



**INFLUENCE OF FAMILY SUPPORT
SERVICES ON EMPLOYEE PRODUCTIVITY:
CASE OF SAFARICOM LIMITED, KENYA**

**Chepkoech Daisy¹,
Hannah Bula²ⁱ**

¹Postgraduate Student,
Kenyatta University,
Kenya

²Lecturer, Dr.,
Department of Business Administration,
Kenyatta University,
Nairobi, Kenya

Abstract:

Social demands in our world today and pressures from employees have posed a challenging dilemma among employers. The employers have had to adopt strategies that will meet the needs of the employers in order to make sure that they retain the best talents while at the same time provide a work life balance thus ensuring a win-win situation for all parties. Lack of providing work life balances have led to mental ill health related disease, absenteeism to deal with family issues and finally loss of best talent to the competitors especially when they have favorable work life balance practices. The study therefore sought to establish the influence of family support practices on employee productivity Safaricom limited in Kenya. The study adopted spillover theory. The study adopted a descriptive survey with target population of 4972 employees of Safaricom limited Kenya. A sample size of 370 employees of the target population was considered using stratified sampling method. Quantitative data that resulted from this process was analyzed with help of SPSS version 21 and descriptive statistics such as frequencies, mean, percentages and standard deviation. From the findings, family support services significantly influence employee productivity at $r=.598$ $p<0.005$. Additionally, the findings concur with the theoretical foundation of the study that adoption of family support services spills over to the attitude and the motivation of the employees which results to increased productivity.

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ⁱ Correspondence: email daisyomera@gmail.com, bula.hannah@ku.ac.ke

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1. Introduction

Business and entities all over the world have had to adopt changes in their operations in a bid to thrive in a competitive world and also in meeting the needs of their employees because a happy employee is a productive employee. In order to achieve this, entities have adopted work life balance strategies that will ensure that their entities perform well and at the same time they retain their employees and provide a conducive environment that will allow them to be productive. Some of the strategies adopted include family support services, flexible work schedules, and adequate maternal leave and onset child services.

Family support service is an aspect of work life balance that entails going beyond the normal requirements of the family and medical leave and extends to adopting strategies that guard the emotional being of the employees through provision of wellness programs such as the gym, or psychological needs, organizational support that empowers the employees to control their working environment through availing family friendly arrangements. Family support services creates an equilibrium between work and family, by addressing out negative or overwhelming matters that would spill over to work and affect the productivity of the employee by decline. A positive spill over from home will be evidenced in the attitude and the motivation of the employee at work resulting to employee productivity. Further, spending more hours at work and less with their families, their health and performance at work, result in a decline (Okeke, 2011).

Lazăr et al. (2010) posits that employees who have some control over their working environment have a lowered stress related ill-health as a benefit of work family life balance. The ability to control ones working environment, have been attributed to reduced stress and diseases that can be associated to benefits accrued through work life and family balance (Lazăr et al., 2010). A survey report conducted in 2014 by the council of economic advisers established that a third of the employees, from which 50 were working mothers, had turned down a job since it conflicted with their family responsibility. Furthermore, aspects such as intensified pressure at work lead to employees increased assignment which goes beyond the normal working time thus leaving the employee with minimal or no personal time (Fapohunda, 2014). A happy employee is a productive employee. Employee absenteeism can be detrimental to the organization's overall achievement of its objectives and would create an environment full of uncertainty to the workforce and the manager. In organizations where several employees execute related responsibilities, employees can help out if one is absent (The Council of Economic Advisors, 2014). The arrangements of a family friendly environment may assist in the reduction of employee turnover rates as they could tend to attract and retain employees who want to have children. In addition to this, it also minimizes the unnecessary cost of replacement for the new hires.

