

WORK LIFE BALANCE PRACTICES AND EMPLOYEE PRODUCTIVITY IN VIHIGA COUNTY GOVERNMENT, KENYA

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Abstract: Among the four factors of production lies labor. It is one of the key determinants of any production process. Therefore understanding its in-depth formation (social and economic) helps establishments get the best out of it. Work life balance can be explained as the division of one's time and focus between working and family or leisure activities. It is therefore important to understand the value of work life balance and its effects on employee productivity. The background of the study talks about the leave programs which are: annual, sick, maternity and study leave. Further on, the empirical review of the relationship between leave programs and employee productivity is discussed. The social exchanged is then discussed in the consequent section. The methodology used in the study is outlined and the results analyzed using the descriptive statistical data analysis. Inferential statistical analysis is explained in the following sector to show the relationship between leave program and employee productivity; and work life balance and employee productivity. Last but not least, the summary of the findings is stated.

Keywords: leave programs, productivity, county government.

1. INTRODUCTION

Work-life balance has increasingly been a concern for both employers and employees for most organizations both in the private and public sectors in the world all over. It brings together elements of professional life and our social life. Clark 2000, defines work-life balance as the satisfaction and good functioning at work and at home with a minimum conflict. Lowe (2007) argues that one in four employees experience high levels of conflict between work and family based on work- to the family- interfering and caregiver strain, and if role overcrowd is included, then close to 60% of employees surveyed experienced work-family conflict.

Lewis, (2000), suggests that the way to achieve this is to adopt an approach that is "conceptualized" as a two-way process involving a consideration of the needs of employees as well as those of employers. This simply means that as the work-life balance programs are being developed, the employer needs to understand that the needs for employees with single marital status vary from those of married employees and thus they need to categorize their employees with regards to their social standings and preferences. Owusu (2014) defines work-life balance as the harmony that strikes between a professional career and social engagements with the hope to achieve organization productivity, while at the same time, satisfying social/communal commitments. Okeke (2011) adds that when people spend too many hours at work and spend less with their families, their health and work performances begin to deteriorate. Mwangi L., Boinett C., Tumwet E. (2017) define work-life balance as the positive relationship between work and other equally important activities in life. From their definition, work and life beget a positive outcome irrespective of the prevailing circumstance. They accept that there is no clear definition of these two variables due to influence in life demands.

Different scholars have different definitions but the common denominator in all the available definitions of work-life balance is the equilibrium between an employee's work and their social life. With the increasing pressures of the economy, we find that in most families, both parents have to work for a living. Finding a perfect balance between work and life, however, is not as flowery as it sounds. Work pressures such as productivity, target achievement, market index and cultural attributes are some but few elements which this thesis hopes to consider in bridging work and life.

County Governments is a relatively new dispensation in Kenya, owing to the enactment of the 2010 constitution. Governments offer social services; they attract no direct return on investment. They shade more light on the element of humanity, which invokes the social life aspect of people. Aside from the corporate scenario, where productivity has a direct relationship to profitability, this form of work-life balance prompts the employer (County Public Service Boards) to come up with new policies so as to drive social productivity and in the same breathe to keep the employees socially sound. The purpose of this study was, therefore, to examine effect of work-life balance practices on Vihiga county government levels of productivity.

Leave Programs:

Leave programs are amount of hours or days allowed to employees to be off duty within a specific duration without repercussions. In this duration, the employee is paid full benefits by the organization. The purpose of these off-work days is to freshen up, catch up with families and participate in other life activities (Burke and Moffet, 2003)

a) Annual Leave

They are paid off work days which employees are entitled to after a particular period of time for recreational purposes (Burke and Moffett, 2003). Some explanations also include fair treatment and with full benefits (thelawdictionary.org). In Kenyan labor laws, there is a provision of at least 21 working days with full pay in a year as the compensation in an annual leave (Employment Act 2007, Section 28). This is the time when an employee is allowed time off for recreation, rest and holidays.

