

Work-Life Balance Benefits and Employee Performance in the State Corporations in Kenya

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Abstract

The lack of a comprehensive reward management system in a majority of Kenyan state corporations has created dissatisfaction among employees leading to decreased staff morale and consequently decreased employee performance. This study sought to establish the influence of work-life benefits on employee performance in state corporations in Kenya. The study used descriptive and explanatory research designs with a sample size of 642. The study used regression analysis to test the significance of the variables at a 5% significance level on the dependent variable. The findings showed that work-life balance rewards moderately influence employee performance. The study concluded that most state corporations in Kenya recognized work-life balance programs, however, these organizations hardly budgeted for the work-life programs. The study, therefore, recommends that work-life programs should be considered and budgeted for. Offering gym facilities to employees provides a healthy lifestyle and also counters stress. Organizations can also offer childcare facilities so that the parents can work comfortably without worrying about their children and hence maximum concentration at the workplace that would lead to better productivity.

Keywords: *Work-life balance benefits, Employee performance, State corporations*

1.0 Introduction

Human resources or the people are the organization's most valuable assets (Tessema, Ready & Embaye, 2013). Notably, employees create a major source of competitive advantage for companies. Hence the need for every firm, private or public, to acquire and retain committed, skilled and motivated personnel. Barney and Hesterly (2012) indicated that firms that utilize capabilities and resources to seize business opportunities and neutralize threats are likely to realize an increase in their net revenue or a decrease in their net costs or both or vice versa.

Qureshi, Akbar, Khan, Sheikh and Hijazi (2010) examined the relationship between rewards and employee performance in the cement industry in Pakistan. They found that there is a direct relationship between extrinsic rewards, intrinsic rewards, and employee performance. Iveta, (2014) found that the work environment is an important determinant of job satisfaction and performance of employees. Russell (2016) noted that offering work-life balance attracts individuals to an organization and results in increased positive related attitudes, work effort, and behaviors. In Kenya, various companies have instituted work-life balance facilities to

mitigate work-family-related conflicts that can have a negative impact on employee performance.

For instance, Safaricom limited Nestle Kenya Limited, Britam, and standard chartered bank have all instituted work-life balance facilities like day care facilities, flexi-time, and health facilities to enhance performance and productivity. Nekoranec (2013) conducted an empirical study on basic aspects of management and organizational behavior and noted that the working environment in which people spend most of their active life is challenging due to the recurrent changes that occur in life. The responsibilities and demands from employment and family have therefore contributed to an increase in role overload due to the employee's desire and struggle to accommodate the various responsibilities placed on them by their personal and professional lives (Sheppard, 2016). It is against this background that the study sought to establish the influence of work-life benefits on employee performance in the State Corporations in Kenya.

Problem Statement

According to Nekoranec (2013), role overload is responsible for diverse stress-related outcomes such as burnout, anxiety, decreased satisfaction, and fatigue. Hence, work-life balance has become a broadly investigated phenomenon in educational and organizational literature where studies establish various ways of balancing work and private life. Lack of a comprehensive reward management system in a majority of Kenyan state corporations has created dissatisfaction among employees leading to decreased staff morale and consequently decreased employee performance.

The consequent poor results are evident in the GDP report that contrarily to Vision 2030's projection of annual GDP growth rates of 10% until 2030; the growth rate has been slow at 4.56% in 2012, 5.69% in 2013, and 5.33% in 2014, 5.65% in 2015 and 5.99% in 2016 (Statista, 2015). The score of the global labour standard of percentage available man hours used for productive work in Kenya is 35.4%, while the global standard is 75% (KIPPRA, 2013). The percentage gap of 39.6% is a reflection of low achievement levels in employee performance which depicts the struggle in attainment of the GDP growth rate. This study, therefore, sought to establish the influence of work-life benefits on employee performance in the State Corporations in Kenya.

Research Hypothesis

H₁: Work-life benefits significantly influence employee performance in the State Corporations in Kenya.

2.0 Literature Review

Work-life employee benefits refer to the work incentives that are given to the employees to work hard and perform up to their level best. Work-life balance policies and practices come in handy in managing employees' work and family lives. Work is considered paid employment and life balance refer to non-work, and more free time spent on leisure or with family (Divyabharathi, Balakrishnan & Vettriselvan, 2014).

Larasati and Hasanati (2019) looked into the impact of work-life balance on millennial employee engagement. Employees of PT. Senwell Indonesia from Banjarmasin participated in this study as a research participant. Researchers in Utrecht employed a work-life balance measure as well as a job engagement scale to collect data. To examine the data, we used a basic linear regression model. Work-life balance is responsible for 14.3% of employee satisfaction, according to the findings. Evidence shows that companies that care about employee well-being in their personal and professional lives can influence employee engagement in the company.

