date _____

Investigator's signature _____ Date _____

Appendix III: *Servant Leadership Practices Empowering Employees*

Respondents	*Response*	Generated codes	Themes and Propositions (Employee empowerment, retention, commitment, sense of belonging, and employee commitment)
G	SONY is one organization that provides us with opportunities to interact with the management and sit down to listen to our needs and issues we would like to be addressed. At some point, we are part of the decisions the organization makes on matters of employee affairs.	Decision-making	Employee empowerment
P	The company's leadership empowers us through exposure to different work positions, training,	Delegation of responsibilities	Employee empowerment

	and giving us experience in different encounters to ascertain career growth.		
Q	When I joined the company, I was curious to learn and gain primary skills in sugarcane processing. The company exposed me to different work positions that equipped me with different skills in the sugar procession. I can't be any prouder.	Delegation of responsibilities	Employee empowerment
Z4	At the leadership level, SONY identifies talents in our employees and injects the right resources and programs to fully harness such talents and help them grow their professions.	Delegation of responsibilities	Employee empowerment
O	In this company, the management rewards us through financial remuneration for those who perform exemplarily. In this way, the organization motivates us to perform our jobs effectively.	Motivation	Employee empowerment
Z5	We recognize the need for self-actualization among the employees. We therefore give them rare	Motivation	Employee empowerment

	opportunities to learn, share, and hone their skills to appropriately impact their professional development in their areas of specialization.		
H	The company have a sure way of moving its employees up the ranks through training and job rotations. Such structures help employees to commit themselves and grow professionally.	Promotion	Employee empowerment
S	The commitment of leaders towards unlocking our potential as employees has seen the majority of the people recruited together with the move to higher ranks, including myself.	Promotion	Employee empowerment
Z2	In the finance department, we foster employee training that helps them to fill in positions that fall vacant. In addition, the company has an internal recruitment plan where only those already employed are given the opportunity to occupy higher-ranking positions.	Promotion	Employee empowerment

M	In this company, the leaders and managers empower us by guiding us and availing tools we require to perform our jobs.	Provision of resources and equipment	Employee empowerment
D	We are provided with the equipment and resources required to perform our tasks effectively.	Provision of resources and equipment	Employee empowerment
F	Our managers empower us by providing us with the resources and tools we require to perform our jobs.	Provision of resources and equipment	Employee empowerment
N	The management team provides employees with the equipment and tools such as gumboots, gloves, aprons, shovels, pangas, and tractors which facilitate the efficient delivery of tasks in the organization.	Provision of resources and equipment	Employee empowerment
C	The management has taken the lead in showing us how to work and attain our set goals. Through their interventions, we find it easy to perform in our respective job positions.	Role Modelling	Employee empowerment
E	Our managers have always taken the lead in ensuring that we understand what we are expected to achieve,	Role Modelling	Employee empowerment

	thus enhancing our ability to complete the assigned tasks.		
K	Career development is a critical factor in the life of an employee. SONY Sugar Company Limited gives us opportunities to learn from training, job rotation, and opportunities to further our education levels.	Study leave to improve knowledge level	Employee empowerment
J	In terms of career growth, the company gives us time to go and study and improve our knowledge levels. The management encourages us to go to school and advance ourselves.	Study leave to improve knowledge level	Employee empowerment
A	There are times when the management organizes training for us. The managers clearly communicate with us, explaining every bit of the work requirements.	Training	Employee empowerment
B	There is a positive relationship between employees and managers. In addition, we get training and knowledge exchange programs that enable us to perform our jobs.	Training	Employee empowerment

I	The company fosters employee training that facilitates skill acquisition and qualification to fill many higher-ranking positions in the organization.	Training	Employee empowerment
L	My employer offers an ever-learning environment as we adopt new processes and machines as well as being assigned to perform different roles in the workplace. Consequently, we are ever learning at SONY.	Training	Employee empowerment
R	SONY Sugar Company's management team are efficient and dedicated to empowering employees through job delegation and training to deliver in different capacities.	Training	Employee empowerment
T	SONY has been very instrumental in equipping me with skills in sugarcane processing regardless of my background.	Training	Employee empowerment
U	Through training, learning seminars, job rotations, and education leave programs, I have gained much knowledge and developed my	Training	Employee empowerment

	profession as an industrial chemist and sugar processing. The company has enabled me to progress in my profession considerably.		
V	In my entire professional life, it is at SONY Sugar that I have recorded tremendous career growth through the job training that the company has provided to me.	Training	Employee empowerment
W	SONY Sugar Company Limited has programs that improve employees' career growth. I have gained numerous skills relevant to my profession through training and job rotation that have placed me on the right trajectory of attaining my professional dream.	Training	Employee empowerment
X	The leaders in our workplace organize professional learning courses that provide us with the requisite skills to perform in different positions in the organization. I have massively grown my profession through these endeavours.	Training	Employee empowerment

