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Kenyan Hotels Post Covid-19**

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## Perceptions on Employee Development and Turnover Intentions of Hotel Employees in Kenyan Hotels Post Covid-19

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### Article History

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### Abstract

**Purpose:** The COVID-19 pandemic certainly had a negative impact on hospitality workers. With the recent recovery, the goal of the research was to assess hotel employees' intentions for career progression as well as their intentions for reskilling to improve their employability.

**Materials and Methods:** The research population is made up of hotel employees from all throughout Kenya, including those working in the food and beverage, kitchen, housekeeping, and front office departments. The respondents were 394 employees who had taken refresher courses. The sampling techniques used was purposive sampling technique. Data was collected using a questionnaire, analyzed using quantitative techniques and presented in charts, graphs and, and tables

**Findings:** Employees value career growth and progression, which allows them to receive promotions or advance in their jobs, according to the findings. However, the majority of them are dissatisfied with their salary and believe the market is volatile, so they may consider quitting the field and changing occupations for better prospects and job stability. Employees who were allowed to improve their work skills through training were more likely to be loyal and would not consider leaving their jobs because they felt

the organization valued their competencies. This resulted in desired organizational performance, creating a reciprocal relationship between the employee and the employer.

**Implications to Theory, Practice and Policy:** It was suggested that the hotel industry build crisis resilience methods for dealing with uncertainties and calamities while considering staff welfare and retention strategies such as giving employee development opportunities. The research contributes to the social exchange theory where employees feel a sense of belonging to the employer while the organization in turn benefits from employee loyalty. As a practice, organizations need to create mechanisms to deal with crisis and uncertainties for employee welfare in addition to retention strategies like employee development opportunities and competitive remuneration. Furthermore, the hotel industry would be instrumental in the development of a national government policy on the establishment of a reserve fund to protect the business and its employees in the case of unforeseen circumstances as happened with the pandemic.

**Keywords:** *Employee Development, Career Progression, Reskilling, Turnover*

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 disease, caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, has changed the entire world, with long-term consequences for the global economy and each individual. The first cases were reported in December 2019 in Wuhan, China, and by June 15, 2020, more than 3.6 million people had been identified as active cases with infection with over 450,000 deaths in over 200 countries (Worldometer 2023). COVID-19 caused more havoc in tourism and hospitality than in World War II. Workers in the hospitality industries are particularly hard hit because, prior to the pandemic, few of them had continuous employment contracts, instead relying on non-standard and contingent arrangements such as self-employment, subcontracting, and casual work (Remeikis 2023; Hunt, 2020). The strong negative impact on the hospitality industry worldwide caused by the arrival of COVID-19 is undeniable (Zurita & Soler 2021; Salem, Elbaz, Elkhwesky, & Ghazi, 2021). Insights on the significance of the consequences of job insecurity caused by the pandemic are presented (Eyoum and Chen 2021.)

With millions of people losing their jobs in the hospitality and tourism industries during the pandemic (Unwto 2020), this indicates a massive realization of job insecurity among hotel employees (Jung, Jung, & Yoon, 2021). Job insecurity, according to psychological contract theory, is a sign of failure to accomplish promises or commitments, diminishing employees' trust in the individual hospitality organization and to a larger extent the hospitality sector (Richter & Naswall, 2021) With this profound effect of the sector, (Rhodes, (2021) elucidates that an economic shutdown was implemented to halt the spread of the coronavirus. Also arguably, the sector has struggled the most to recover. In part, the slow hiring of workers reflects the challenges the industry still faces in returning to full productivity.

To determine how the industry can recover the losses suffered to ensure a sustainable future, investigations have focused on the work uncertainty experienced by front-line employees in the context of COVID-19 fears (Sasaki, Kuroda, Tsuno, & Kawakami, 2020) with the experience of job insecurity fears there is a fear of lack of employee performance and commitment. It is realized however that job insecurity was insignificant in terms of turnover intention, whereas job stress was significant in terms of turnover intention (Putri & Ariyanto, 2023). In comparison to other sectors of the global economy, the hospitality industry is widely regarded as one of the world's fastest-growing (Verevka, 2019). Globally, this industry creates jobs requiring various skills and allows for quick access to a diverse workforce that includes women, youth, and migrant workers (Kusluvan, Kusluvan, Ilhan, & Buyruk, 2010). Despite its constant growth, the hospitality industry faces a unique workforce challenge with extremely high employee turnover (Davidson & Wang, 2010).

With the fact that the industry already experienced high turnover even before the pandemic, considered to be the highest among other economic segments, globally, our understanding of the reasons why people leave may be incomplete. People, in essence, look beyond their current employment conditions and consider their future circumstances when making decisions to advance their careers, whether at their current company, a competitor, or even in a different industry entirely. Despite this, the hotel industry has become one of the industries with an extremely high employee turnover rate, even before COVID-19 was implemented (Cuc, et al., 2022) For the reason that generally COVID-19, wreaked havoc on the service sector, job insecurity is more prevalent in the hospitality and tourism industries (Baum & Hai, 2020) Khawaja, Sarfraz, Rashid,

and Rashid 2022). Pandemics have diverse effects on different industries. Non-essential services are the hardest hit, while essential services are in high demand. The workforce must change quickly and dramatically. Supermarkets, for example, desperately needed extra workers during COVID-19, while other sectors went into hibernation (Martins, Riordan, & Dolnicar 2020). As parts of the economy are closed to prevent the spread of the disease - and essential goods and services are strained - former hotel, restaurant, and airline employees moved to other sectors such as grocers, online retailers, and hospitals around the world. Some governments are also encouraging furloughed workers and students to help plant and harvest fruits and vegetables. Meanwhile, in Germany, McDonald's Corp. supplied workers to two large grocery chains in need (Bender & Dalton, 2020).