Annual leave was a concept fathered in Australia in 1935 when Printers Union workers won a one week of paid leave (worksite.actu.org.au). The numbers of days were increased to 2 weeks in 1945. In 1963, the Commonwealth Industrial Court adopted 3 weeks of annual leave and last but not least, the annual leave days increased to 4 weeks in 1974 (worksite.actu.org.au)

Subsequently, other nations have adopted various ways and number of days they allow as annual leave. Top of the list is Algeria and Brazil, each allowing 30 days (ilo.org). Others like Sweden and France allows 25 days. Interestingly countries like Portugal, Finland and Greece have statutory laws gazetted as annual leave days, but also allow collectively bargained days added (ilo.org). However, Indonesia has the fewest number of days recorded in the labor organizations with 12 days, while in the United States of America, there is no law that prompts annual leave.

b) Sick Leave

This is the time off duty that an employee is granted to address their health concerns without losing pay (Burke and Moffett, 2003). An employee is entitled to a sick leave only after working for two consecutive months with the employer (Employment Act 2007, Section 30). For a period of not less than 7 days, he/she will receive full pay, and thereafter receive half pay for the following 7 days for a period running for 12 months. This order is dispensed when the employee produces the Incapacity to Work certificate from a qualified medical practitioner.

c) Maternity Leave

Customarily, this leave is entitled to both parents of the newborn baby. However, women get a better offer for at least 3 months which are fully paid (Burke and Moffett). Brough et al, (2009) observed that the prevalence of return to work was higher in employees who had no paid maternity leaves due to financial constraints. The effects of this are inattentiveness at work, fatigue and mental disturbance. The parent-child relationship was also affected hence health complications, especially to the mother.

d) Study Leave

This is categorized under part-time employment where a labor resource participate partially (evening classes) or full time leave (during exam days). Study leave is encouraged for self-professional growth and organizational development (Burke and Moffett, 2003). There is no standard procedure in Kenya that guides this arrangement and is left for the employer and employee.

Leave Program and Employee Productivity:

Haynesand Ali (2013) analyzed the impact of leave programs on the employee's output, which was a variable on the work-life balance thesis. The sample population was gathered from 115 small businesses in Iran's Tehran Province, with a

sample size of 867 participants. Data analysis was done using the Pearson's correlation. The findings showed a significant relationship between leave programs and productivity. The finding showed improved health, bodily rejuvenation and stress-free attributes as the major contributor to this positive relationship. This guided the researcher to conclude that leave programs should be entrenched in the business' human resource policies for improved organizational efficiency.

In a quest to find out significance of leave programs to employee productivity in Kenya's corporate scene, Joyce, Viona and Obino (2013) conducted a work-life balance study in Ecobank Kenya. The study employed the exploratory, cross sectional survey, interviewing 330 respondents scattered among 10 branches of the bank. Graphs, tables and percentages were used for analysis. The findings showed a significant relationship between leave program and employee productivity. Notable features included motivation, fatigue elimination, psychological preparation and job satisfaction as the driver for the improved performance.

Operational Theory: Social Exchange Theory:

This theory assumes that individuals who engage more socially are happier in the duty delivery (Mannon and Kiger, 2003). It advises the management to offer socially inclined add-ons to the work ethics and employees will surely show job commitments (Sullivan and Lewis, 2001). Basing on this premise, this theory touches on the relating economic thinking with social tendencies: getting maximum benefit from resource investment in a social enterprise where the key performance indicators are a product of another independent variable. This gives more prominence to the family, and hope that the utility derived from this variable will unconditionally influence the outcome of work-related productivity (Mannon and Kiger, 2003).

In this theory, the major assumption, which is largely circumstantial, is the fact that the employer is giving a lot of leeway on the premise that a happy employee begets a good output. Other than the fact that employees participate in decision making and institutional programming, this management style works well in a large organization where the level of supervision is lower but the expected outcome is significant (Mahwish and Shama, 2002).

2. METHODOLOGY

The study used correlational research design: a relationship between independent variables and dependent variables. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2009) this approach gives room for a multi-analysis among the factors under study to give a workable analogy. This is helpful due to the open and varied stature and multiple levels of administration to gathers information from the respondents. The respondents were asked their views on the standard procedures, social approach and build-up questions in relations to the case study. The study was carried out at Vihiga County Government, which is a hinterland county, and has the highest population per hectare in the whole country.

Data analysis was done using both quantitative and qualitative methods. The data collected was edited, coded and then analyzed using the SPSS version 20 computer program. This computer software enabled the study to manipulate and transform variables into desired forms and through its set of procedures, the collected data was then be comprehensively analyzed. Descriptive data analysis techniques comprising of frequencies, percentages and means was used. It was then presented in tables in terms of frequencies and percentages. Quantitative data was analyzed using Pearson Product Moment correlation to test the strength of the relationship between work life balance and employees productivity.