Kenyan employers have adopted family friendly policies as stipulated by the government through a five-day work policy for employees (Njiru, 2008). Organizations are yet to fully embrace work life balance aspects in totality. The preferences by human resource on lower salaries with work life balance aspects such as family support services as compared to higher salaries with no work life balance has caused special attention by employers in order to retain the best talent and also ensure productivity. A survey by DiNardi, & Holtz-Eakin, (2003) of 120 organizations established that providing flexible sick leave, flexible working arrangements and schedules and on-site childcare was significantly associated with lower salary entry levels. This research depicts the significance of maintaining equilibrium between work and personal life issues. Seeing the impact of balanced work life, many organizations in Kenya have greatly embraced policies and programmes that supports employees in terms of work life balance and ensuring a culture that empowers the employees

2. Statement of the problem

Concerns on work life balance have been identified all over the globe with increase in commitment to work, demand on time and social demands for improved livelihoods. Challenges that affect the human resource in implementing organizational goals has necessitated the need for action in ensuring that the human resource are in an environment that is conducive for them to work and also manage their work. The quality of human resource and output has been greatly impacted by the challenges experienced in our world today, hence requiring special attention. According to Naithani, (2010) management of human resource by organizations significantly influences the employee's productivity. This therefore means that engaging and managing the employees using the wrong strategies and motivation will create an imbalance that will result in decline in employee productivity and organizational performance. Provision of a conducive work environment that is family oriented in terms of emotional, instrumental and operational support will enhance employee productivity and vice versa.

Safaricom employees have experienced challenges in their work place resulting to low employee productivity as shown in Safaricom sustainability report (2015). From the report, the major issues raised by the employees were better market remuneration and work life balance aspects such safety, flexibility as well as productivity in their working stations and the overall opportunities achieved through direct interaction with the governance of the entity. As shown in the report, these issues directly influence the morale of the employees, which can be evidenced in their productivity. The concerns for a safe and flexible working environment for employees if not met results to decreased employee inputs and eventually many succumb to the pressure from the factors, resulting to less or no motivation at all, absenteeism, poor quality work or the employees quitting their jobs.

Safaricom has introduced other work life balance initiatives such as extended maternity leave and onset child care. These initiatives may not favor all persons as work

life balance varies from one person to another. Ensuring work life balance necessitates the need to continually monitor work life balance because balance varies from each employee and also with time. With so much going on around the world such as the COVID 19 pandemic which has brought about overwhelming challenges at the same time improved other aspects of work life balance, there is need for organizations to adjust accordingly and embrace measures that will maintain employee's wellbeing to ensure that they remain productive. This study will therefore seek to fill the knowledge gap by investigating the influence of family support services on employee productivity at Safaricom limited.

2.1 Objective of the study

The study sought to establish the influence of family support services on employee productivity at Safaricom limited.

2.2 Theoretical review

The spill over theory was used for the study. It is a construct that explains the relationship between family and work aspects. Belsky et al., (1985) established that during work, workers carry their feelings or emotions, attitudes, skills and behaviors that they form at home to work and vice versa.

The word spill over in the literature has been found to mean generalization, isomorphism, persistence, extension, acquaintance, and likeness (Edwards and Rothbard, 2000; Staines, 1980; Zedeck, 1992). There are two interpretations of spillover according to Edwards & Rothbard, (2000) spill over either be positive or negative. Positive spillover refers to fact that satisfaction and achievement in one domain may bring along satisfaction and achievement in another domain. Negative spillover refers to troubles experienced in one party will be carried on to another party depicting the same emotions. In short, despair, anxiety experienced at work, is likely to be carried forward to home and vice versa. Spill over process therefore brings uniformity in the roles played since experiences with one role inform the other one.

This theory sufficiently illustrates how work and home environment work together. The theory further suggests that workers carry their attitudes, behaviours, and skills both positive and negative; which they portray at work and in their family life (Sidin *et al.*, 2010). A negative spill over stimulates pressure in individuals and the positive spill over can lead to high levels of job fulfilment and performance. Studies have shown that employees who continuously work long hours have greater degree of work life conflict (Dex & Bond, 2005). Spill over theory is characterized by both negative and positive outcomes such as stressors in numerous areas or from an individual to another, resource development and success at work and family (Carlson, Karmar, Wayne, & Grzywacz, 2006; Xu, 2009).