Y	My current employer, SONY Sugar, quickly took me through a series of training and skill-honing activities and programs that have greatly enhanced my professional development in the sugar production area.	Training	Employee empowerment
Z1	As a leader, we ensure that employees have the right skills, improve their capacities, and assess their ability to deliver effectively.	Training	Employee empowerment
Z3	We as leaders identify the potential and needs of our employees and expose them to the right learning program as organized by the company. As a result, they learn and develop their professions.	Training	Employee empowerment

Appendix IV: *Employee Empowerment Strategies, Codes and Themes*

Respondents	*In what ways do managers empower you to meet your professional objectives*	Generated codes	Themes and Propositions (Employee empowerment, retention, commitment, sense of belonging, and employee commitment)
C	The management creates room for career growth and progression.	Career development and growth	Employee empowerment
O	My employer instils the drive to work through the provision of learning career development and professional growth.	Career development and growth	Employee empowerment
P	SONY Sugar Company Ltd. has always been steadfast in creating opportunities for employees in different positions. I have had the opportunity to grow my profession due to the leadership and learning opportunities the company provided to	Career development and growth	Employee empowerment

	me.		
Q	The leadership is committed to helping employees identify their potential. As a junior employee since I joined I have managed to further my education and rise the ranks to be in charge of a weighing bridge.	Career development and growth	Employee empowerment
R	Through the refresher courses that the company caters for, I have massively gained in terms of building my profession by shifting from a cane cutter to a tractor driver.	Career development and growth	Employee empowerment
U	The organization creates room for us to move into high-ranking positions. Once a position falls vacant, the organization allows us to move up the ladder through training.	Career development and growth	Employee empowerment
W	The organization allows us to move into higher positions. For instance, I moved from cane planting to being in charge of the company farms.	Career development and growth	Employee empowerment
Y	From a personal experience, I have moved from a sugarcane cutter to a weighing bridge attendant and now a supervisor. I have gained a lot of	Career development and growth	Employee empowerment

	knowledge and skills.		
Z2	SONY is like an institution of learning. We learn from each other and the skills we attain are honed to help employees develop their professions.	Career development and growth	Employee empowerment
Z3	The company fosters clear communication, education programs, and training initiatives that empower employees to grow their careers and make them successful in the long term.	Career development and growth	Employee empowerment
H	SONY organizes internal job position exchange and learning that enhances our skillsets and knowledge in the workplace.	Job position exchange	Employee empowerment
K	Through the exchange programs between different positions in the organization, SONY's management gives us the opportunity to progress professionally.	Job position exchange	Employee empowerment
M	Efficient planning in the financial department and management at large where resources are solicited from the bottom and employees are involved, which ensures that the employees'	Role modelling	Employee empowerment

	professional needs are met.		
N	Attaining professional objectives in the company is easy as the management facilitates teamwork and learning from others who may be more experienced than you are.	Role modelling	Employee empowerment
L	The company sets the budget prior enough to buffer the employees from a financial crisis. The funds set aside help ensure that the employees have all they require to perform their tasks and attain professional progress.	Provision of resources and equipment	Employee empowerment
Z1	As leaders in this organisation, we help employees identify their career paths since the majority join as unskilled workforce. We then facilitate their development in the desired career paths within the operations of the company.	Stewardship	Employee empowerment
Z4	In the ICT department, we have empowered the employees through clear communication on the status of the company and instilling them with skills to help steer the company forward.	Stewardship	Employee empowerment

