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Otado, N. O.,<sup>1\*</sup> Were, S.,<sup>2</sup> & Odhiambo, R. O.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1\*</sup>Ph.D Scholar, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture & Technology [JKUAT], Nairobi, Kenya

<sup>2</sup>Ph.D, Senior Lecturer, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture & Technology [JKUAT], Nairobi, Kenya

<sup>3</sup>Professor, Meru University of Science & technology [MUST], Kenya

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### ABSTRACT

*The study aimed to establish the effect of work life balance on career salience in the five star hotels industry in Kenya. This study was guided by role theory. The research was explanatory and follows a cross-sectional survey design. The total population for this study was 4,465 employees and managers of five star rated hotels in Nairobi City County. The desired sample size was 196 respondents. The study used structured questionnaires as the main instruments for collecting primary data from respondents and in some instances document analysis was used as source of secondary data. The researcher used drop and pick method while administering questionnaires to the respondents. The data was analyzed quantitatively using the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) to obtain descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. Data collected was first edited, formatted and organized for coding into the SPSS data viable table. The study hypothesis was tested using multiple linear regression analysis. This study revealed that work life balance significantly influenced career salience in five star hotels in Kenya. The study concluded that employees working in organisations where priority is also given to their other aspects of life other than work commitments feel more satisfied and engaged in their work. Therefore work life balance is an essential component in ensuring career salience among employees. The study recommended that companies should have adequate work life balance policy that include leave days, provision for maternity leave that would go a long way in ensuring people continues with their normal life besides work. The best work-life balance is different for each of employees because we all have different priorities and different lives therefore work life balance should in a manner that accommodates everyone.*

**Keywords:** Work-life Balance, Hotels and Career Salience

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## INTRODUCTION

This study sought to establish some of the antecedents of career salience in hotel industry in Kenya. According to the industry experts career salience is one of the major contributors of high employee turnover not only in hotel industry but also in other industries. The study therefore found it necessary to provide insights on the antecedents of career salience with specific focus on the hotel industry in Kenya. Over the years it has become apparent that our world has changed from a more structured and predictable environment to one that is forever changing. Employees are required to continuously update their skills and knowledge if they want to keep up with these turbulent times, as a stable and progressive career path is no longer the norm (Southgate, 2006).

Career salience is dependent upon many factors that may be sociological, financial, educational or economical (Rasool *et al.*, 2012). Every individual possesses different socio-psychological features which affects their career salience. These may be personality, attitude, values, self-esteem, individual motives, preferences, commitment and interests. Researchers have consistently found out that women by far are the minority in top leadership positions within the private sector and government service (Fogliasso, 2011). Recent studies have indicated that self-imposed barriers can hold women back from advancing to top ranks. Such barriers can broadly be considered as the often dramatic “push and pull” between family-personal issues and the time of life during which promotions to higher ranks typically take place (Brizendine, 2008; Reddy, 2007).

Hatchman (2009) examining the mediating factors between maternal employment, maternal depression, and motherhood, in Wisconsin found among mothers of 12-month-old infants that those with high scores in career salience were more likely to work after childbirth and that they would prefer to work rather than stay at home. Rasool *et al.* (2012) carried their study in the banking sector of

Pakistan on the impact of organizational culture on employee’s career salience. They found that on the practical level the organizational culture and career salience enhanced the employees and organizational efficiency and effectiveness as well as it achieved the organizational and employees goals.

Kiyan *et al.* (2011) in their study on investigation of the impact of career salience on universities teachers' job involvement indicated that there was a significant positive relationship between career salience and job involvement of public and private university teachers together. Another result based on gender revealed that correlation between career salience and job involvement for male and female university’s teachers was highly significant. Moreover, the association between career salience and job involvement for lecturer, assistant professor, associate professor was quite significant (Kiyan *et al.*, 2011).