The study performed correlation analysis using the Pearson's Product Moment correlation test on data that is normally distributed, having been obtained from a random sample of a population (Cooper and Schinder, 2003; Mugenda,2009). The test also operates on assumptions that there is linearity of data and that nominal, ratio or interval measurement scales were used to measure the data (Polonsky and Waller, 2005). The use of Pearson's Product Moment is justified since the study data was in ordinal scale where five-point Likert scale was used to rank respondents views on work life balance and employee productivity. The research also used Multiple Regression to analyze quantitative data. The use of Multiple Regression was justified by the fact that Faraway (2002) argued that multiple regression is used when analyzing statistical significance of more than two independent variable on one dependent variable. Multiple regression analysis was conducted on each of the study hypothesis to find out whether the individual hypothesis was statistically supported or not at 95% confidence level (Cooper & Schindler, 2006). Data was then presented qualitatively and quantitatively using frequencies tables, figures, measures of central tendency (mean) which was used to determine the proportion of respondents choosing the various responses.

3. RESULTS

The results represent a 95.2% response rate which is very good as asserted by Bebbie (2004) that a response rate of 70% and above is very good. The results indicate that majority of the respondents were male (54%). Female employees were also well represented, at 46%. The study can be interpreted that, the composition of employees in Vihiga County government is well above the Constitution of Kenya 2010 threshold requiring that more than two-third of the employees should not be of the same gender.

Research findings depict that majority of employees in Vihiga County government are in 26-35 years age bracket (49.6%) followed by 18-25 years age bracket. The study findings imply that, the county government employees consist of young and energetic youth whose efforts are needed for the development of the county. It also implies that employment in the county government of Vihiga is skewed towards youthful population.

The results further indicate that majority of Vihiga County government employees are married, (62.5%) followed by single employees (32.7%). The findings of the study thus imply that work life balance form part of the county programs due to the presence of family units in the county.

It emerged that Vihiga County government employee mostly people with bachelor degree qualification (43.4%) followed by diploma qualification (36.9%). The study findings imply that majority of the respondents were knowledgeable regarding work life balance practices practiced by the county and their effect on their productivity.

The results also depicted that most of the employees of Vihiga County government are on permanent employment terms (48.7%) followed by contractual terms (33.3%) and casual terms (17.4%). The study results can be interpreted that work life practices is an integral ingredient in the county government since it mainly affect permanent and contract employees.

Descriptive Statistical Analysis:

The study sought to determine the effect of work life balance practices on employee productivity in Vihiga county government, Kenya. The respondent responses were rated on a five-point Likert scale showing to what extent the respondents agree or disagree with the researcher statements on work life balance practices and employee productivity, where: 1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Neutral, 4-Agree and 5-Strongly Agree. The researcher used mean to interpret data as suggested by Bryman and Bell (2011), where mean <1.5=Strongly Disagree, >1.5-2.5=Disagree, 2.5-3.5=Moderately Agree, 3.5-4.5=Agree and >4.5 Strongly Agree. Data was analyzed in relation to each research objective by generating the mean from SPSS version 20 software.

Leave Programs and Employee Productivity:

Table 1: Leave programs and employee productivity

| | N | Mean |
|---|-----|--------|
| Leave enable refreshment and increases employees productiveness | 339 | 3.4631 |
| Leave days enable employees recreate and catch up with family members | 339 | 3.4602 |
| Employer offers annual paid leave | 339 | 3.4071 |
| Employer offers paid sick leave | 339 | 3.3717 |
| Employer offers paid maternity/paternity leave | 339 | 2.9056 |
| Employer offers paid study leave | 339 | 2.0413 |
| Valid N (listwise) | 339 | |

Source: Field data (2018)

Results in Table 1 show that employees in Vihiga County government were in agreement that their county offer leave programs to their employees shown by level of agreement that they are offered paid: annual leave (mean=3.4); sick leave (mean=3.4); maternity/paternity leave (mean=3). This intern lead to employees productivity (mean=3.5) and enable employees recreate and catch up with family members (mean=3.5). The respondents however disagreed that their county offer paid study leave. The results of the study can be interpreted that leave programs lead to employees' productivity and also Vihiga County government are complying with Employment Act, 2007 which stipulate that leave is a right of employees. Study findings that leave programs results in employee productivity agrees with past research findings conducted by Burkner and Moffet (2003); Brough et al, (2009); Heynesand (2013); and Joyce, Viona and Obino (2013) that asserted that leave programs lead to performance of organization.