T	SONY provides internal training sessions as well as opportunities to further our education.	Study leave	Employee empowerment
A	We undergo training to gain more skills. We are also given the opportunity to further our education through education leave programs.	Training	Employee empowerment
B	Our company organizes for training and skill acquisition to help in knowledge and skill development.	Training	Employee empowerment
D	Once a position falls vacant, the organization allows us to move up the ladder through training and exchange programs.	Training	Employee empowerment
E	There are regular training sessions for employees in different capacities which help us gain more knowledge and progress in our respective fields.	Training	Employee empowerment
F	Through training and seminars, we learn a lot and progress in our professions.	Training	Employee empowerment
G	The organization have training programs that enable us to learn as well as education leave programs.	Training	Employee empowerment
I	We undergo training to gain more	Training	Employee

	skills. We were also given the opportunity to further our education and professional exchange learning.		empowerment
J	The company has organized a series of seminars, training sessions, and job rotation programs that have enabled us to grow professionally and attain progress in one's life.	Training	Employee empowerment
S	The company has consistently been involved in trainings that have improved my professional ranks.	Training	Employee empowerment
V	There are regular performance evaluations and assessments that enable the company to adjust its training and employee empowerment structure.	Training	Employee empowerment
X	There are regular training sessions for employees in different capacities which help us gain more knowledge and progress in our respective fields.	Training	Employee empowerment
Z5	The management team ensures that employees have the adequate skills to perform their assigned tasks through training.	Training	Employee empowerment

Appendix V: *Managerial Strategies for Injecting Positive Energy*

Respondents	*In what ways do your managers inject positive energy in you as their followers?*	Generated codes	Themes and Propositions (Employee empowerment, retention, commitment, sense of belonging, and employee commitment)
Z2	The employees are assured of career growth and progression in the company and this gives them the conviction that our company is the best place to continue and grow their professions.	Career development and growth	Employee empowerment
Z3	Job security and professional growth convinces employees to stay regardless of the financial situation facing the organization.	Career development and growth	Employee empowerment
D	At SONY we have a peaceful working environment as leaders engage us when making decisions on matters that would directly	Decision-making	Employee empowerment

	impact our productivity.		
Z1	Our organization work with different partners to train, develop, and widen our workers' experiences in the workplace. In addition, we also create time to listen to the workers and allow them to be part of the decision-making process. As such, we believe that the employees find our workplace an enjoyable and accommodating place to commit their efforts and be productive.	Decision-making	Employee empowerment
G	The company pays timely regardless of the challenges that have faced the sugar sector in Kenya.	Employee motivation	Employee empowerment
J	Motivation comes in different forms. In SONY, the management ensures that the employees are capable of accomplishing the assigned tasks. This can be motivation enough to convince one to commit themselves to the organization.	Employee motivation	Employee empowerment

O	The organization pays on time. Even in times when the payments will be delayed, there is clear communication, which allows us to plan ourselves.	Employee motivation	Employee empowerment
U	Timely payments of salaries and clear communication on the same in case of delays make the company a positive workplace.	Employee motivation	Employee empowerment
W	In my experience, the respectful and dignified approach that my manager uses to address issues in the workplace creates a massive sense of respect and injects positive energy into the employees.	Employee motivation	Employee empowerment
Y	In the department where I work, there have been instances where the supervisor and manager privately engage low-performing employees and help them recover and attain their set goals. In this way, the leaders have injected positive energy into the employees.	Employee motivation	Employee empowerment

B	There is a good relationship with the managers, which encourages me to commit myself to the employer.	Encouragement	Employee empowerment
C	Our manager encourages us to participate and contribute towards the activities of the workplace. At the end of the day, one feels energized to work in the company.	Encouragement	Employee empowerment
L	Our employer creates opportunities for management to inspire and guide employees towards efficient achievement of their tasks. As a result, employees develop an attachment to the organization and its leadership.	Encouragement	Employee empowerment
P	Through the engagement with managers, we assess and determine the actual situation of the company and this creates a positive energy in the workplace.	Encouragement	Employee empowerment
Q	Our leaders have bestowed a lot of confidence in us as they hardly interfere with the operations we undertake. This makes the	Encouragement	Employee empowerment

	company a conducive environment to work.		
Z5	Engaging the employees in their performance, assessing the parameters, and coming up with measures to achieve the set goals creates a positive energy in the workplace as employees gain a clear picture of where they are headed.	Encouragement	Employee empowerment
T	Facilities such as a club and restaurant, a school which is subsidized for employees, and medical facilities make SONY a suitable and positively impactful work environment.	Growing others (employees)	Employee empowerment
H	The recognition that management accords us during job rotation and filling of higher ranking positions, we feel valued in the company.	Job position exchange	Employee empowerment
E	We are provided with tools and equipment that improve efficiency in the company.	Provision of resources and equipment	Employee empowerment
F	Based on my professional experience, I can say SONY is the	Provision of resources and	Employee empowerment