This theory suggests that adopting life balance policies which can contribute towards a positive spill over in work life balance practices, will not only contribute towards employee productivity but also organization performance.

3. Literature Review

Uddin *et al* (2020) carried out a study to establish the perceived impact of family support, workplace support and work life balance policies on work life balance among the female bankers in Bangladesh. The study deployed purposive sampling, with 558 female responses. From the findings the study established that maintaining work life support, family support and enacting work life balance policies greatly determines if the work life balance will be attained or not. This is an indication that supporting family activities will help in ensuring balance between work and life roles.

A study by Kamau, Tuwai and Kuria (2015) was carried out to determine the effects of corporate wellbeing practices on employee's performance in 43 commercial banks in Kenya. The researcher adopted census sampling in collection of data concerning aspects of financial aspects of financial, environmental, physical and social wellness. The study established that employees' performance is improved by financial, intellectual, environmental, social and physical wellness programs. The study concluded that physical wellness helps the employee to stay fit thus improved productivity and flexible work arrangements puts away tension and stress that employee might have thus making them effective and efficient in their work.

Muli, Muathe and Muchiri (2014) carried out a study on family support services and employee's productivity within commercial banks in Nairobi County. The study employed a cross-sectional survey research design to gather quantitative and qualitative data from employees of the 43 commercial banks in Nairobi County, Kenya with a target population of 3607 with a selected a sample size of 360 respondents. The study established that there was need to include all cadres of employees into human resource work-family support service programs and standardize services to all sectors. The study established that there is a positive relationship of inclusion of family support services on employees' performance.

4. Research Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey which is important in collecting data from a population one off since the results can be inferred. The target population for the study was 4972 employees of Safaricom Limited Kenya in both waiyaki way and Mombasa road offices in Kenya. The company was chosen because of its role in the provision of mobile services in Kenya. The employees were drawn from 10 divisions; enterprise business unit, customer business unit, financial services, technology, resource, finance, customer care, marketing, risk management and internal audit. Both stratified and random sampling was used to have a full representation of all the workers at Safaricom limited. The sample size was determined by use of Yamane (1967) formula for calculating sample size. The formula is $n = \frac{N}{1 + N*(e)^2}$

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N*(e)^2}$$

Where

n = sample size,

N = population size (4972 employees of Safaricom limited)

e = error term (.05) hence,

$n = 4972 / 1 + (4972) * 0.05^2$

= 370

Table 1.1: Sample Size

Description	Frequency	% of population	Sample size
Supervisory	339	100	150
Operational staff	4633	100	220
	4972	100	370

Source: Omaera & Bula, 2021.

The employees of Safaricom limited were selected using both random and stratified sampling and 370 out of 4972 employees of them was accessed using systematic sampling and was requested to fill in a questionnaire.

This study used primary and secondary data as well as questions presented in Likert-type Scales was used. Primary data was collected using a questionnaire with close ended questions to ensure that the researcher captures all the information that was used in testing hypothesis and drawing conclusions. To pretest and validate the questionnaires, the researcher carried out a pilot study. The researcher pilot was tested for appropriateness on 10 employees at Airtel Kenya limited at Mombasa Road Branch. Questionnaires with the raw data from the field was checked for completeness and consistency in responses and coded. The quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS and the results summarized into descriptive statistics such as frequencies deviations, percentages and the result presented in tables to describe the study parameters.

5. Results and Discussion

The study targeted a sample size was 370 respondents from which 240 filled in and returned the questionnaires making a response rate of 65%. This response rate was satisfactory to make conclusions for the study as it acted as a representative. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (1999), a response rate of 50% is adequate for analysis and reporting; a rate of 60% is good and a response rate of 70% and over is excellent. Based on the assertion, the response rate was good.

The study sought to establish the level of agreement relating to statements on the influence of flexible work arrangements on employee productivity.