Shockley, Smith, and Knudsen (2017) review research on issues at work and detention. It defines work-life balance and other words that scholars use to investigate the subject. This chapter discusses the evidence that links work-life balance to prison-related outcomes. Following that, the role of formal and informal employment, as well as family support measures, in boosting job and personal performance, as well as prison outcomes, is examined. A hypothesized association between work-life conflict and retirement attitudes is supported by empirical research. A minor positive relationship between conflict and the desire to change work and life was discovered in the meta-analytic research, as well as a tiny negative relationship between the two conflict directions and organizational commitment.

Kurnia and Widigdo (2021) looked at how work-life balance, job demand, and job insecurity affected employee performance, using employee well-being as an intermediary variable. With SEM-PLS, an explanatory quantitative test method was applied. A total of 100 employees from PT Jaya Lautan Global took part in this survey. Saturated sampling was used as a sample strategy in this investigation (counting). According to the findings, work-life balance and job requirements have a positive and significant impact on employee contentment. Uncertainty in the workplace has a significant negative impact on employee happiness. Work-life balance has a positive and significant impact on employee performance.

Hassan and Teng (2017) investigated the relationship between work-life balance and job satisfaction among Malaysian workers using gender and race as moderators. The data was gathered via a questionnaire. In this study, one-way analysis of covariance, t-test, and one-way analysis of variance was utilized. There is a significant correlation between work-life balance and job happiness, according to the data.

Abdirahman (2018) studied the relationship between work-life balance, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment to employee representation among university administrative staff in northern Malaysia. This study employs quantitative research techniques. Various statistical approaches were used to analyze the data, including reliability studies, descriptive analysis of variables, correlation analysis, and regression analysis. According to the regression results, all independent factors, such as work-life balance, job satisfaction, and organizational engagement, are positively related to the dependent variable, employee performance. The study does find, however, that to boost the performance of effective personnel, motivation must be increased. This will affect the organization's ability to achieve its goals in both the commercial and public sectors.

Mungania (2017) looked into how work-life balance affects Kenyan banking performance. This research aims to examine the impact of flexible work arrangements, health programs, family duties, and, finally, work-related conflicts on the banking industry's performance in Kenya. A mixed-methodologies research strategy was used in this study, which comprised both quantitative and qualitative methods. Flexible work arrangements, health programs, and considerations about family duties were shown to be more directly associated with banking performance in Kenya, according to the study. He also discovered that organizations that help people achieve a better work-life balance are more effective. Workplace conflict has a negative effect on performance, meaning that there is a correlation between workplace conflict and banking performance.

3.0 Methodology

The study used both descriptive and explanatory designs as they encompass the quantitative and qualitative research designs. The study was carried out in the 178 state corporations in Kenya with 642 respondents being sampled. The state corporations are categorized as

commercial, regulatory, tertiary, research and service. The unit of analysis was the 2 top managers reporting to the Chief Executive Officer, 2 officers or assistant managers, and 2 assistant officers. Questionnaires were used to collect primary data. Data analysis took place at two levels – descriptive statistics level and inferential statistics level. Descriptive analysis was carried out by producing percentages, means, and standard deviation, and results were displayed in tables. Simple linear regression was used to test the hypothesis.

4.0 Results and Discussion

Descriptive Statistics of Work-Life Balance

Work-life balance is the individual employee's ability to engage in work, while at the same time meeting family commitments and obligations. Results of the findings indicate that the statements with the highest mean were that the organization offers a conducive work environment to an employee with 84.7% agreeing, 7.5% disagreeing, and 7.7% with neutral opinion with a mean of 3.91 and a standard deviation of .800, and the statement that the organization offers vacation time to employees with 73.6% agreeing, 16% disagreeing and 10.4% being neutral with a mean of 3.80 and standard deviation of 2.747.

This implies that state corporations in Kenya offer a conducive working environment to employees one of them being by offering annual leaves and offs. The biggest benefit of annual leave is the positive effect it has on the employee mindset. By taking breaks, employees get an opportunity to re-energize their minds and body. After a break, employees are less stressed and can able to manage work responsibilities more effectively. Additionally, a rested mind and body boost creativity as well as productivity to aid employees in approaching tasks with a better perspective as well a fresh mindset.