	only company which trains employees across different positions and job classifications. This is highly motivating to the employees.	equipment	
V	The leaders provide us with the essential tools and resources required to perform the assigned tasks creating a positive energy in the workplace.	Provision of resources and equipment	Employee empowerment
R	The company's management handles each employee with integrity and respect making it a conducive environment to perform.	Role modeling	Employee empowerment
M	Giving employees higher responsibilities in acting capacities and effective remuneration of employees makes them feel that the management cares about them.	Sense of belonging	Employee empowerment
Z4	As a manager, I ensure that employees are ascertained that they are contributing towards the growth of the company, thus they remain loyal to the company.	Sense of belonging	Employee empowerment

A	The company heeds to our needs regardless of the small challenges we encounter. I can say that the company is doing enough to ensure we are satisfied.	Service to others (employees)	Employee empowerment
I	Effective planning and systemization of operations gets everything into place and this helps in collaboration and efficient job performance.	Stewardship	Employee empowerment
N	The leaders keep enlightening us on the levels of performance and assess the performance daily to ensure that they proactively react to the parameters measured.	Stewardship	Employee empowerment
K	SONY Sugar Company's management allows us to advance our studies through study leaves and incentivizes these programs which highly inspires one to continue working for the company. We feel that we are part of the company and that the company makes our family whole.	Study leave	Employee empowerment
S	The company organizes training	Training	Employee

	sessions such as seminars, job exchanges and rotations, which enable us to grow in terms of skillsets and progress professionally.		empowerment
X	The ICT department has always thrived in empowering employees through training and equipping us with top-notch skills to learn new ideas and become innovative.	Training	Employee empowerment

Appendix VI: *Strategies that Foster Employees' Sense of Belonging and Value*

Respondents	*In what ways do the managers help you have a sense of belonging and value in the workplace?*	Generated codes	Themes and Propositions (Employee empowerment, retention, commitment, sense of belonging, and employee commitment)
A	We are allowed to contribute to some of the decisions that affect us as employees. The management creates room for engaging and adopting our views.	Decision-making	Employee empowerment
U	My manager listens to my contributions, and issues raised, and considers us in decision-making on matters that affect the employees. This creates a sense that they value our positions and opinions in the workplace.	Decision-making	Employee empowerment
H	The support we get from our servant leaders makes everything	Employee motivation	Employee empowerment

	easier and work enjoyable. Consequently, we develop a feeling of satisfaction due to the effortless ability to complete tasks in the workplace. In turn, I believe that SONY Sugar Ltd remains incomparable to the majority of the companies in the industry. I just want to work here till my retirement.		
C	Through the company's job rotation plan, I feel valued and recognized in the workplace as I get promoted to stand in or work in highly ranked positions.	Growing others (employees)	Employee empowerment
W	Our leaders have bestowed a lot of confidence in us as they hardly interfere with the operations we undertake. This makes the company a conducive environment to work.	Role modelling	Employee empowerment
Z1	As a management team, we recognize the ability of the employees to contribute towards our activities and operations. We	Role modelling	Employee empowerment

	nurture them to perform their tasks and value their contribution to the organization.		
E	The managers are always attentive to our concerns. They are friendly, they listen to the challenges and act on the issues we raise with them.	Service to others (employees)	Employee empowerment
B	There are set aside sessions with the management where we our challenges in the workplace which creates a sense of belonging in the company.	Sense of belonging	Employee empowerment
D	From time to time, the organization arranges for departmental meetings where employees interact with the managers. As a result, an environment that fosters a positive workplace is created and employees feel that they are valued.	Sense of belonging	Employee empowerment
F	Our supervisors and managers are committed to ensuring that our voices are heard and that we participate in the majority of the activities that involve us directly.	Sense of belonging	Employee empowerment