Transferable skills are becoming increasingly valuable in a sector-mobile world. Snell, Gatt, & Gekara, (2016) advise that this is because they allow workers to move between sectors in response to demand and capitalize on available opportunities. Sector-mobile workers also help economies during downturns by reducing unemployment and filling critical job shortages. However, employers, workers, and trainers alike are currently undervaluing skill transferability. With the virus contained, though there are still cases, they are minor, and normalcy is slowly returning, the tourism and hospitality sectors have seen a significant drop in demand. International arrivals fell by 74% in 2020, with one billion fewer than in 2019 (UNWTO, 2023) There are still issues of vulnerability in tourism and hospitality employment, such as cost cutting, reduced services, and suspension of operations (Gössling, Scott, & Hall, 2020).

Job security is the most significant fundamental barrier affecting the hotel and tourism industries today Robinson, Martins, Solnet, & Baum, (2019) attributes it to the impact of COVID-19, because the industry structure is vulnerable to economic repercussions, resulting in high job insecurity among workers in this industry. Building and maintaining a sustainable workforce, as well as eliminating turnover intentions, have become two of the most pressing issues confronting hospitality organizations (Abdou, Khalil, Mahmoud, Elsaied, & Elsaed, 2022) (Baquero, 2022). Thus, turnover has been identified as a significant and demanding challenge in the hospitality industry, not only from an organizational standpoint but also from a career development standpoint (Cuc, et al., 2022) Regardless of the hotel industry's contingency plans to survive beyond COVID-19, employees will experience job insecurity, which will change their attitude toward the company (Baquero, 2022). Turnover intentions was realized not to be a significant factor for employee turnover intentions, stress related to the jobs was more of a consideration by employees to leave an organization Putri & Ariyanto, (2023) claim that establishments should therefore implement intervention strategies aimed at reducing stressful daily occurrences. This is important because every hotel industry relies on its employees to succeed because they are directly responsible for providing service to customers and ultimately determine the level of service provided.

### **Statement of Problem**

Following the World Travel and Tourism Council estimate of 50 million jobs in the global hospitality industry at risk, the socioeconomic implications of the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the fact that the hospitality industry was the hardest hit by the outbreak of COVID-19. With effects on both the supply and demand sides, and workers in this sector faced potentially devastating hardships (Martins, Riordan, & Dolnicar) thereby needed to look for alternative livelihoods. (Nicola, et al., 2020) affirms that as a result of the crisis, coupled with the loss of jobs

and sudden falling into poverty, many employees experienced extremely high levels of job insecurity and the physical and psychological risks that come with it. Jobs could not be sustained while 65 % of tourism businesses had problems paying up their suppliers and reported liquidity difficulties (Jones & Comfort, 2020).

Employees in the hospitality industry perceived the pandemic as a traumatic event that increases their perceived job insecurity and infectious risk. It was also discovered that both job insecurity and infectious risk cause increased job stress and turnover intentions, with job insecurity being a stronger predictor of turnover intentions on its own Chen, Zou, and Chen (2022). Furthermore, the uncertainty of the post-COVID-19 era and potential subsequent financial recessions resulting in decreased demand (Bartik et al., 2020) and an uncertain career outlook distinguish the pandemic from other crises or disasters in the recovery stage.

In the post-COVID-19 recovery, customer-facing hospitality staff is more vulnerable in terms of the unpredictability of return date, job security, and health-related issues than knowledge workers who can work remotely and perceive less impact from COVID-19-related disruptions (Waizenegger, McKenna, Cai, & Bendz 2020). Job insecurity has been identified as a major stressor (Tu, Li, & Wang, 2021) (Wong, Kim, Kim, & Han, 2021) (Chen & Eyoun, 2021). Future research should empirically investigate employees' personal uncertainty (Lai & Cai, 2023).

The Kenyan hotel industry like others globally was hard hit by the pandemic. Normalcy state is slowly returning. The Kenya tourism sector lost an estimated 1.2 million jobs and 152 labor incomes. The paper investigates the turnover intentions and options taken by the current hospitality employees who have returned to the industry.

### **Study Objectives**

To examine the Intentions of career growth of hotel employees Post Covid - 19

To establish the Intentions of reskilling to enhance the employability of hotel employees post Covid -19

### **Theoretical Framework**

According to social exchange theory, when employees perceive themselves to have gotten a high level of support from the organization, they feel obligated to provide the employer with a good attitude and behavior (Meira & Hancer, 2021). Social exchange theory, in particular, assumes that employees develop a larger sense of ownership of their organization when it shows a commitment to their needs and provides enough monetary and nonmonetary rewards (Yin, 2018).

Employee development serves both the organization and the employee in accomplishing common goals. It makes an employee realize that the organization cares about him/her and his/her progress toward personal or organizational goals in some way. When an organization provides training to its personnel, it assists them in advancing their careers, which they desire and require. Employees' sense of advancement and skills contribute to higher productivity for themselves and their teams. They will be more satisfied with their jobs and are less likely to leave your organization. Reduced staff turnover gives an immediate advantage to an organization's achievements

## 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

### Career Growth

#### Intentions of Hotel Employees

It has been discovered that career development opportunities improved career commitment and reduced career regret by increasing employee thriving at work. Employee anxiety caused by COVID-19 exacerbates the impact of career growth opportunities on thriving, career commitment, and career regret. Huo, (2021) suggests that when employees experience high levels of COVID-19 anxiety, career development opportunities are most needed and beneficial for shaping their career outcomes. Opportunities for professional development improve employees' feelings of well-being. This contributes to the socially embedded thriving model. Coetzee, (2019) argues that despite a lack of direct research evidence, the thriving-enhancing effect of career advancement opportunities is supported by indirect empirical evidence, which shows that organizational support for employee career development and goal achievement promotes employee sense of thriving. Whereas a plausible reason is that opportunities for career advancement allow employees to develop professional knowledge and a sense of purpose at work (Birtch, Chiang, Cai, & Wang, 2021).