Franks, Schurink and Fourie (2006) explored the role salience of dual-career women in managerial positions in South Africa. The authors sought to establish if there was a positive correlation between work salience and career salience for dual-career women. They found that for dual-career women, work salience and career salience were moderately positively correlated. An increase in work salience was likely to be associated with an increase in career salience. An increase in work-role salience (expressed for example through greater participation in, commitment to, or stronger value expectations of the work role) is likely to lead to an increase in career salience. Dual-career women did not only consider the work role as highly salient but were invested in furthering their career development (Bhowon, 2013).

Tourism is now a leading economic activity in Kenya (Ministry of Tourism, Kenya, 2010) and a major employer of hospitality management graduates. According to Kariru, Odhuno and Ouma (2013) there has been an increase in the number of

hospitality management graduates working in non-hospitality organizations in Kenya. However, despite this, the factors influencing these graduates' career decisions have not been adequately addressed and previous studies conducted in Kenya, for example Kariru, Odhuno and Ouma, (2013) have tackled hospitality employee turnover in general. Many researchers have categorically demonstrated that there is much job dissatisfaction and high employee turnover in the hotel industry and not only here in Kenya but worldwide (Kuria, Wanderi, & Ondigi, 2012; Mapelu & Jumah, 2013). This study therefore endeavors to establish if there is connection between the high employee turnover and career salience in the hotel industry here in Kenya.

A study by Ondieki and Kung'u (2013) on Kenya's hospitality industry indicates that, about 64 percent of jobs are either semi-skilled or unskilled. This comprises of about 6 percent in managerial, 8 percent in supervisory, 22 percent with craft while the remaining are unskilled. The, low skills profile of jobs results to low status, low pay and poor working conditions in tourism and hospitality industry. Contrary to this, managers in the hospitality industry value practical and operational skills as well as on-job training, which may be acquired easily within the workplace. The ILO (2001) report indicated that, a formal qualification from new entrants is not highly regarded within the hospitality industry (Thomann, 2011).

Organizations depend on committed employees to create and maintain competitive advantage and achieve superior performance (Akintayo, 2010). These employees provide the human capital which has become the most critical asset for many organizations (Hunjra *et al.*, 2010). Employees' commitment to an organization has become a great area of interest to both practitioners and researchers. It has emerged as a promising area of research because it is one of the factors that could lead to healthy organizational climate, increased

morale, motivation and productivity (Adebayo, 2006).

From the organizational perspective, labour turnover represents a significant direct cost in terms of recruiting, poor production practices and reduced standards as well as high replacement and training costs (Mapelu & Jumah, 2013). According to Ongori (2007) other costs associated with labour turnover include separation costs (exit interviews and severance pay), recruitment costs (advertising and search fees), selection costs (interview and reference checking), hiring costs (induction and initial training), relocation expenses, uniforms and lost productivity costs associated with both the unfilled vacancy and the learning curve associated with the new employee. Indirect costs however are associated with decreased levels of employee motivation, absenteeism, tardiness leading to customer dissatisfaction and ultimately customer defection.

The hotel industry in Kenya ranks among the highest in employee turnover as has been indicated by perpetual recruitment exercises in the firms within the industry (Kyule, 2014). Mapelu and Jumah (2013) also contend that turnover in the hotel industry has been shown to be unacceptably high averaging up to 200 or 300 percent per annum although substantial variations exist between different establishments. Mapelu and Jumah (2013) further posits that employee turnover in the hotel industry is problematic and can be dysfunctional. There cannot be a cohesive successful team, if the team members are always changing. Very few firms in the hospitality industry take more than three months without carrying out recruitment of new staff at all levels. Low experience at workplace has also been observed and blamed on staff turnover (Kyule, 2014). Employees turnover is very costly to organizations because of the many cost involved in hiring and training new employees (Ongori, 2007).

The hospitality industry is among the leading sectors in the Kenyan economy. The tourism and

hotel industry is one of the pillars of the Kenya's Vision 2030. A report by WTTC (Kyule, 2014) indicated that in Kenya, the hospitality sector alone catered for over 509,000 jobs in 2007, a ten percent of total employment. By 2017, it is estimated that the industry will cater for about 628 000 jobs. Despite such impressive figures, this industry has been faced with the challenge of high labour turnover for a long period (Ondieki & Kung'u, 2013). Kyule (2014) posits that the high potential of this industry is threatened by a number of factors, the most significant being employee turnover.