	They ensure that our views count in defining policies that govern our operations in the workplace.		
I	Through sessions with the work council, we as employees are allowed to share with the management the challenges we face in the workplace.	Sense of belonging	Employee empowerment
K	At SONY, the MD organizes a quarterly meeting with the employees, where the workers share their issues, grievances, and solutions determined and acted on by the MD.	Sense of belonging	Employee empowerment
L	At SONY we are a family unit where we all participate in activities and processes in the workplace and collectively define the vision. Through our involvement in the decision-making process, we feel part and parcel of the organization, something that really motivates us beyond remuneration and rewards.	Sense of belonging	Employee empowerment
M	Our managers and supervisors	Sense of	Employee

	create a great sense of belonging and satisfaction by creating a conducive and inclusive working environment. In turn, we develop a feeling that there is no better employer and working environment than what SONY guarantees. Therefore, we feel the desire to commit our lives to the organization for the longest time possible.	belonging	empowerment
N	The management provides avenues for sharing our views and this creates a sense of belonging as we feel valued.	Sense of belonging	Employee empowerment
P	Employees always have special sessions with the work council, where we speak out ourselves and the challenges we are facing as a workforce. This creates a feeling that they value us.	Sense of belonging	Employee empowerment
Q	Inclusivity has significantly improved the positive perception of the workplace. Employees are motivated and develop a sense of	Sense of belonging	Employee empowerment

	value whenever they are included in the processes.		
R	The company's management gives us the freedom to perform our roles with little supervision, which makes us believe that we are valued and given the chance to own the process.	Sense of belonging	Employee empowerment
S	The managers talk to us explaining the situation in the company, which creates a feeling that they care about us and strive towards ensuring that we are well-planned and understand the company.	Sense of belonging	Employee empowerment
T	I believe that SONY trusts us to deliver and applies little supervision on us once they have trusted our ability to deliver in the workplace. Consequently, we develop a sense of belonging and never have enough reasons to quit.	Sense of belonging	Employee empowerment
V	In the manufacturing department, we are entrusted with machine operations and anything we propose or recommend to be an	Sense of belonging	Employee empowerment

	issue is considered and addressed, making it feel comfortable and enjoyable working for the company.		
X	SONY Sugar Company Limited is one of the very few companies in the country that gives employees the room to operate under very little supervision and this implies that we hardly clash with the managers in the workplace. We feel included and valued in the organization as a result.	Sense of belonging	Employee empowerment
Y	I love the confidence and trust levels that the company have bestowed in me, I perform tasks under little supervision. The working condition creates high confidence levels in me as an employee. The managers are supportive and understanding to us.	Sense of belonging	Employee empowerment
Z2	SONY is one of the organizations one would hardly distinguish between employees and their leaders as we create an equal rights	Sense of belonging	Employee empowerment

	environment where everyone can talk about anything related to work.		
Z3	For example in the production department, we assign employees responsibilities, which they perform without supervision as they are the supervisors of their operations. Ours at the leadership is to confirm the targets are attained as specified.	Sense of belonging	Employee empowerment
Z4	In the IT department, we involve employees in undertaking operations, listening to their views, and supporting them to achieve the desired objective.	Sense of belonging	Employee empowerment
Z5	Employee engagement ensures that their contributions, solutions, and issues are considered in the decision-making stage to ensure that they are satisfied and given a sense of belonging in the workplace.	Sense of belonging	Employee empowerment
O	Our managers provide solutions to the problems we face. As a result, we feel that we are part and parcel	Stewardship	Employee empowerment

	of the organization, which makes me committed to continue working for SONY.		
G	I have realized that our management is honest and people of integrity. We trust their vision and position of the company. We have a clear picture of where we are headed as a team.	Stewardship	Employee empowerment
J	Our managers form part of the solutions we require for our problems. The managers help us to address the issues, which makes me comfortable and satisfied to continue working for SONY.	Stewardship	Employee empowerment

Appendix VII: H*ow Managers Foster a Positive Work Environment*

Respondents	*In what ways do your managers foster a positive work environment*	Generated codes	Themes and Propositions (Employee empowerment, retention, commitment, sense of belonging, and employee commitment)
L	A good relationship with the community, employees, and the employer motivates employees to continue working for the company over time.	Employee motivation	Employee empowerment
R	The managers create an interactive environment with us and communication is easy making it motivating to commit to the tasks and meet all the set organizational objectives.	Employee motivation	Employee empowerment
X	The relationship between the farmers, employees, and customers is just so perfect that	Employee motivation	Employee empowerment

	we easily make one peaceful community. This makes the organization a positive work environment.		
Y	The organization has a well-circulated itinerary that informs all the stakeholders of its activities and reduces conflicts with the main stakeholders, and this makes it an inspirational encounter in the organization.	Employee motivation	Employee empowerment
Z2	As a management team, we commit ourselves and actualize our promise through our engagements. As a result, the majority of employees have confessed that they are inspired and contented to continue working for the company.	Employee motivation	Employee empowerment
A	Even though we face difficulties in the workplace sometimes, our managers are committed to ensuring that we fulfil our tasks by encouraging us to commit and passionately deliver.	Encouragement	Employee empowerment