Opportunities for career advancement include three dimensions, Weng & McElroy, (2012) explain them as achieving one's career goals, developing professional skills and abilities, and receiving rewards commensurate with those skills and abilities. According to researchers, (Weng & McElroy, 2012; Weng, McElroy, Morrow, & Liu, 2010) employees' work-related behaviors and decisions are motivated by their desire to achieve career goals. According to this argument, career development opportunities are widely recognized as important job resources that promote positive organizational outcomes such as increased organizational commitment and lower turnover intention. Weng & McElroy (2012) further claim that opportunities for career advancement contribute to knowledge and positive meaning resources, which keep employees focused on their work tasks, ultimately leading to thriving experiences.

Career development opportunities, in particular, allow employees to advance toward their career goals while also developing professional skills. Employees are more likely to view their work as meaningful and therefore strive to gain more professional knowledge. It then follows that they prioritize tasks and thus stay focused on them as their knowledge and positive meaning resources increase. In turn, when employees concentrate intently on the task at hand, they become absorbed in it and feel energized. Furthermore, they are more likely to create and improve routines for performing tasks efficiently, thereby contributing to learning (Sprietzer, Sutcliffe, Dutton, Sonenshein, & Grant, 2005). It was established that thriving increases career satisfaction and decreases the likelihood of career turnover (Chang & Busser, 2020). Employees who are optimistic, show higher levels of career adaptability (Haratsis *et al.*, 2016), they also plan for their careers and experience career success (Santilli, MARcionetti, Rochat, Rossier, & Nota, 2017).

This means that investigating the enablers and barriers to hospitality workers' career optimism becomes more urgent as COVID-19 creates ongoing challenges. Kleine, Rudolf, & Zacher, (2019) state that this investigation can help hospitality organizations identify effective strategies for developing vocationally optimistic employees who can contribute to the industry's efficient recovery and long-term development. Individual factors that promote optimism, are related to job-related competencies. As a result, knowledge, skills, and experience are important not only when

hiring new employees, but also to emphasize the importance of ongoing training and development to empower employees in times of crisis. Psychological resources such as adaptability, resilience, and self-efficacy lead to career optimism and other positive outcomes, and thus may be important to identify during the recruitment process.

The degree to which employees experience career growth within their current organizations is referred to as organizational career growth (Weng Q. , McElroy, Morrow, & Liu, 2010). Originally, four factors were considered: career goal progression, professional ability, promotion speed, and compensation. Spagnoli & Weng, ( 2017) further claim that professional ability development represents the extent to which one's current organization supports employees in their efforts to acquire new knowledge, skills, and abilities, whereas career goal progress represents the extent to which one's current organization allows individuals to meet their career goals. Son & Kim, (2021) demonstrate that employees' work engagement and career commitment are enhanced by intrinsic career growth. Employees' perceptions of leaders as role models play an important moderating role in the relationship between work engagement and career commitment. As a result, the distinct role of organizational Career Growth and employees' perceptions of leaders must be considered in order to fully comprehend the process by which organizational support increases employees' career commitment.

Career development is an organization's approach to ensuring that people with appropriate qualifications and experience are available when needed, as they can benefit both individuals and organizations. Human resource development is required in order to reduce companies' reliance on the hiring of new employees. Effective career development will result in an environment of mutual trust, effective empowerment, and commitment to vision, mission, and strategic objectives. A well-designed career development program includes three main components: first, assisting employees in assessing their own internal career needs; second, developing and broadening the career opportunities available within the organization; and third, connecting employees' needs and Employers should provide career growth opportunities and challenging jobs to their employees in addition to high pay, as these are important motivators (Edgar & Geare, 2005). Similarly, Lisa, (2014) provides a blueprint for creating a more robust learning environment. Because learning is an important part of career development, an emotionally positive environment promotes learning by reducing major learning inhibitors such as fear, ego defenses, complacency, and capabilities with career opportunities.

### **Intentions of Reskilling to Enhance Employability of Hotel Employee**

Employability competence is much more than just getting a job, it also includes keeping that job in challenging times. Training Institutions and subsequently employers need to consider must consider: graduates and candidates' ability to get a job, whether highly skilled individuals or lower-level employees, and 'their ability to tackle the level of work that is expected of the job in the new normal after Covid – 19 effects (Levenson, 2020). Everyone, regardless of age, Graton, (2019) claims will have to spend time either re-skilling (learning new skills to perform multiple tasks) or looking for a new job at some point.

Kumar ( 2021) elucidates that the Human resource department representing the employers, must play a critical role in forging bonds with people under the "People connect" concept, and must connect people at the lower organizational levels whom they have previously ignored. During the COVID-19 period, the term has come to re-imagine Human Resource as a major stakeholder. They

must seriously consider the fact that money can be of less importance in the organization in order to form a positive bond with them. As a result, when it comes to relationships with employees Human resource must play multiple roles. This includes inevitably skilling, reskilling and upskilling. COVID has caused HR to rethink matters of development, motivation, inspirations and training of employees, as well as the adoption of a system of imparting skilling as it has been realized that it is a time to learn and understand new technology as well as manage relationships to fit into the changing scenario and economic landscape. For a job well done, rewards have always been a source of satisfaction, and recognition could include both technical and financial rewards to help retain strategic talent.