### Research Hypothesis

H<sub>A1</sub>: There is a positive significant relationship between Work Life Balance and Career Salience in 5 Star Hotels in Kenya.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### THEORETICAL REVIEW

The study of work-life conflict has been predominantly approached from the role theory perspective (Sikora *et al.*, 2007) and utilizes the concepts of role conflict, role overload, and role interference. Role conflict occurs when the collective demands of individuals' various roles are in some sense incompatible so that participation in one role is made more difficult by participation in the other role ((Veiga, 2009). Role conflict could include role overload as well as role interference. Role overload occurs when multiple demands exceed resources. Role-interference could occur in either direction, that is, requirements from the work role could interfere with the other life roles; similarly, the requirements of non-work roles may, in turn, impact on individuals' work responsibilities (Filimon, 2015). Furthermore, role conflict could also be construed in terms of the objective and psychological impacts that are experienced (Riley, 2007). Individuals experience objective conflict when dealing with the everyday practicalities associated with limited time and conflicting schedules, while the psychological impacts refer to

the perceptual aspect of feeling overloaded, highly stressed and overwhelmed by multiple commitments (Biddle, 2013). This theory supports work life balance in the sense that employees have an increased concern about balancing their work and personal lives as a result of a world of work characterized by change and increased demands on time, energy and work commitment (Koenig & Eagly, 2014).

### EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Work life balance is a concept including proper prioritizing between "work" (career and ambition) and lifestyle (health, pleasure, leisure, family and spiritual development/meditation) (Goyal & Babel, 2015). Work life Balance does not mean an equal balance. Trying to schedule an equal number of hours for each of various work and personal activities is usually unrewarding and unrealistic. Life is and should be more fluid than that. The best individual work life balance will vary over time, often on a daily basis. The right balance today will probably be different tomorrow. The right balance when one is single will be different when one is married, or if have children; when starting a new career versus when nearing retirement (Ahemad & Chaudhary, 2013). There is no perfect, one-size fits all, balance that one should be striving for. The best work-life balance is different for each of us because we all have different priorities and different lives (Figueroa, 2016).

Employees have an increased concern about balancing their work and personal lives (Lewis, Gambles & Rapoport, 2007). This is the result of a world of work characterized by change and increased demands on time, energy and work commitment (Cartwright & Holmes, 2006). Studies in the area of work-life interaction have so far mainly concentrated on the conflict between people's work and other life roles. It is generally accepted that there is a clear link between work-life conflict and work-life balance, as attaining work-life balance is dependent on managing or reducing the conflict between various roles. From the literature



referring specifically to work-life balance, the concept could generally be described as successfully balancing the needs arising from work and other life roles (Beauregard & Henry, 2009).

Study by Filimon (2015) shows that the concern is not limited to a specific group of employees. He observed that in industrial countries employees across different organizational levels and with different family structures are concerned with achieving a better balance between working life, family obligations, leisure and socializing. An inability to create a balance between work and personal life could influence employees' effectiveness and productivity in the workplace thus affecting their career salience (Chiang, Birtch & Kwan, 2010).

Ishaya *et al.* (2008) in their study; Predicting work-family conflict via perceived involvement and overload, observed that conflict occurs when either time devoted to the requirements of one role, or strain from participating in a role or finally, specific behaviors required by a role, make it difficult to fulfill the requirements of another. Moreover, conflict intensifies when roles are salient, central to the individual's self-concept or when there are negative consequences for not meeting role demands. Role conflicts and failure to meet role demands negatively impacts on career salience.