U	The managers encourage us to work in safe environments and ensure that we are safe.	Encouragement	Employee empowerment
G	The company provides us with incentives such as sugar or shopping vouchers for the excellent performers which motivates everyone to work here.	Growing others (employees)	Employee empowerment
O	The company has amenities, employee training, timely payment, and clear communication structures that motivate us to work.	Growing others (employees)	Employee empowerment
N	The manager provides us with the right tools and equipment to ensure that the work is delivered correctly. The company is committed to ensuring that we are safe and creating positive energy in the workplace.	Provision of resources and equipment	Employee empowerment
P	The manager provides us with the right tools and equipment to ensure that we work efficiently. There is no cruelty in the workplace and the flexibility to	Provision of resources and equipment	Employee empowerment

	work makes the place an interesting environment.		
Z3	The company identifies the areas that need adjustments and injects resources to achieve the established goal which creates a positive working environment for employees.	Provision of resources and equipment	Employee empowerment
S	In the manufacturing department, we are entrusted with machine operations and anything we propose or express our concerns are addressed or considered by the management.	Role modelling	Employee empowerment
F	The management has committed to actualizing their promise through engagement with employees, which allows employees to air their views and thus the feeling of contentedness to continue working for the company	Sense of belonging	Employee empowerment
H	SONY has created a positive working relationship between management and employees,	Sense of belonging	Employee empowerment

	which enables us to engage managers on anything troubling us and they consider our views on the workplace.		
I	The company entrusts us with different positions and efforts through job rotations which creates a positive feeling in the workplace.	Sense of belonging	Employee empowerment
M	The ability to link up with seniors and those who have crucial information about the company creates a connection with the employees as they feel as if they are carriers of the organization's background information and identity.	Sense of belonging	Employee empowerment
Q	In this organization, we operate in a positive work environment with employees and managers interacting freely to learn from each other, which creates a feeling of satisfaction and inclusivity in the organization.	Sense of belonging	Employee empowerment
T	With the management team	Sense of	Employee

	interacting with us regularly, SONY Sugar Company remains a workplace closer to home for many employees. The working condition creates high confidence levels in me as an employee.	belonging	empowerment
W	The organization organizes work council sessions where the employees interact with the leaders. This has significantly improved my relationship with the managers and thus a positive work environment.	Sense of belonging	Employee empowerment
Z1	With a conducive, interactive, and inclusive working environment, we have fostered strong relationships and defined our identities with employees thus making the organization a desired workplace for the majority of our employees. Going around, you notice that there are employees who are still owed salaries for the last six months, others even 1 year, but they are	Sense of belonging	Employee empowerment

	still committed to us and the company is committed to making their work experience better with a well-deserved compensation framework.		
E	Positive work relationship between management and employees, and the work-related benefits such as subsidized cost of housing.	Service to others (employees)	Employee empowerment
J	Through the social services and amenities such as school and hospital, housing, and social funfairs we feel that all our primary needs are catered for and we do not see the need to seek other opportunities.	Service to others (employees)	Employee empowerment
B	Managers organize internal training that is relevant to our operations.	Training	Employee empowerment
C	SONY facilitates training, skill development, and acquisition of personal protective equipment (PPEs), which makes working here easier.	Training	Employee empowerment

D	Through training in computer skills, and relationships between the employees and managers, we are positive to work in the employer.	Training	Employee empowerment
K	The management takes it up to them to ensure that the employees are guided through training and resources to effectively perform their tasks.	Training	Employee empowerment
V	Over the years, SONY has equipped us with the right skills and expertise to perform in the workplace. With such contributions, the company has significantly inspired many of us to work here regardless of the financial difficulties we encounter at times.	Training	Employee empowerment
Z4	The employees are involved, trained, and engaged all through to attain the goals and provide guidance in achieving the objectives in our department.	Training	Employee empowerment
Z5	The company emphasizes	Training	Employee

	training that equips employees with the necessary skills to perform confidently. In addition, the company's study leaves program and refresher courses that the company pays for motivate employees to continue working in the organization.	empowerment