54.6% of the respondents agreed with the statement that employees sent on vacation register improved performance, 13.8% disagreed and 31.5% had neutral opinions with a mean of 3.44 and standard deviation of .883. Statements with the lowest means were that the organization has set aside a budget for work-life balance benefits with 55% disagreeing, 19.4% agreeing and 25.6 being neutral with a mean of 2.61 and a standard deviation of .970.

The statement that employees on the flexible working schedules register improved performance had 51% of the respondents disagreeing, 23.9% agreeing and 25.1% being neutral with a mean of 2.72 and standard deviation of .965 and the statement that the organization offers flexible working schedules to employees with 65.5% of respondents disagreeing, 31.1% agreeing and 12.4% being neutral with a mean of 2.77 and standard deviation of 1.132. These results indicate that state corporations in Kenya need to set aside a budget for work-life balance benefits to the employees to increase their productivity.

According to Shield et al. (2015), the act of introducing employment policies that foster a healthier work and life balance for employees is crucial in enhancing employee motivation. It is hence evident that the enhancement of work-life balance in a professional setting is an essential factor in increasing employee performance.

Therefore, these results indicate that there is a need for management in state corporations to focus on creating diverse work-life incentives that will improve employee performance. The respondents suggested for flexible working hours, that employees should be given incentives such as vacations and off days to unwind. The other suggestion was that when an employee is out of the office, they should be given time for their issues without interference.

Organizations world over are implementing work-life balance programs to minimize its possible negative outcomes. Benefits realized through work-life programs include increased

productivity, increased employee morale, increased customer service, increased loyalty, reduced absenteeism, reduced operations cost as well as attraction and retention of talented staff (Sentamilselvan & Delecta, 2016).

Table 1: Work-Life Balance Benefits

Items	(SD) %	(D) %	(N) %	(A) %	(SA) %	Mean	Std. Deviation
The organization recognizes work-life balance programs	1.4	10.6	18.0	62.4	7.6	3.64	.825
The organization offers vacation time to employees	3.9	12.1	10.4	63.8	9.8	3.80	2.747
Employees sent on vacation register improved performance	3.1	10.7	31.5	48.0	6.6	3.44	.883
The organization offers flexible working schedules to employees	6.5	50.0	12.4	22.4	8.7	2.77	1.132
Employees with flexible working schedules register improved performance	4.5	46.5	25.1	19.8	4.1	2.72	.965
The organization offers a conducive work environment to employees	2.2	5.3	7.7	69.0	15.7	3.91	.800
The work-life balance benefits contribute positively to employee performance	1.4	23.7	23.3	40.4	11.2	3.36	1.008
The financial costs associated with the provision of these benefits are not a strain on the organization	2.4	25.8	32.7	31.5	7.5	3.16	.974
The organization has set aside a budget for work-life balance benefits	7.8	47.2	25.6	15.5	3.9	2.61	.970

Scale; SD =strongly disagree: D = disagree: N= neutral: A =agree: SA =strongly agree

Descriptive Statistics of Employee Performance

The real success of organizations originates from employees' willingness to use their creativity, abilities, and expertise in favor of the organization. The organization's task is to encourage and nourish these positive employee inputs by putting effective reward practices in place. The findings showed that the highest mean was that employees in the organization are aware of the organizational objectives, mission, vision, and objectives of the organization with a mean of 4.22 and a standard deviation of .516 with 96.1 % of the respondents agreeing, 0.45 disagreeing and 3.5% being neutral.

These results indicated that understanding the business mission statement helps give employee training purpose because it helps everyone to see how the course content benefits their personal career goals and the wider organization's mission. Other statements with high means of above 4.00 were that the work performed by employees is of high quality with 93.3% agreeing, 0.6% disagreeing, and 6.1% being neutral with a mean of 4.14 and standard deviation of .528.

The statement that the rate of absenteeism by employees in the organization is low had 89.6% agreeing, 1.2% disagreeing, and 9.2% having a neutral opinion and with a mean of 4.09 and a standard deviation of .591.

The statement that the work performed by employees is of high quantity had 88.4% of the respondents agreeing, 2.3% disagreeing and 9.3% being neutral with a mean of 4.05 and standard deviation of .611. 83.8% of the respondents agreed with the statement that the employees in the organization achieve their specified targets with 2.5% disagreeing and 13.7% being neutral with a mean of 4.00 and standard deviation of .650. These results indicate that employees play a big role in determining an organization's success. When the employee workforce commits themselves to ensure that they work steadily and effectively the organization will realize its targets.