Katie (2011) studied how Work-life programs enhance employee retention and proposed that in addition to time-based conflict, social identity should be considered concurrently. He found that as time spent in the work role and the identity that an individual derives from the work role became incongruent, the conflict increased. Furthermore, individuals who have strong identities with either role, or significant identities in both the work and non-work roles, experience more role conflict. Shaheen (2012) did a study on Type A behavior and work-family conflict in professional women in Pakistan. He concluded that certain job characteristics were strongly correlated with work-

family conflict. These included the number of hours worked, irregular starting times, frequent and uncontrollable overtime work, an inflexible work schedule and physically or psychologically demanding work. On the other hand, Armstrong and Taylor (2014) found that organisational values, associated with high performance and involvement, created an environment that may make it more difficult for employees to achieve or even wish to achieve balance in their work and life roles.

Apart from the job characteristics and organizational values mentioned above, (Potgieter & Barnard, 2010) stated that individual variables could also influence work-life balance. These included age, sex, qualifications, pay, professional aspirations and family status as well as attitudes, expectations and priorities assigned to the various roles by both partners. Ahmad (2008) found that the greater number of roles that individuals have, the more likely that they will experience high role overload. Amongst these, married individuals with children or elder care experienced the highest conflict. Reddy (2010) in his study, work-life balance among married women employees established that professional women in households where both spouses pursue careers did indeed experience work-life role conflict. Their experienced conflict originated from their participation and value expectations being mainly concentrated in their work roles, whilst they felt more committed to some of their other life roles. Whitehead's study (2008) concurs in that the respondents did feel pressure because of the conflict ("role conflict was dynamic and a constant challenge") but it occurred at different levels and the minimum level of comfort varied for individuals

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study adopted explanatory research design and followed a cross-sectional survey as the main objective was to establish the antecedents of career salience in five star hotels in Nairobi, Kenya. Explanatory survey design allowed the use of inferential statistics to determine relationship

between the variables in the model. The study focused on five star hotels in Nairobi since over 65% of all five star hotels in Kenya have their heads office in Nairobi therefore five star hotels in Nairobi County is fair representation of Kenya. The unit of analysis in this study was five star rated hotels in Nairobi City County, Kenya while the hotel staff was the unit of observation. The total population for this study was 4,465 employees and managers of five star rated hotels in Nairobi City County, Kenya.

This study adopted stratified sampling because the population of interest was heterogeneous in nature. Therefore, the desired sample size was 196 respondents. The study used structured questionnaires as the main instrument for collecting primary data from respondents and in some instances document analysis was used as source of secondary data. The descriptive statistics that were used in this study include frequency, percentages, mean and standard deviation. The study used descriptive analysis to provide the overview on how the respondents responded to various statements in the questionnaire. The study used both Pearson correlation and Multiple Linear Regression Analysis to establish the relationship between the study variables. Linear regression analysis was used to estimate the relationship between the dependent (Career Salience) and the antecedents of career salience, and provided a means of objectivity in assessing the degree and nature of the relationship between the dependent and independent variables. Further, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was carried out to test the significance of the overall model, while also testing hypotheses of the study. The study was guided by a model of the form:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \varepsilon$$

Where:

$Y$  = Represents the dependent variable (Career Salience)

$\beta_0$  = The Constant, the value of  $Y$  when all  $X$  values are zero.

$\beta_i$  = The regression coefficients ( $i = 1, 2, 3$  and  $4$ ). The regression coefficients indicate the relative

importance of the independent variable in prediction of the dependent variable.

$X_i$  = Work Life Balance

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The total sample for the study was 196 respondents, therefore the study administered 196 questionnaires to the randomly selected respondents from all the selected 5 five star hotel in Kenya. The number of the questionnaires that were completely filled and returned was 160 whereas 36 were not returned. This represented a response rate of 82% which was adequate in line with the proposition of Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) for posited that a response of above 50% was desirable for a descriptive study. Similarly, Babbie (2004) asserted that return rates of 50% are acceptable to analyse and publish, 60% is good and 70% is very good.

