

Work Life Balance on Performance of Judicial Service Employees in Kitui County, Kenya

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Abstract: In Kenya, despite many efforts geared towards improving the service delivery of the judiciary, it is evident that many cases take long to be adjudicated; there have been some instances of case files missing, claims of unfair trials and judgments and an increase in the cost of settling cases. The study therefore sought to investigate the influence of work-life balance on judicial service employees' performance in Kitui County, Kenya. Compensation theory was used to explain the interrelationship between variables. Empirical literature reviewed scholarly studies on work life balance and its influence on employee performance. Descriptive research design was used. The unit of analysis was 93 employees from four Law Courts in Kitui County, Kenya. The research adopted a census study of all the 93 respondents since the population was relatively small and manageable. Structured questionnaires were used to collect primary data through self-administration method. Both content and construct validity were determined. The study concluded that employees' performance is important for the organization succession and achieving the goals. The research results add value to the areas of work life balance and judiciary employees' performance. The study showed that some factors contributed to stress at work like too much work, lack of in-house childcare among others. The study showed that work life balance significantly and strongly affects employee performance. The study recommends that Judicial Service Commission should adopt flexible work schedule strategies

Key Words: Work life balance, performance, Law Courts

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I. Introduction

The environment surrounding any organization is so dynamic that employees constantly need to balance between work life and family otherwise conflict is bound to arise. The situation is further compounded by the limited resources available to the organizations; nonetheless, customers expect quality goods and services while the citizens of any nation will expect better services from government institutions. Employees experience a heavy work load with longer working hours and this significantly affects their lives and their families' lives. Organizations are charged with the responsibility of improving the work life balance of their employees not only to comply with the applicable laws and regulations but also to reduce the costs associated with employee turnover and health care brought about by work-family conflicts.

Work-life balance (WLB) can be described as a state where the time devoted for work and other activities reflects an employee's priorities, needs and ambitions. Yuile et al. (2012) defines WLB as a state where employees balance time in fulfilling personal priorities and professional requirements. People will like to co-exist in a society that is democratic, tolerant, righteous, fair, and dynamic and where they can compete favorably in a peaceful environment. It is therefore evident that employees must balance their family life with work life otherwise work-family conflicts may arise which may affect the realization of organizational goals.

The researchers' motivation is driven by the fact that employees form the backbone and the major driver of the realization of organizational goals of this country and yet they encounter a myriad of challenges. These challenges are to a very large extent affecting their performance and consequently slowing down their productivity. Although employees encounter many challenges in the course of discharging their duties, the issue of work life balance cannot be wished away. It is imperative that this study be carried out to determine the judicial service employees' performance in correlation with work life balance in Kitui County.

Kitui County is in the former Eastern Province of Kenya and is located 170 km south east of Nairobi City. Its capital and largest town is Kitui although Mwingi is also another major urban centre. The County has a population of 1,136,187 (2019 Census) and an area of about 30,430 km². The residents of Kitui County are served with Magistrate Courts located in Kitui, Mwingi, Kyuso and Mutomo towns. Kitui Law Courts has four Court Rooms namely Court Room 1, 2, 3 and 4 while Mwingi, Kyuso and Mutomo Law Courts each has two Courts Rooms namely Court Room 1 and 2. The Courts in Kitui County have a staff population of 93 employees

of whom ten are Magistrates who are classified as judicial officers and the remaining 83 are non-judicial officers. The number of Magistrates amounts to one Magistrate for every one hundred and fourteen thousand inhabitants (JOR, 2020; Census 2019). Over the past few years, the number of judicial service employees increased considerably but the demand for justice services increased much more.

The Judicial service Commission has over the years endeavored to increase service delivery through devolvement of judicial services to the grassroots, numerous investments in training, culture change workshops and information technology aimed at eliminating or substantially reducing the number of complaints associated with poor or delayed service delivery.