In agreement, Cloete, Ndlovu, A.M, & Prabhakaran, (2022) state that the Post Covid -19 world has provided new evidence on sustainable tourism recovery, which include green tourism systems, employee training, and re-skilling to improve organizational performance and work-life balance. Employee up skilling and reskilling has a variety of advantages, ranging from inclusive growth to reduced unemployment benefits. However, despite advances in manpower development and complex training programs, tourism businesses continue to face a number of challenges in up skilling and reskilling their workforce. Even with considerations that most businesses encourage lifelong learning, low-skilled employees are barred from participating. Most businesses focus their training efforts on highly skilled employees rather than low-skilled workers. Re-skilling employees to be lifelong learners and critical thinkers will benefit organizations and help employees grow personally and achieve retraining of employees in order to remain relevant in the post-Covid -19 Era.

The perception of competencies requirements for any employee or emerging entrepreneur in hospitality and tourism will shift in order to be ready for sustainably support tourism recovery based on the lessons learned from the Covid-19 pandemic, the type and strength of competencies in Hospitality and Tourism will be much higher in the new normal (Buheji, 2020). Employability has become critical for both policymakers and academics, as it focuses on preparing individuals, both low and high-skilled, in the various job categories for jobs that do not yet exist, as well as solving challenges that cannot be realized. It is expected that young people start out, because today's workforce is likely to work for as many employers as their parents did, therefore cultivating a culture of self-improvement and lifelong learning, is critical for mitigating the inevitable turmoil caused by these disruptions. Education initiatives should also be expanded to include not only youth but also adults of all ages who may wish to enter the labor force. (Prabhakar & Kurein)

Hospitality skills as Bagri & Suresh, (2009) explain, are required to promote individual achievement, ideas diversity, critical thinking, and people's long-term retention. Skills are classified as, basic skills, work skills, hard skills, generic skills, enabling skills, transferable skills, experiences, and knowledge. The desire to stay is riled by the high quality of technology-enabled learning, proactive human behavior, and the ability to share expertise with a larger target audience in different geographic locations. Youssef & Mohammed (2022) concur by stating that those in the tourism industry, whether it is to look for a lost job, to stay in a job that is still available, or to advance in their professional career, should make it a priority to use this period of low activity to improve their skills and professional qualities. The Covid-19 pandemic necessitated the mobilization of new categories of skills and quality in terms of hard-skills, soft-skills, green-skills, and even life-skills in the tourism labor market. The way tourism businesses are organized will need to change and adapt to the Covid-19 pandemic. This change affects work habits, the working



environment, task prioritization, decision-making, and, most importantly, essential skills and futuristic qualities.

### 3.0 MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study used positivism to conduct the research. Purposive sampling was used to gain insights into the dynamics of the hospitality industry from 394 participants who are working in the main hotel departments, front office, housekeeping, kitchen and food and beverage service. . The analysis was aimed to identify covid-19 effect on employees in terms of turnover intentions with specific reference to career growth and employability by extracting meaning from the respondent's answers. The study population consists of hotel employees from Kenya's various areas, including operational staff in the food and beverage, kitchen, housekeeping, and front office departments. A number of staff who had attended refresher courses completed the questionnaires. Data was analyzed using frequencies and presented in charts, graphs and, and tables. Participants' diverse areas of work from across the country within various hotels were favorable to this process.

### 4.0 FINDINGS

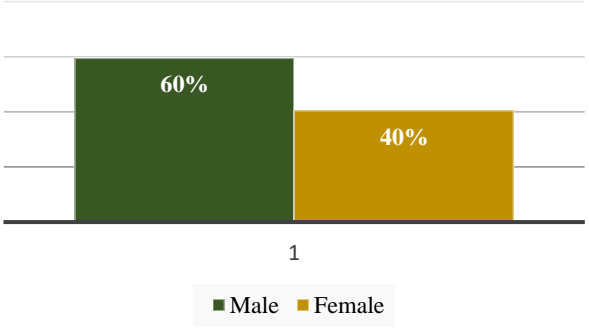
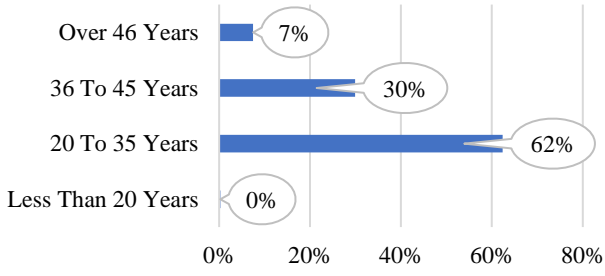
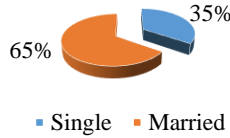
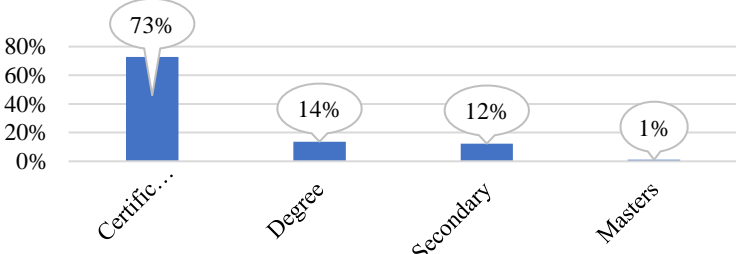
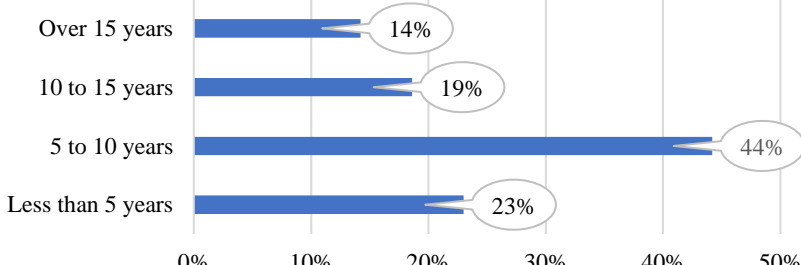
394 hotel employees from various counties across the country were interviewed for this study. The attendance by county is shown in the table below:

**Table 1: Distribution of Hotel Staff by Counties**

County	Frequency	Percentage
1. Nairobi	124	31%
2. Nakuru	55	14%
3. Narok	26	7%
4. Mombasa	21	5%
5. Kwale	18	5%
6. Kajiado	13	3%
7. Machakos	11	3%
8. Uasin Gishu	11	3%
9. Kiambu	9	2%
10. Taita Taveta	8	2%

### Respondents' Profile

The socio-economic status of the sampled hotel employees are summarized in the table below.