### Descriptive Statistics of Work life Balance and Career Salience

The objective of the study was to determine the influence of work life balance on career salience in the hotel industry in Kenya. Descriptive results for this objective are presented in Table 1. The study sought to find out whether there was work life balance among the 5 star hotels in Kenya. To measure work life balance the study sought to find out whether respondents were satisfied with the working hours of their hotel. From the findings presented in table 1, the results showed that 38.8% and 33.8% of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed with the statement. These findings were also confirmed by the mean of 3.96. The study findings further showed that 40.0% and 30.6% of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed that they got enough time for my family after work. These findings implied that there was work life balance among the hotel industry.

The study also sought to establish whether respondents were able to balance my work and my life. The findings showed that the statement had a

mean response of 3.90 implying that majority of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed with the statement. The findings similarly showed that 40.0% and 35.6% of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed respectively that most often they think or worry about work even when they are not actually at work or travelling to work. These findings imply poor work life balance. Worrying about work all the time inhibits one from focusing on other aspects of life that matters besides work.

The study was also interested in whether; hotels took initiative to manage work life of its employees. The findings revealed that 36.9% and 37.5% strongly agreed and agreed respectively. The results further showed that the statement had a mean of 3.98 which confirmed that majority of the respondents agreed with the statement. On whether respondents work for long hours or overtime and even on holidays, 38.8% and 36.9% of the respondent agreed and strongly agreed. The mean of 4.06 also confirmed that majority of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed that they often miss out quality time with my family and friends because of work pressure. The responses on those statements further confirm lack of work life balance for most employees in the hotel industry.

The study also sought to establish whether policy for work life management helped to increase productivity of the organization. The results showed 40.6% and 36.2% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively. The statement had

a mean of 4.06 which further confirmed that majority of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed. On whether the leave policy of the company was not satisfactory, the results revealed that majority of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed as shown by the mean of 4.11.

The results also showed that majority of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed that they had a good career prospects in the hotel industry since the statement had a mean of 3.97. The results further showed 43.1% and 32.5% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively that they had very flexible working hours that allow me time personal life. The results further showed that the statement had a mean of 4.06. The findings also showed that all the statement had a standard deviation of close to 1 which implied small variation between the response and the mean.

This finding underpins the importance the work life balance on career salience. The findings further implied that employees are usually comfortable with jobs that provide good opportunities to pursue other life issues other than work related. The study findings concurs with those of Ishaya *et al.* (2008) who observed that conflict occurs when either time devoted to the requirements of one role, or strain from participating in a role or finally, specific behaviors required by a role, make it difficult to fulfill the requirements of another.

**Table 1: Descriptive Results on Work life Balance and Career Salience**

Statements	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std Dev
I am satisfied with the working hours of my hotel	6.2%	3.1%	18.1%	33.8%	38.8%	3.96	1.12
I get enough time for my family after work	2.5%	6.2%	20.6%	40.0%	30.6%	3.90	0.99
I am able to balance my work and my life	5.6%	1.9%	20.0%	41.9%	30.6%	3.90	1.04
Most often I think or worry about work even when am not actually at work or travelling to work	4.4%	2.5%	17.5%	40.0%	35.6%	4.00	1.02
My organization takes initiative to manage work life of its employees	3.8%	6.2%	15.6%	37.5%	36.9%	3.98	1.06
I work for long hours or overtime and even on holidays	1.9%	6.2%	16.2%	36.9%	38.8%	4.04	0.99



Statements	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std Dev
I often miss out quality time with my family and friends because of work pressure	2.5%	7.5%	13.1%	35.0%	41.9%	4.06	1.04
Policy for work life management helps to increase productivity of the organization	3.8%	4.4%	15.0%	36.2%	40.6%	4.06	1.04
The leave policy of the company is not satisfactory	3.8%	3.1%	16.2%	32.5%	44.4%	4.11	1.03
I think I have a good career prospects in the hotel	5.0%	6.2%	13.8%	36.9%	38.1%	3.97	1.11
I have very flexible working hours that allow me time personal life	4.4%	3.8%	16.2%	32.5%	43.1%	4.06	1.07
<b>Average</b>						<b>4.00</b>	<b>1.04</b>

### Correlation Tests Results

The study further used correlation analysis to test the association between work life balance and

career salience in Kenya Hotel industries. Table 2 contained the correlation results for association between work life balance and career salience.