Statement of the Problem

The judiciary of Kenya is one of the three arms of government. It is tasked through the judicial service commission which is the principal body that oversees the operations of the entire judiciary with solving all manner of cases between conflicting parties that require interpretation and application of the formal justice. Many cases are launched at the Kenyan judiciary by individuals, groups and the state. However, despite the devolvement of judicial services to the grassroots, public complaints to the office of the Ombudsperson about the Kenyan judiciary were 3,005 in 2016/2017 and 3,515 in 2017/2018. (State of the Judiciary and the Administration of Justice Annual Report, 2017-2018). Numerous investments in training, culture change workshops and information technology aimed at eliminating or substantially reducing the numbers of complaints in the judicial service have been undertaken, however, similar complaints by judicial service clients continue every year. Despite all the efforts by the judicial service Commission of Kenya to increase its productivity, numerous cases in Kitui County are still pending or delayed for one reason or another.

Studies in this area include Muhammad (2015) who investigated the influence of work life balance on employee performance moderated by transactional leadership but focused on different variables such as work or personal life enhancement (WPLE), personal life interference with work (PLIW), work interference with personal life (WIPL). This study presents a contextual gap on work life balance on employee performance. In a study on the influence of work-life balance on employee performance at the cabinet affairs office, Kenya; Abdulkadir (2018), focused on job related inducers of stress such as long working hours, supervisor's leadership style and perceived organizational support. This study presents a methodological gap on work life balance on performance. Grace (2017) carried out a study to interrogate factors influencing performance of the judicial system in Kenya, the case of delayed court rulings and revealed that information technology, Court rules, procedures and collaboration between government agencies have significant impact on performance of the judicial system. This study did not assess how the employees balanced Information Technology, Court Rules, procedures and collaboration between government agencies with family life and the effect on employee performance. The study presents a conceptual gap that was covered by the current study.

Objective of the study

i To assess the influence of work life balance on judicial service employees' performance in Kitui County, Kenya

Theoretical review

The study was anchored on compensation theory which was first adduced by Piotrkowski in 1979. He argued that employees "perceive their homes as a haven and derive satisfaction lacking in the occupational sphere from their families" Compensation theory refers to an attempt of making up for shortcomings or deficits in one role through higher involvement in another role (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000). These deficiencies could be the demands or satisfactions that can be fulfilled in another role (Guest, 2002). For example an individual is highly engaged in the work life because of some negative experiences in the non-work life.

Compensation can be viewed in two broad facets namely supplemental and reactive. Supplemental compensation occurs when positive experiences are inadequate at work and are thus pursued at home while reactive compensation occurs when negative work experiences are overcome by positive home experiences (Zedeck & Mosier, 1990). Compensation theory holds the view that there is an opposite relation between work and life and therefore employees make up for negative experiences in one domain from the other domain, (Clark, 2000). Therefore inadequate positive experiences at work may affect employee performance. This theory offers a vital link between work life balance as the independent variable and performance of judicial service employees as the dependent variable.

Empirical review

Thevanes and Mangaleswaran (2018) conducted a study on the relationship between work-life balance and employee performance on a sample of 166 employees of private banks in Sri Lanka. The study concluded that work-life balance has positive and significant relationship with job performance and employers should

adopt flexi time. The study left a gap on examining the correlation between work life balance and employee performance. The study was purely descriptive while the current study aims at collecting primary data on the influence of work life balance on employee performance.

Muhammad (2015) investigated the influence of work life balance on employee performance moderated by transactional leadership. He performed a moderation analysis on employees selected from seven universities which indicated that a transactional leadership style has negative significant influence on the relationship between work life balance and employee performance. He further recommends that organizations should adopt flexible work schedule strategies since it was found that an increase in flexible work arrangement would positively affect employee performance.

A study by Abdulkadir (2018) on influence of work life balance on employee performance adopted stratified random sampling technique and used questionnaires to collect primary data from a sample of 70 employees. The study adopted descriptive research design. The study concludes that the demand at the workplace interferes with employees' family life; employees make some adjustments in order to accomplish their family duties as a result of work pressure, most employees were unable to balance between work and family, long working hours made employees experience increased stress, the supervisor's leadership style induced stress to some employees and that lack of Perceived Organizational Support (POS) also leads to stress.

Grace (2017) carried out a study to interrogate factors influencing performance of the judicial system in Kenya, the case of delayed court rulings and revealed that information technology, Court rules, procedures and collaboration between government agencies have significant impact on performance of the judicial system. This study did not assess how the employees balanced Information Technology, Court Rules, procedures and collaboration between government agencies with family life and the effect on employee performance.