Statements with the lowest means were that the organization rewards the stakeholders arising from improved employee performance, with a mean of 3.65 and standard deviation of .875, and that employees in the organization usually meet deadlines while accomplishing their tasks with a mean of 3.95 and standard deviation of .728.

Employee performance positively impacts the return on investment with a mean of 3.96 and a standard deviation of .757. These results indicate that organizations should consistently reward employees and stakeholders after improving the organization's performance in a bid to motivate them to work harder.

This is in line with studies by Shahzad et al. (2012) which indicated that higher rewards would motivate the employees as they would feel more appreciated than their colleagues of the same qualification working in other firms, this high satisfaction translates to higher performance.

The result of this study supports Burdbar and Nisar (2012) research that concluded that individual performance levels are a function of one's motivation and total job capability and therefore when both are high, performance will tend to be generally high.

Table 2: Employee Performance

Items	(SD) %	(D) %	(N) %	(A) %	(SA) %	Mean	Std. Deviation
The work performed by employees is of high quality	0.0	0.6	6.1	72.1	21.2	4.14	.528
The work performed by employees is of high quantity	0.0	2.3	9.3	69.2	19.2	4.05	.611
Employees in the organization usually meet deadlines while accomplishing their tasks	0.0	4.9	14.7	61.5	18.9	3.95	.728
Employee performance positively impacts the return on investment	0.6	3.7	16.3	58.5	21.0	3.96	.757
The employees in the organization achieve their specified targets	0.0	2.5	13.7	65.2	18.6	4.00	.650
The rate of absenteeism by employees in the organization is low	0.2	1.0	9.2	69.1	20.5	4.09	.591
Employees in the organization are creative and innovative	0.4	0.6	19.6	60.0	19.4	3.97	.672

The employees in the organization are encouraged to appraise themselves	1.0	3.1	12.2	65.0	18.7	3.97	.724
Employees in the organization are aware of the organizational objectives, mission, vision, and objectives of the organization	0.0	0.4	3.5	69.8	26.3	4.22	.516
The organization rewards the stakeholders arising from improved employee performance	1.2	8.8	26.5	46.7	13.6	3.65	.875

Scale; SD =strongly disagree: D = disagree: N= neutral: A =agree: SA =strongly agree

Test of Hypothesis

The study tested the effect of work-life benefits on employee performance through the hypothesis that H_1 : *Work-life benefits significantly influence employee performance in the State Corporations in Kenya*. The average indexes for all the dimensions for both work-life benefits on employee performance were determined and a regression analysis was carried out.

Table 3: Effect of Work-Life Benefits on Employee Performance

		Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
1	.337 ^a	.113	.112	.69669		
a. Predictors: (Constant), Work Life balances						
		ANOVA				
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	30.949	1	30.949	63.763	.000 ^b
	Residual	242.200	499	.485		
	Total	273.149	500			
		Coefficients				
Model	B	Unstandardized Coefficients	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	2.820	.141		19.977	.000
	Work-Life balances	.342	.043	.337	7.985	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance						

The results in the model summary show that $R=.337$ suggests that there exists a moderate relationship between work-life balance and employee performance. Coefficient of determination $R^2=.113$ implies that work-life balance influence employee performance by 11.3%. This is significant since $p\text{-value}<0.05$ at 95% confidence level.

The results show that the overall model is significant ($F=63.763$, $p<0.05$), and the coefficient also show that work-life balance contributes significantly to employee performance ($\beta=0.342$, $t=7.985$, $p>0.05$). This implies that work-life balance significantly influences employee performance and therefore the alternative hypothesis was accepted. Performance in the State Corporations in Kenya was nullified. The findings of this study were in line with the findings of (Sentamilselvan & Delecta, 2016; Nekoranec, 2013; Johnson, 2015; Morgan, 2009; White, Hill, McGovern, Mills & Smeaton, 2003) who suggested that employee work balance benefits have a significant influence on how employee performance at work.

5.0 Conclusion

The study concluded that state corporations in Kenya offer a conducive working environment to employees one of them being by offering leaves and offs' to their employees. Additionally, the findings also concluded that State Corporations in Kenya recognize work-life balance programs. Moreover, the study further concluded that despite the benefits of work-life balance, most organizations hardly budgeted for work-life programs. It was also concluded that the organization did not offer flexible working schedules to employees.

6.0 Recommendations

The study, therefore, recommends that work-life programs should be considered and budgeted for. Offering gym facilities to employees provides a healthy lifestyle and also counters stress. Organizations can also offer childcare facilities so that the parents can work comfortably without worrying about their children and hence maximum concentration at the workplace that would lead to better productivity. The study concluded that motivation positively influences employee performance.

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