<p><b>Gender</b>                  60% of the respondents were male while 40% were female.</p>	 <p>A bar chart with two bars. The first bar, representing Male, is dark green and reaches the 60% mark on the y-axis. The second bar, representing Female, is gold and reaches the 40% mark. A legend below the chart identifies the colors: Male (dark green) and Female (gold).</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Gender</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Male</td> <td>60%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Female</td> <td>40%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Gender	Percentage	Male	60%	Female	40%				
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Female	40%										
<p><b>Age</b>                  62% of the respondents were between the ages of 20 and 35 years (youths), 30% were between the ages of 36 and 45, and 7% were over the age of 46.</p>	 <p>A horizontal bar chart showing the distribution of respondents by age group. The y-axis lists age groups: Less Than 20 Years, 20 To 35 Years, 36 To 45 Years, and Over 46 Years. The x-axis shows percentages from 0% to 80%. The bars are blue, and their values are: Less Than 20 Years (0%), 20 To 35 Years (62%), 36 To 45 Years (30%), and Over 46 Years (7%).</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Age Group</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Less Than 20 Years</td> <td>0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>20 To 35 Years</td> <td>62%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>36 To 45 Years</td> <td>30%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Over 46 Years</td> <td>7%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Age Group	Percentage	Less Than 20 Years	0%	20 To 35 Years	62%	36 To 45 Years	30%	Over 46 Years	7%
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<p><b>Marital Status</b>                  65% of the respondents were married while 35% were single.</p>	 <p>A 3D pie chart showing marital status. The larger slice, representing Married, is orange and accounts for 65%. The smaller slice, representing Single, is blue and accounts for 35%. A legend below the chart identifies the colors: Single (blue) and Married (orange).</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Marital Status</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Single</td> <td>35%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Married</td> <td>65%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Marital Status	Percentage	Single	35%	Married	65%				
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<p><b>Highest Level of Education</b>                  73% of respondents had studied up to the Certificate/Diploma level, 14% at the Degree level, 12% at the Secondary level, and only 1% at the Masters level.</p>	 <p>A bar chart showing the highest level of education. The y-axis lists education levels: Certificate/Diploma, Degree, Secondary, and Masters. The x-axis shows percentages from 0% to 80%. The bars are blue, and their values are: Certificate/Diploma (73%), Degree (14%), Secondary (12%), and Masters (1%).</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Education Level</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Certificate/Diploma</td> <td>73%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Degree</td> <td>14%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Secondary</td> <td>12%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Masters</td> <td>1%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Education Level	Percentage	Certificate/Diploma	73%	Degree	14%	Secondary	12%	Masters	1%
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<p><b>Years Worked in the Hotel Industry</b>                  The majority of respondents had worked in the hotel industry for 5-10 years.</p>	 <p>A horizontal bar chart showing the number of years respondents worked in the hotel industry. The y-axis lists time periods: Less than 5 years, 5 to 10 years, 10 to 15 years, and Over 15 years. The x-axis shows percentages from 0% to 50%. The bars are blue, and their values are: Less than 5 years (23%), 5 to 10 years (44%), 10 to 15 years (19%), and Over 15 years (14%).</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Years Worked</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Less than 5 years</td> <td>23%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5 to 10 years</td> <td>44%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>10 to 15 years</td> <td>19%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Over 15 years</td> <td>14%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Years Worked	Percentage	Less than 5 years	23%	5 to 10 years	44%	10 to 15 years	19%	Over 15 years	14%
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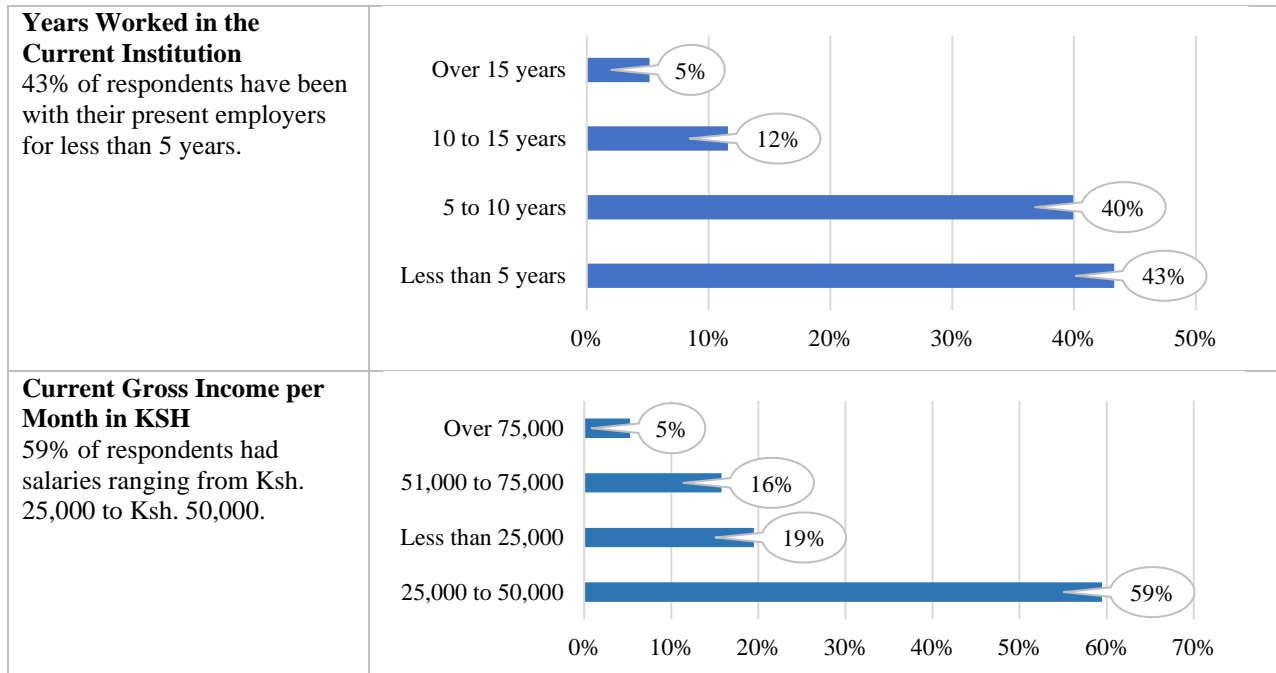