In their study to assess the influence of work life balance on employee productivity in Kenya, A case of Milimani Law Courts, Muchiti and Gachunga, (2015), found out that independent variables contributed 77.10%, significantly and positively to employee productivity at the judiciary. Flexible working schedule was the most significant factor and had a positive significant relationship at 5% level of significance. However, this study only focused on Milimani Law Courts whereas the current study focused on judicial service employees of Kitui County, Kenya.

Conceptual framework

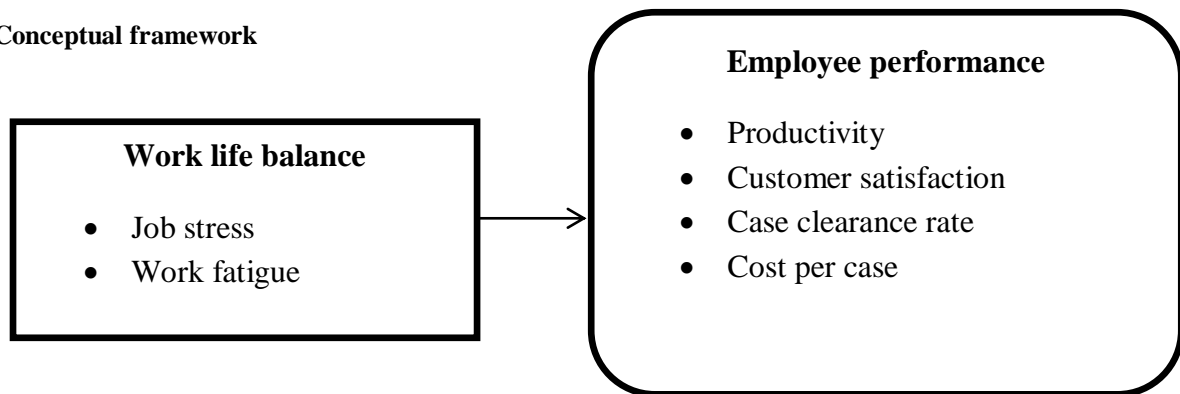


Figure 2.1 Conceptual Frame Work

The work-life balance depends on the supportive attitude of the organization in allowing employees to balance their work and non-work lives. The study dependent variable was employee performance which was measured by productivity, customer satisfaction, case clearance rate and cost per case. This measure included both financial measures and non-financial measures based on the BSC models (Kaplan & Norton, 1996)

Research design

The research design is a crucial plan which provides a summary of the activities required to implement the research conclusions. A descriptive research design was used to conduct this study. This design involved the collection of quantitative information that can be tabulated along a continuum in numerical or describe categories of information in the study variables (Creswell, 2013).

Target population

Orodho, (2003), opines that a researcher should describe the group of people to whom the research results apply based upon who he/she chooses to generalize findings on. All the 93 judicial service employees drawn from Kitui County comprised the target population for this study.

Table 3.1: Target Population

The target population consisted of 93 judicial service employees classified as judicial officers and non-judicial officers. Staff drawn from various departments with shared services constituted the non-judicial officers. The unit of observation was the four law Courts in Kitui County while the unit of analysis were judicial service employees from the four law Courts as shown in the table below.

Employee category	Population	Percentage
Judicial officers	10	10.75
Non Judicial Officers	83	89.25
Total	93	100

Source: (JOR, 2020).

Sampling techniques

Sampling techniques include a variety of approaches that help minimize the amount of data collected by only taking data from a sub group that represents the target population. A population of less than 200, a census is recommended (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2013). The study therefore used a census.

Data collection instruments

Structured questionnaires were utilized to collect primary data. The questionnaires were designed in such a way as to incorporate closed and open ended questions. Mugenda & Mugenda, (2003), states that questionnaires allow respondents to elicit detailed responses on complex issues. Aside from giving fairly objective data, questionnaires are relatively easy to use and are cost effective.