Table 4.2: Statements Regarding Family Support Services

Family support services	No extent at all	Little Extent	Moderate	Great Extent	Very Great Extent	Mean	Standard deviation
Having control over my working environment lowers stress and related ill health	0	0	48	97	95	4.20	0.92
Spending more time at work and less with family result in work decline.	7	13	89	56	75	3.75	0.66
Our company has a family friendly environment.	14	43	101	25	57	3.28	0.54
Our company offers mental health services.	38	72	109	17	4	2.49	0.52
We have wellness facilities such as gym at our work.	5	16	105	69	45	3.55	1.78

The study sought to establish the level of agreement relating to statements on influence of family support services on employee productivity at Safaricom limited. From the findings, the study established that the respondents agreed to a great extent that having control over my working environment lowers stress and related ill health shown by a mean of 4.20, Spending more time at work and less with family result in work decline shown by a mean of 3.75 and we have a wellness facility such as gym at our work shown by a mean of 3.55. The respondents were moderate on our company has a family friendly environment shown by a mean of 3.28 and our company offers mental health services shown by a mean of 2.49. The findings were sustained by a low standard deviation which is an indication that the respondents held similar views. The findings correspond with that of Lazăr et al., (2010) that Employees who have some control over their working environment have a lowered stress related ill-health as a benefit of work family life balance . When employees spend many hours at work and less with their families, their health and performance at work, result in a decline (Okeke, 2011).

The study sought to establish the level of agreement relating to statements on employee productivity.

Table 1.3: Statements regarding employee productivity

Employee productivity	No extent at all	Little Extent	Moderate	Great Extent	Very Great Extent	Mean	Standard deviation
I am committed to this company because of their family support for me	4	8	100	52	76	3.78	0.70
I really care about the fate of Safaricom limited	9	7	61	76	87	3.94	0.77
To me, my company has initiated the best work life environment	2	1	45	86	106	4.22	0.96

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I am willing to be hired somewhere else if an opportunity arises	25	45	7	67	96	3.68	0.82
I am willing to say positive things about this organization and recommend it to other people	2	8	6	125	99	4.30	3.32

From the findings, the study established that the respondents agreed to a great extent that I am willing to say positive things about this organization and recommend it to other people shown by a mean of 4.30, to me, my company has initiated the best work life environment shown by a mean 4.22, I really care about the fate of Safaricom limited shown by a mean of 3.94, I am committed to this company because of their family support for me shown by a mean of 3.78 and I am willing to be hired somewhere else if an opportunity arises shown by a mean of 3.68. The findings were sustained by a low standard deviation which is an indication that the respondents held similar views. The study concurs with that of Collins et al., (2003), who depicts that productivity of employee can be measured using these aspects such as time balance which translates to time devoted, involvement balance which is equated to psychological balance and satisfaction balance which is evaluated by satisfaction with work and family responsibility.

5.1 Regression Analysis

Table 1.4: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.788 ^a	.621	.634	.06210

Adjusted R squared is coefficient of determination which tells us the variation in the dependent variable due to changes in the independent variable. From the findings, the value of adjusted R squared was 0.634 an indication that there was variation of 63.4% on employee productivity at Safaricom limited due to changes in family support services at 95% confidence interval. This shows that 63.4% changes on employee productivity at Safaricom limited could be accounted for by change in family support services. R is the correlation coefficient which shows the relationship between the study variables. From the findings, the study found that there was a strong positive relationship between family support services and employee productivity as shown by 0.788.

Table 1.5: Analysis of Variance

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Residual	2.976	4	0.744	6.149	.004 ^b
	Regression	7.986	66	0.121		
	Total	10.962	69			

From the ANOVA statistics, the processed data, which is the population parameters, had a significance level of 0.04 which shows that the data is ideal for making a conclusion on the population's parameter as the value of significance (p-value) is less than 5%. The calculated value was greater than the critical value ($2.37 < 6.149$) an indication that family support services significantly affect employee productivity at Safaricom limited Nairobi. The significance value was less than 0.05, an indication that the model was statistically significant.