Appendix VIII: *Coding memorandum from the research prepositions*

Code	Rm	Emp	So	Stw	Go	Dod	Ecnt
Label	Role modelling	Employee empowerment	Service to others	Stewardship	Growing others	Delegation of duties	Encouragement
Definition	Passing on knowledge, values, expertise, and skills to others to enhance their understanding of the jobs	Giving employees the authority to make decisions, confidence in completing tasks,	Serving the interests of others and ensuring that their needs are accomplished first before the leader	A careful as well as responsible management of employees or resources entrusted to the leaders' care in the	Propagation of knowledge down to others, ensuring that they have the requisite resources to perform their	Assigning team members tasks, giving them authority to perform such tasks and allowing them to be responsible for the actions	Giving others the confidence and support they need to perform certain tasks by asking them for the help they need to undertake their duties in the workplace.

	they undertake and ensure effective completion of tasks.	engaging them in their activities and ensuring that they are provided with all they require to succeed in the workplace.	can address their interests.	workplace.	tasks, and ensuring that people can grow their potential themselves.	they take. Delegation also allows employees to be accountable.	
Description of occurrence	Activities that an organization	Employee empowerment involves	Service to others is a process that	Stewardship involves activities that	Growing others involves	Leaders identify different people's	Encouragement is an act of providing others with the

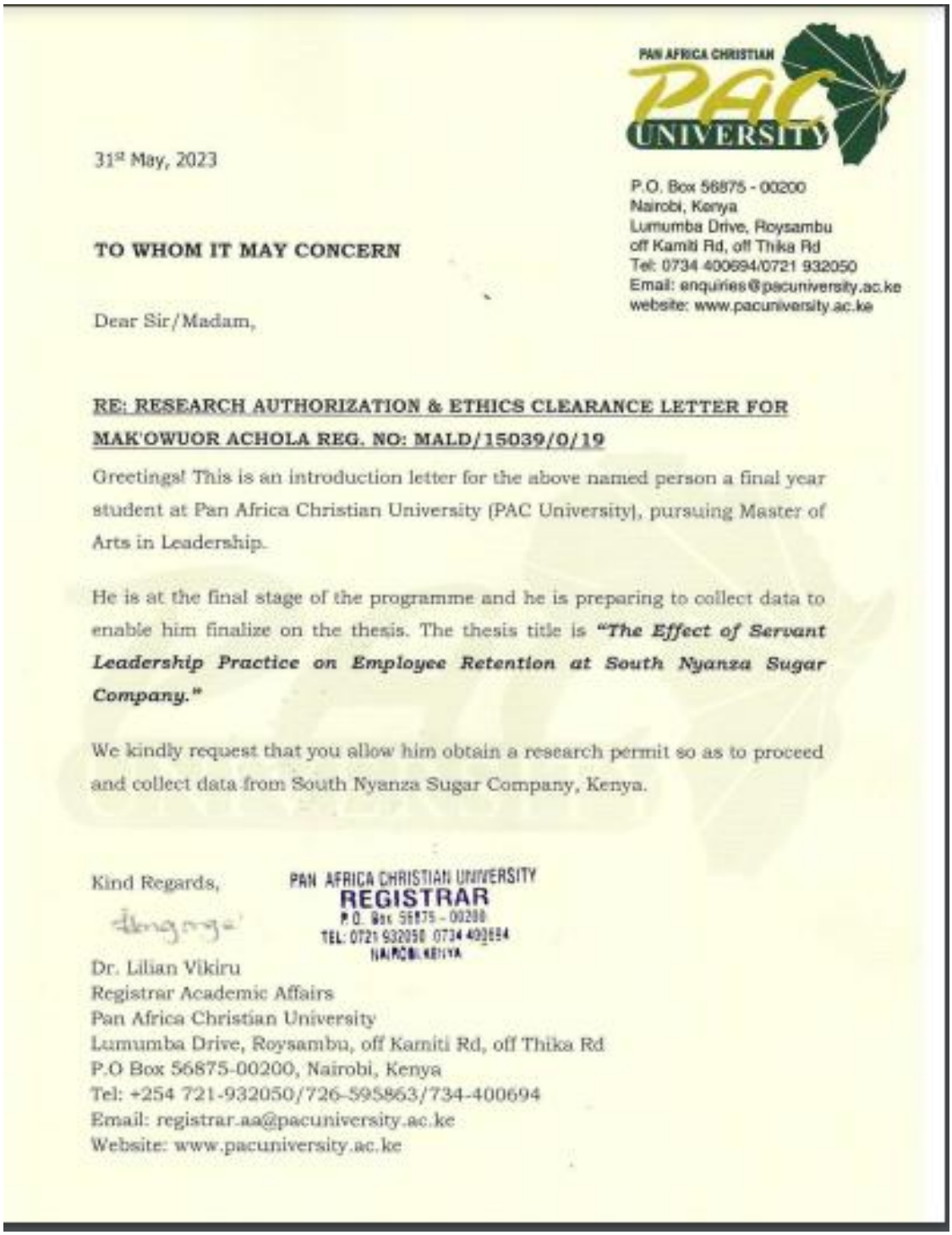
	undertakes to instil knowledge, values, skills, and expertise in employees that enhance their understanding of the jobs they are to perform in the workplace.	giving employees authority and autonomy to directly participate in processes in the workplace such as decision-making, job accomplishments, and ordering for	leaders engage in intending to serve their followers' interests.	improve human resources management and provide direction to others to effectively perform their assigned tasks.	identifying the deficiencies and needs of others and working with them towards addressing the challenges and helping them meet their needs, through training.	abilities and skill sets, assigning them duties that they can best complete.	confidence and assurance that they can deliver their assigned tasks regardless of their challenges or failed attempts to deliver previously.