Figure 1: Respondents Profile

### Covid-19 Impacts

Previous research indicates that the covid-19 has had a significant impact on workers in the tourism and hospitality industries. This study intended to discover how the COVID-19 epidemic affected hotel employees.

Table 2: Covid- 19 Impacts

	Covid-19 Impacts	Yes	No
i.	During the Covid-19 pandemic, I received financial assistance from my employer.	43%	57%
ii.	My salary was reduced by my employer during the Covid-19 pandemic.	76%	24%
iii.	My employer required us to take lots of unpaid leave during Covid-19 pandemic.	72%	28%
iv.	My company laid off workers during the Covid-19 pandemic.	70%	30%
v.	I lost my job as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.	24%	76%
vi.	Prior to Covid-19, I was satisfied with my job	66%	34%
ii.	I would consider changing my career due to covid-19 effects.	35%	65%
iii.	I am currently working for the same employer as before covid-19 pandemic	77%	23%
ix.	I retained my earnings as before Covid -19 pandemic.	56%	44%

According to the findings, the majority of hotel employees (57%) were not offered financial aid by their employers, and 76% had their salaries reduced. Unpaid leave had to be taken by 72% of the employees.

Despite the fact that most organizations laid off their staff, only 24% of hotel employees lost their jobs during this time period. Most employees (66%) were satisfied with their jobs before to the pandemic, and the majority of them, 65%, claimed that they would not consider changing careers as a result of the Covid-19 effect.

77% of employees continue to work for the same company they did before the outbreak. The majority of hotel employees (56%) maintained their pre-Covid-19 incomes, however a significant percentage (44%) indicated differently.

The results therefore show that hotel workers in Kenya were affected by the covid-19 pandemic. These findings corroborate those of Remeikis, 2023 and Hunt, 2020 who found that workers in the hospitality industry were particularly heavily struck by the covid-19 epidemic.

### Organizational Identification

Hotel employees were asked to express their level of agreement on their organizational identification.

**Table 3: Organizational Identification**

	<b>Organizational Identification</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Not Sure</b>	<b>Disagree</b>
i.	I often talk about my company with friends because it is a company worth working for.	74%	12%	14%
ii.	My values are very similar to those of my company.	62%	22%	16%
iii.	I am very proud to say that I am a member of my company.	85%	8%	7%
iv.	I am very happy to be working for my company.	79%	13%	8%
v.	I agree with my company's employee treatment policies	58%	23%	19%
vi.	I am concerned about my company's future.	68%	20%	12%
vii.	In my opinion, this is the best company I've ever worked for.	54%	27%	19%

The results found that the majority of hotel sector personnel are pleased and satisfied to work in their current organizations. Employees, on average, share similar values, agree with their company's employee treatment policies, and are concerned about the company's future success.

### Intention to Stay

Hotel employees were questioned if they intended to stay with the organization for which they work. The table below contains their responses.

**Table 4: Intention to Stay**

	<b>Intention to Stay</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Not Sure</b>	<b>Disagree</b>
i.	I often consider leaving my current employer	33%	28%	39%
ii.	I believe it is my best decision to continue working at my company.	57%	27%	16%
iii.	Even if there was a better opportunity, I would not consider leaving my job.	19%	21%	60%
iv.	If I leave I would leave for better pay	84%	8%	8%
v.	If I leave I would leave for a higher position	77%	11%	11%
vi.	I have a specific time I intend to stay with the company	46%	31%	23%

According to the findings, the majority of hotel workers (39%) did not consider leaving their current employers, however a significant number (33%) considered leaving their current employers. The majority (57%) thought that continuing to work at their employer was their decision. Yet again, the majority (60%) indicated that they would consider leaving their jobs if a better opportunity presented itself. Nearly all (84%) of the respondents would leave their companies for better pay and 77% would leave their companies for higher positions.

### Career Growth and Satisfaction

The table below depicts hotel workers' perceptions of career progression and job satisfaction in their organization after Covid-19.