Employee Productivity:

Table 2: Employee productivity

| | N | Mean |
|---|-----|--------|
| Department achieves its objectives through employees effort | 339 | 4.8820 |
| Organization support discourages staff turnover | 339 | 3.5457 |
| Employees are complimented for good work done by supervisors | 339 | 2.9853 |
| Timely clocking in and out or signing daily attendance book | 339 | 4.8171 |
| Employees realize their daily targets at workplace | 339 | 4.5811 |
| Organization achieves its objectives with minimal resources provided to employees | 339 | 3.9794 |
| Valid N (listwise) | 339 | |

Source: Field data (2018)

Table 2 results depict that Vihiga County government performs effectively due to presence of work life programs in the organization. This was illustrated by the respondents level of agreement to the issues of employee productivity that: Department achieves its objectives through employees effort (mean=4.9); Organization support discourages staff turnover (3.5); Employees are complimented for good work done by supervisors (mean=3); Timely clocking in and out or signing daily attendance book (mean=4.8); Employees realize their daily targets at workplace (mean=4.6); and Organization achieves its objectives with minimal resources provided to employees (mean=4). The results imply that, work life balance practices results to increase in employee productivity.

Inferential Statistical Analysis:

The study sought to determine the effect of work life balance practices on employee productivity in Vihiga county government, Kenya. Data was analyzed in relation to each research objective by generating correlation and regression coefficients from SPSS version 20 software. The main aim of correlation analysis was to test the strength and significant of relationship that exist between work life balance practices on employee productivity and regression analysis was meant to test for research hypothesis, whether to reject or fail to reject. The regression analysis conducted generated model summary, ANOVA and coefficient of determination for the purpose of either rejecting or failure to reject the study hypotheses. The study used t-statistics level of significance to test for the hypothesis. If the t-statistics is significant at 95% level of confidence, the researcher rejected the null hypothesis otherwise the study failed to reject the null hypothesis (Elam, 1979).

Leave Programs and Employee Productivity:

Tables 2-4 show the correlation and regression analysis between Leave programs and employee productivity. The results of the tables were used to answer the first study objective, that is, to establish the effect of leave programs on employee productivity in Vihiga County Government.

Table 3: Model Summary of Leave programs and employee productivity

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate | Sig. |
|-------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|------|
| 1 | .118 ^a | .014 | .011 | 1.22779 | .030 |

a. Predictors: (Constant), Leave programs

Source: Field data (2018)

The results in Table 3 show that there is a positive and significant effect of leave programs on employee productivity at 95% confidence level ($r=0.118$, $\alpha=0.030$ and $p\text{-value}=0.05$ thus $\alpha < p\text{-value}$). The results on model summary show that R-Square is 0.014 indicating that leave programs accounts for 1.4% of the variability in the employee productivity in county government of Vihiga. The results of the study can be interpreted as, leave programs in organizations lead to a slight increase in employee productivity.

Table 4: ANOVA^a of Leave programs and employee productivity

| Model | | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|-------|------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|-------------------|
| 1 | Regression | 7.127 | 1 | 7.127 | 4.728 | .030 ^b |
| | Residual | 508.019 | 337 | 1.507 | | |
| | Total | 515.146 | 338 | | | |

a. Dependent Variable: Employee productivity

b. Predictors: (Constant), Leave programs

Source: Field data (2018)

The ANOVA results in Table 4 depict that, $F=4.728$, $p=0.030$. The overall results reveal that regression model was significant in determining the applicability of the model to measure the study variables. This means that there is a satisfactorily goodness for fit between leave programs and employee productivity in Vihiga County government. The use of regression model to either accept or reject the research hypothesis is thus justified.

Table 5: Coefficients^a of Leave programs and employee productivity

| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. |
|-------|----------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|-------|------|
| | | B | Std. Error | | | |
| 1 | (Constant) | 1.749 | .200 | | 8.756 | .000 |
| | Leave programs | .132 | .061 | .118 | 2.174 | .030 |

a. Dependent Variable: Employee productivity

Source: Field data (2018)

Based on the study beta coefficient in Table 5 results, the equation simple linear regression model can be written as; $Y=1.749+0.132X_1+e$. where Y =employee productivity, X_1 represents leave programs and e represents error term. A beta of 0.132 means that in every 0.132 units of use of leave programs, there is a corresponding 1 unit increase in employee productivity in the Vihiga County government. The results also show that leave programs is statistically significant ($\alpha=0.030$ and p -value=0.05) measure of employee productivity. Since the t -statistic is significant, the study reject the first null hypothesis and concludes that, there is a significant and positive relationship between leave programs and employee productivity in Vihiga County Government.