		requirements.					
Qualifiers and exclusions	Role modelling involves training and education of employees through engagement of learning materials and encounters in and outside the workplace.	Empowering employees involves leaving employees to accomplish tasks without supervision and allowing them to make	Service to others entails the willingness and ability of leaders to serve the interests of their followers and ensure that they can meet their needs in the	Stewardship directly impacts employees through careful management activities.	Involving others directly understanding their capabilities and working towards improving their ability to deliver.	Delegation of duties involves activities that enable people to efficiently perform particular tasks in the workplace.	Encouragement involves providing a conducive environment for their followers to effectively participate in job delivery and giving them the confidence to rise again and again.

		decisions that directly touch on their activities.	workplace.				
Data examples to verify the code	Leaders organized seminars, job position shifting, and training for employees.	Leaders give employees an opportunity to solely make decisions, participate in decision-making with	Leaders inquire from their followers about the issues they face in the delivery of tasks.	Leaders identified people with difficulties in accomplishing tasks and guided them towards efficient service delivery.	Training, learning encounters, knowledge sharing, seminars, and job rotations enable others to learn and grow themselves.	Leaders allocate duties based on skillsets and qualifications.	Leaders motivate and give their followers the confidence they need to effectively deliver their assigned tasks.

	managemen t, and participate in work accomplish ment without supervision.	In addition, providing proper and deserving remuneration and rewards.

Appendix IX: Research Authorization & Ethics Clearance Letter



PAN AFRICA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

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31st May, 2023

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION & ETHICS CLEARANCE LETTER FOR MAK'OWUOR ACHOLA REG. NO: MALD/15039/0/19

Greetings! This is an introduction letter for the above named person a final year student at Pan Africa Christian University (PAC University), pursuing Master of Arts in Leadership.

He is at the final stage of the programme and he is preparing to collect data to enable him finalize on the thesis. The thesis title is ***"The Effect of Servant Leadership Practice on Employee Retention at South Nyanza Sugar Company."***

We kindly request that you allow him obtain a research permit so as to proceed and collect data from South Nyanza Sugar Company, Kenya.

Kind Regards,

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Appendix X: Research License by NACOSTI



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Date of Issue: 31/May/2023

RESEARCH LICENSE

This is to Certify that Mr.. Achola Mak'Owuor of Pan Africa Christian University, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Migori on the topic: THE EFFECT OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP PRACTICE ON EMPLOYEE RETENTION AT SOUTH NYANZA SUGAR COMPANY for the period ending : 31/May/2024.

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