**Table 5: Career Growth and Satisfaction**

	Career Growth and Satisfaction	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree
i.	I have set career goals and Plans	93%	5%	2%
ii.	My company has a career development program	59%	16%	25%
iii.	My Company has career growth and advancement opportunities	64%	17%	20%
iv.	My pay is sufficient to keep me at my current job for the next 12 months.	29%	26%	45%
v.	My employer compensates me for working overtime or at night.	34%	6%	59%
vi.	Since the hotel industry is volatile, I am considering leaving the hospitality industry and changing career.	25%	27%	47%
vii.	I have the skill set of another Industry.	41%	20%	38%
viii.	My pay is commensurate with my skills and abilities	33%	21%	46%
ix.	Post Covid-19 pandemic, my company has been offering motivation strategies such as rewards and bonuses for good performance	50%	8%	42%
x.	Following the pandemic, my company conducts evaluations to help me improve in my designated area.	56%	13%	32%
xi.	My company offered me psychosocial support after the Covid-19 pandemic.	36%	15%	49%

The data on professional growth and satisfaction revealed the following: The majority, 93%, of hotel employees reported that they have set career goals and plans, 59% stated that their companies have career advancement programs, and 64% stated that their company offers opportunities for career growth and advancement. On the other hand, the majority of hotel employees disagreed that their pay is sufficient to keep them at their current job for the next 12 months and that their employer compensates them for working overtime or at night. Due to the volatile external environment, they would consider leaving the industry and changing careers; that their pay is commensurate with their skills and abilities; and that their company provided them with psychosocial support following the covid-19 pandemic.

### Intentions of Reskilling

Following COVID-19, hotel employees were asked if they planned to reskill to boost their employability. Their responses are presented in the table below.

**Table 6: Intentions to Reskilling**

	<b>Intent to Reskill</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Not Sure</b>	<b>Disagree</b>
i.	I undertake career development courses post the Covid-19 pandemic to be able to deliver at my work.	70%	8%	22%
ii.	My company provides periodic training and support that are required for my career growth.	79%	7%	13%
ii.	My company performs evaluations that help me improve in my designated area post the pandemic.	69%	14%	17%
v.	Following the coronavirus outbreak, our organization increased its training efforts.	59%	15%	27%
v.	Some skills, such as digital literacy/capabilities, have become more important during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.	80%	13%	7%
vi.	Post Covid -19 I realize I need more skills to perform the same job.	85%	7%	8%
ii.	I am learning new skills to ensure I maintain my employability	90%	5%	5%
ii.	Once I gain my skills I will leave my employer	18%	36%	47%

According to the table above, 80% of employees felt the need to reskill in order to perform the same job after the Covid-19 outbreak, and 90% said they were in the process of learning new skills. It has also been observed that, despite the fact that the majority of employees take career development courses, their employers also give periodic training required for their career growth.

The majority of employees were loyal to their employers, with 45% saying that they would not leave their companies after learning work skills.

### Career Lessons Learned

Hotel employees were asked to identify major career lessons acquired because of the Covid-19 outbreak. The following are their responses. Employees indicated that it is one of the lessons was that it was important to be responsible, a team player, self-driven, and of high integrity; and to be adaptable, open-minded, and ready to adapt to any changes that may occur at the workplace. Multiskilling was also seen to be important such that there was a way to have multiple incomes in case one of them did fail or was affected by such phenomena of Covid-19. Employees realized the need to have a savings plan and a strong industry network for survival. Personal adjustments included the act of being patient, helpful, and a positive attitude being optimistic for the future.

For the organizations employees advised that job security was also a major concern in the industry as the effects on the external environment affected the industry adversely, therefore the employees felt they and there should be strategic plans in place to deal with uncertainties by the organizations and reserve funding provided in preparation for such incidences. Domestic Tourism needed to be given more priority, there should not be an overreliance on international tourism. New skills

required employees though that digital literacy has become more important with the working from-home concept.

### Career Change

Hotel staff were asked if they would change careers if given the chance. The line graph below depicts their reactions.

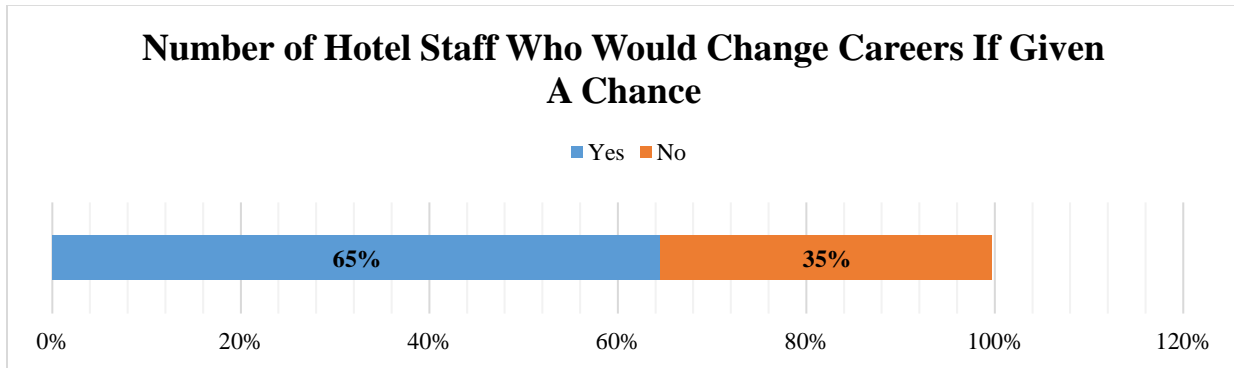


Figure 2: Career Change Intentions

According to the findings, the majority (65%) of hotel employees agreed that if given the opportunity, they would change careers. This is due to a variety of reasons, which are noted in the graph below.