Study findings that leave programs results in employee productivity agrees with past research findings conducted by Burkner and Moffet (2003); Brough et al, (2009); Heynesand (2013); and Joyce, Viona and Obino (2013) that asserted that leave programs lead to performance of organization.

Work Life Balance and Employee Productivity:

Tables 6 show the correlation and regression analysis between work life balance practices on employee productivity. The results of the tables were used to answer the general research objective, that is, to establish the effect of work life balance on employee productivity in Vihiga county government, Kenya.

Table 6: Model Summary of Work life balance and employee productivity

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | .199 ^a | .040 | .031 | 1.21530 |

a. Predictors: (Constant), Flexible working hours, Leave programs, Work family support programs

Source: Field data (2018)

The results in Table 6 depict that there is a positive effect of work life balance practices, that is, leave programs on employee productivity at 95% confidence level ($r=0.199$). The results on model summary show that R-Square is 0.04 indicating that work life balance practices accounts for 4% of the variability in the employee productivity in county government of Vihiga. The results of the study can be interpreted as, work life balance in organizations lead to an increase in employee productivity.

Table 7: ANOVA^a of Work life balance and employee productivity

| Model | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|-------|------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|-------------------|
| 1 | Regression | 20.370 | 3 | 6.790 | 4.597 | .004 ^b |
| | Residual | 494.776 | 335 | 1.477 | | |
| | Total | 515.146 | 338 | | | |

a. Dependent Variable: Employee productivity

b. Predictors: (Constant), Flexible working hours, Leave programs, Work family support programs

Source: Field data (2018)

The ANOVA results in Table 7 depict that, $F=4.597$, $p=0.004$. The overall results reveal that regression model was significant in determining the applicability of the model to measure the study variables. This means that there is a satisfactorily goodness for fit between work life balance practices and employee productivity in Vihiga County government.

Table 8: Coefficients^a of Work life balance and employee productivity

| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | T | Sig. |
|----------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|-------|------|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| (Constant) | 1.090 | .349 | | 3.122 | .002 |
| Leave programs | .140 | .065 | .125 | 2.168 | .031 |

a. Dependent Variable: Employee productivity

Source: Field data (2018)

Based on the study beta coefficient results in Table 8, the equation multiple linear regression model can be written as; $Y=1.090+0.140X_1+0.172X_2+0.144X_3+e$. where Y =employee productivity; X_1 represents leave programs; X_2 represents work family support programs; X_3 represents flexible working hours and e represents error term. Betas of 0.140, 0.172 and 0.144 means that in every 0.140, 0.172 and 0.144 units of use of leave programs, work family support programs and flexible working hours respectively, there is a corresponding 1 unit increase in employee productivity in the Vihiga County government. This means that work family support programs results to higher employee productivity, followed by flexible working hours and leave programs. The results also show that leave programs and flexible working hours were statistically significant ($\alpha=0.031$ and $\alpha=0.018$ where p -value=0.05) measure of employee productivity. It can be concluded from the study that, work life balance results in increase in employee productivity.

4. SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

Leave Programs and Employee Productivity:

Study results indicated that county government of Vihiga offers leave programs to their employees which entails paid: annual leave, sick leave and maternity/paternity leave. This intern lead to employee productivity and enable employees recreate and catch up with family members. The respondents however disagreed that their county offer paid study leave.

Results of the study depicted that there is a positive and significant effect of leave programs on employee productivity at 95% confidence level. Model summary R-Square indicated that leave programs accounts for 1.4% of the variability in the employee productivity thus leave programs in organizations lead to a slight increase in employee productivity. Based on the study beta coefficient results, in every 0.132 units of use of leave programs, there is a corresponding 1 unit increase in employee productivity. The results also show that leave programs was statistically significant measure of employee productivity. Since the t-statistic is significant, the study reject the first null hypothesis and concludes that, there is a significant and positive relationship between leave programs and employee productivity in Vihiga County Government.

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