Table 1.6: Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	Constant	1.954	0.453		4.313	.002
	Family support services	0.598	0.201	.023	2.975	.001

From the data in the above table the established regression equation was:

$$Y = 1.954 + 0.598 X_1$$

From the above regression equation, it was revealed that holding flexible work arrangements at a constant zero, employee productivity would be at 1.954. A unit increase in Family support services would lead to increase in employee productivity by a factor of 0.598. These findings support the theoretical foundation of spill over theory that anchored this study that a positive spillover on the strategies adopted to ensure family support service will result to a positive impact on the employees productivity.

From the findings, Family support services influence employee productivity of Safaricom limited Nairobi by allowing them to control their work environment which lowers stress and related ill health, they are able to balance time at work and at family since spending more time at work and less with family result in work decline. Finally, the study established that wellness facilities are important. These findings were sustained by a low standard deviation which is an indication that the respondents held similar views. The findings correspond with that of Lazăr et al., (2010) that Employees who have some control over their working environment have a lowered stress related ill-health as a benefit of work family life balance.

6. Conclusion

From the findings family support services is important in lowering stress and related ill health, balances time spent at work and with family. The study therefore concludes that family support services influences employee productivity at Safaricom limited Nairobi.

6.1 Recommendation

The study recommends that management of Safaricom limited should invest in mental health services. Workers are experience mental health problems such as depression or anxiety. Investing in mental health awareness and services ensures that the well-being of the employees is prioritized thus work effectively and efficiently

6.2 Areas of further study

Further research should be carried out to establish the impact of mental health services of human resource at work place on employee performance so that human resource management can provide solutions for both the organization and the employees to achieve a win-win situation.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interests.

About the author

Chepkoech Daisy O. is a Human Resource Professional, a holder of Bachelor's Degree in Bachelor of Commerce (Human Resource), Higher Diploma in Human Resource Management and a Diploma in Human Resource Management. She is passionate about Human Resource and will always strive to ensure that employees working in an organization feel valued and are able to run their daily lives with a balance as this enhances commitment to achieve organizational goals as they get to achieve their alongside.

Dr. Hannah Bula has over 20 years' experience in teaching. Her PhD is in Business Administration and Management [DeKUT] focusing in Entrepreneurship. Her research passion is in Entrepreneurship, Human Resource Management and Strategic Management. Hannah is also passionate about building capacity in Human Capital Development, Managing Succession Planning, Business Incubation, Management, Human Resource Management, Curriculum Development, Strategic Planning, and Business Development and Entrepreneurial skills. Hannah has consulted for different organizations such as County governments, universities, SITE, OXFAM, NOPE and World Bank in collaboration with NITA in Youths and Women's work. Her special focus has been on Women Entrepreneurship, Women Empowerment and building capacity for performance management using the balanced Scorecard and quality management. Hannah is a Full member of Institute of Human Resource Management (IHRM) and an Associate Member of the Kenya Institute of Management (KIM). She has authored books in Women Entrepreneurship and Innovation Capability among Women in the informal settlement of Nairobi Kenya respectively (Lambert and ESDA book). Hannah has authored several Human resource management modules used by Kenyatta University at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. She's also an author of two online modules in Entrepreneurship and Technology used by the African Virtual University and has also published in high impact peer reviewed journals on Women Issues such as

Entrepreneurship Scorecard and Performance of Women Small Scale traders (SSEs), Balanced Scorecard and Performance of Women, Women Entrepreneurship Demographic Characteristics and Performance of SSEs and Women's Marital Status and Performance of (SSEs) in, Kenya among others. Bula sits in various editorial boards in Kenya and internationally as a blind peer reviewer of journal articles. Google Scholar: <https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=oM76uzsAAAAJ&hl=en> [orcid: 0000-0003-1033-7275](https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1033-7275)

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