Data collection procedures

Prior to data collection, the researcher obtained authorization from Kenyatta University and NACOSTI. The researcher used drop and pick method where the questionnaires were individually administered to the judicial service employees in the four Law Courts. The respondents were given enough time to respond to the questions before the questionnaires were collected by the researcher after 14 days

Data analysis and presentation

Descriptive and inferential statistics were utilized to analyze data using statistical packages for social scientists (SPSS) software version 25. The analyzed quantitative data was presented in tables and figures using descriptive statistics in the form of frequencies, standard deviations and percentages. Further, inferential statistics such as linear regression was used to test for relationship between the independent and dependent variables in each of the study objectives at 95% confidence level. The regression model used will be in the form:

$$Y = a + \beta_1 X_1 + \epsilon$$

Where Y = Employee Performance in judicial service of Kitui County, Kenya

- a = y-intercept
- β_1 = regression coefficient
- X_1 = work-life balance
- ϵ = error term

II. Research Findings And Discussion

Response rate

The study targeted 93 respondents out of which 74 questionnaires were filled and returned. This represented a 79.6 % response rate, which was considered satisfactory to make conclusions for the study. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) a 50% response rate is adequate, 60% good and above 70% rated very well.

Descriptive Analysis

Work Life Balance and Judicial Service Employees' Performance

The results in table 4.1 below presents how work life balance influence employee performance

Table 4.1 Influence of work life balance on judicial service employees' performance

Statement	Mean	Std Dev
I keep thinking about work when I am not at work	4.256	0.362
I feel that there are factors that contribute to stress at work	4.632	0.651
Our organization provides a healthy environment for me to realize job-related targets as well as family duties without stress	4.214	0.412

I consider deadlines as a source of health related problems associated with pressure or stress	4.362	0.134
There is an in-house childcare or gym for employees to reduce work-related stress	1.236	0.654
I often take on too much work	4.652	0.421
I perceive excessive work load as a source of job fatigue	4.215	0.514
I at one point experienced a burnout as a result of excess job related activities in our organization	4.562	0.341
I have to do a lot of work during weekends and evenings in order to get my work done	4.237	0.526
I often feel mentally exhausted after a day's work	4.694	0.462

Source: Author, 2021

The findings presented in table 4.1 Shown that majority of the respondents strongly agreed that they kept thinking about work when not at work as shown by a mean score of 4.256 and a standard deviation of 0.362, that they felt that there were factors that contributed to stress at work as shown by a mean score of 4.632 and a standard deviation of 0.651. This was in line with the results of Muhammad (2015) who revealed that there is significant relationship between work or personal life enhancement (WPLE), personal life interference with work (PLIW), work interference with personal life (WIPL) and employee performance. Majority of the respondents also strongly agreed that the their organization provided a healthy environment for them to realize job-related targets as well as family duties without stress as shown by a mean score of 4.214 and a standard deviation of 0.412, that the they considered deadlines as a source of health related problems associated with pressure or stress as shown by a mean score of 4.362 and a standard deviation of 0.134. However, majority of the respondents strongly disagreed that there is an in-house childcare or gym for employees to reduce work-related stress as shown by a mean score of 1.236 and a standard deviation of 0.654. These findings supported those of Abdulkadir (2018) that the demand at the workplace interferes with employees' family life.

Also, majority of respondents strongly agreed that they often take on too much work as shown by a mean score of 4.652 and a standard deviation of 0.42, that they perceive excessive work load as a source of job fatigue as shown by a mean score of 4.215 a standard deviation of 0.514, that they at one point experienced a burnout as a result of excess job related activities in their organization as shown by the mean of 4.562 and a standard deviation of 0.341, that they have to do a lot of work during weekends and evenings in order to get their work done as shown by the mean score of 4.237 and a standard deviation of 0.526 and that they often felt mentally exhausted after a day's work as shown by a mean score of 4.694 and a standard deviation of 0.462. The findings proves the results of Thevanes and Mangaleswaran, (2018) that revealed that work-life balance has positive and significant relationship with job performance.

Performance of judicial service employees

Table 4.2 Case load statistics Report July 2020-March 2021

Court	Pending cases June 2020			Filed cases			Resolved cases			Pending cases March 2021		
	Criminal	Civil	All	Criminal	Civil	All	Criminal	Civil	All	Criminal	Civil	All
Kitui	1452	2392	3844	1182	772	1954	1187	594	1781	1147	2570	4017
Mwingi	1330	497	1827	649	197	846	591	195	786	1388	499	1887
Mutomo	661	64	725	401	75	476	446	124	570	620	147	767
Kyuso	90	70	160	206	41	247	193	53	246	103	58	161

(Source: Select Caseload Statistics Report July 2020-March 2021, Kenya, Judiciary)

The statistics as per table 4.2 show the highest number of pending cases in Kitui Law Courts at 4017, followed by Mwingi, Mutomo and Kyuso Law Courts at 1887, 767 and 161 respectively.