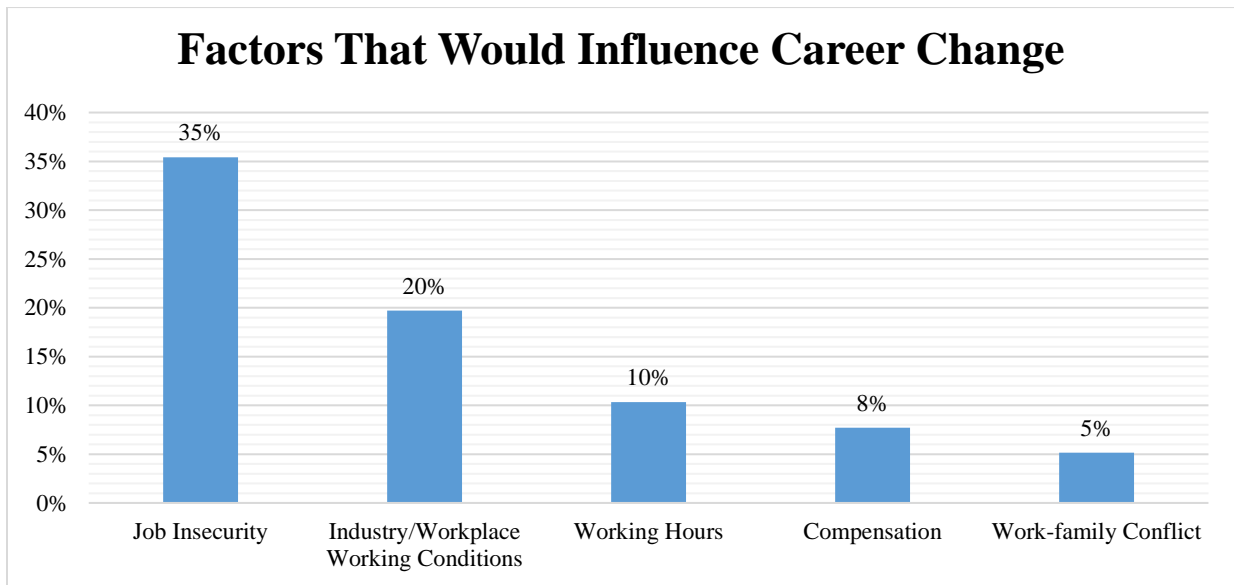


Figure 3: Factors that would Influence Career Change

The following factors were found to influence hotel staff to change their careers: job insecurity (35%); industry/workplace working conditions (20%); working hours (10%); compensation (8%); and work-family conflict (5%).

## **5.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION**

### **Summary of Findings**

The Covid -19 pandemic affected the hospitality and tourism sector worldwide. The intent of the study was to establish the impact of covid-19 and its effect on hotel employees in the hospitality and tourism industry. The results indicated that hotel workers in Kenya were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic just like most other hospitality establishments all over the world. As a result of this occurrence, to a large extent, the hotel laid off workers by sending them for unpaid leaves, and others that were retained were on reduced compensation. However, despite the challenge caused by the pandemic, the majority of the staff in Kenya's hospitality sector were pleased and satisfied to continue working in their current jobs. Most Employees stayed with the same employer post COVID-19 but did not retain their earnings, they were engaged at lower earnings.

On employee identification with the organization, findings indicate that the majority of hotel sector employees are glad and content with their current jobs. Employees share similar beliefs, support their company's employee management standards, and are concerned about the future success of the hotels they work for. Employee turnover intentions show that a large majority would quit for more pay, but a smaller majority would depart for a higher position. It is also evident that employees would change careers, given a chance mainly for the reason of Job security and working conditions. Although compensation is an outcry for many employees, it does form a major reason for leaving the organization.

On a personal level, employees expressed responsibility for ensuring that they were multiskilled and did not rely only on one skill such that should there be adversity in the hotel sector they could opt for another option as they would be having additional skill sets. They also that they needed to be ready for Job uncertainties by saving and also having other options for income not only relying on employment.

### **Conclusions**

The first objective of the study was to examine the intentions of career growth of hotel employees post-COVID-19. The results revealed that the majority of hotel employees have set career goals and plans companies have career advancement programs that provide opportunities for career growth and advancement. This finding is an indication that the employees value career growth and progression, which enables them to get promotions or advance in their careers. However, most of them are dissatisfied with their pay and consider the industry volatile and would therefore contemplate leaving the industry and changing careers for better prospects and job security.

The second objective which was to establish the intentions of reskilling to enhance the employability of hotel employees showed that the majority of the employees found the need to reskill essential to enable them to perform the same job after the Covid-19 outbreak and that they had started the process of learning new skills by attending refresher courses. In addition, it was noted that hospitality establishments also conduct periodic job training at the workplace to facilitate career growth. Apart from work skills, it is now critical that the employees in the sector require essential skills in digital literacy such as Zoom, webinars, and other virtual platforms. The establishments also train staff periodically and provide support for training as evidenced by the respondents attending the refresher courses. Employees who were given the opportunity to enhance their work skills through training were likely to be loyal and would not contemplate



leaving their jobs because they felt that the organization recognized the importance of their competencies which resulted in desired organizational performance, creating a reciprocal relationship between the employee and employer.

### **Recommendations**

Employees who have an opportunity to grow in their careers and progress upward tend to be motivated and are likely to remain loyal to their employers. Organizations should thus strive to create structures for a good work environment that promotes staff development and career growth. This would lead to a motivated workforce that performs efficiently and effectively and would reduce turnover. It is therefore recommended that organizations should develop crisis resilience mechanisms for handling uncertainties and disasters by keeping in mind the welfare of employees and strategies to retain them by providing employee development opportunities, among other strategies such as competitive remuneration, as they form a very important aspect of the holistic hotel product in providing services to guests. In addition, the hotel sector to initiate the development of a policy by the national government on the creation of a reserve fund that can cushion the industry and workers in the event of a disaster.

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