Table 4.3 Case clearance rate

Court	No. of cases due			No. of resolved cases			% case clearance rate		
	Criminal	Civil	All	Criminal	Civil	All	Criminal	Civil	All
Kitui	2634	3164	5798	1187	594	1781	45.06	18.77	30.72
Mwingi	1979	1146	3125	591	195	786	29.86	17.02	25.15
Mutomo	1062	139	1201	446	124	570	42.00	89.21	47.46
Kyuso	296	111	407	193	53	246	65.20	47.75	60.44

The number of cases due is given by the sum of pending cases and number of filed cases. The statistics as per table 4.3 indicate that the percentage case clearance rate is highest in Kyuso at 60.44% followed by Mutomo, Kitui and Mwingi at 47.46%, 30.72% and 25.15% respectively. The comparison of the number of

cases resolved as a percentage of the number of cases filed, Mutomo leads the pack with a case clearance rate of 119.75% followed by Kyuso, Mwingi and Kitui at 99.60%, 92.91% and 91.15% respectively.

Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis presents the strength and relationship of the study variables

Table 4.4 Correlation Analysis

		Work life balance	Performance
Work life Balance	N	93	
	Pearson correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-Tailed)		
Performance	N	93	1
	Pearson correlation	.594	
	Sig. (2-Tailed)	.003	93
N		93	

The findings in this study indicates that the correlation between work life balance and judicial service employees’ performance in Kitui County, Kenya was positive and significant (P=0.594, sig=0.003). The results were supported by Abdulkadir (2018) that the demand at the workplace interferes with employees’ family life.

The study model summary presents the correlation coefficient and coefficient of determination. The correlation coefficient presents the strength of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables whereas the coefficient of determination explains the extent to which the dependent variable is explained by the changes in the independent variable

Table 4.5 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.7214	.5936	.5982	.23488

Source: Author, 2021

Findings in table 4.5 shown that the value of correlation coefficient (R) was 72.14% indicating that there was a strong relationship between the study variables at a confidence level of 95%. The coefficient of determination (adjusted R squared = 0.5982) indicates that 59.82% changes in the performance of judicial service employees in Kitui County was explained by the work life balance. 40.18% variation in performance of judicial service employees was affected by other factors not in the model.

Table 4.6 Regression coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.168	.303		7.161	.000
	Work life balance	.312	.128	.323	2.448	.003

a. Dependent Variable: Employees performance

The adopted study model was $Y = 0.168 + 0.312X_1$

Where Y is the dependent variable (employees’ performance), X_1 is work life balance. The results indicate that the relationship between work life balance and employee performance was positive and significant ($\beta_2=0.323$, sig =0.003). According to the regression equation established, taking all factors constant, employees’ performance will be 0.168. The data findings analyzed also show that taking all other independent variables at zero, a unit increase in work life balance lead to a 0.312 beta value increase in employees’ performance. There was positive relationship between work life balance and employees’ performance at the judiciary service. The findings concurred with Ganesan & Krishnamurthi (2015) that employee performance involves factors such as quality, quantity and effectiveness of work done by employees as well as the behaviors employees portray in the work place.

III. Conclusions And Recommendations

Conclusions

Work life balance had a positive and significant relationship with judicial service employees' performance. Although there was flexible work schedule strategies that were made to ensure that employees balance their work life, employees felt that there were some factors that contributed to stress at work like too much work, lack of in-house childcare among others. Strengthening flexible work schedules could increase the productivity of judicial service employees hence better service delivery. Furthermore, improved service delivery would ultimately aid in reducing case backlog.

Recommendations

Judicial Service Commission should adopt flexible work schedule strategies since it was found that work life balance positively affected employee performance. The judiciary should ensure that there is an in-house childcare or gym for employees to reduce work-related stress. The employees should be allowed to rest on weekends and be compensated for work done overtime. The judiciary service should ensure that there is a therapy room for employees who feel mentally exhausted after day's work.

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