**Table 2: Correlation Results for Work life Balance and Career Salience**

		Work life Balance	Career Salience
Work life Balance	Pearson Correlation	1	0.424
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	160	160
Career Salience	Pearson Correlation	0.424	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	<b>N</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>160</b>

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results of correlation analysis also indicated that Work life Balance had a strong positive and significant correlation with career salience in 5 star hotels in Kenya ( $r=0.424$ ,  $p=0.000$ ). The findings implied that improvement in Work life Balance would result in increase in career salience. The study findings concurs with those of Ishaya *et al.* (2008) who observed that conflict occurs when either time devoted to the requirements of one role, or strain from participating in a role or finally, specific behaviors required by a role, make it difficult to fulfill the requirements of another.

### Regression Results for Work Life Balance and Career Salience

The objective of the study was to determine the influence of work life balance on career salience in the hotel industry in Kenya. Regression results for this objective are presented in Table 3 and 4. The results showed that work life balance had a significant association with career salience in five star hotel in Kenya ( $R=0.424$ ). The results further revealed that work life balance accounted for 17.9 percent of the variation in career salience.

**Table 3: Model Summary for Work Life Balance and Career Salience**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.424	.179	.174	.42255

a. Predictors: (Constant), Worklife Balance

The results of ANOVA in table 4 indicated that work life balance was a significant predictor variable of career salience in Hotel industry in Kenya. This was indicated by the F-statistics results (F=34.546,

p=0.000) indicating that the model used to link the independent variable and dependent variable was statistically significant.

**Table 4: ANOVA Results for Work Life Balance and Career Salience**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	6.168	1	6.168	34.546	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	28.210	158	.179		
	Total	34.378	159			

a. Dependent Variable: Career Salience

b. Predictors: (Constant), Work life Balance

The regression coefficient of work life balance was at ( $\beta=0.324$ ,  $p=0.000$ ,  $<0.05$ ) showed a statistically significant relationship between work life balance and career salience in Hotel industry in Kenya. Hence the study findings concluded that work life

balance significantly affects career salience in Hotel industry in Kenya. The regression coefficient of 0.324 obtained in this case implies that a unit increase in work life balance would lead to 0.324 units increase in career salience.

**Table 5: Coefficients Results for Work life Balance and Career Salience**

	$\beta$	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	2.564	0.223		11.495	0.000
Work life Balance	0.324	0.055	0.424	5.878	0.000

a Dependent Variable: Career Salience

The results of correlation analysis also indicated that Work life Balance had a strong positive and significant correlation with career salience in 5 star hotels in Kenya. The findings implied that improvement in Work life Balance would result in increase in career salience. The findings of regression analysis revealed a positive statistically significant relationship between work life balance and career salience in Hotel industry in Kenya. The study concluded that work life balance positively and significantly affects career salience in Hotel industry in Kenya. The study failed to reject  $H_{A1}$  at  $\alpha=0.05$  and concluded that there is a positive significant relationship between work life balance and career salience in 5 star hotels in Kenya.

The study findings concurred with those of Ishaya *et al.* (2008) who observed that conflict occurs when either time devoted to the requirements of one role, or strain from participating in a role or finally, specific behaviors required by a role, make it

difficult to fulfill the requirements of another. Similarly, Katie (2011) studied how Work-life programs enhance employee retention and proposed that in addition to time-based conflict, social identity should be considered concurrently.

### CONCLUSION

The study further concluded that employees working in organisations where priority is also given to their other aspects of life other than work commitments feel more satisfied and engaged in their work compared to employees that struggle with work life balance management. Therefore work life balance is an essential component in ensuring career salience among employees.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommended that companies should have adequate work life balance policy that include leave days, provision for maternity leave that would go a long way in ensuring people continues with their normal life besides work. The best work-life

balance is different for each of employees because we all have different priorities and different lives therefore work life balance should in a manner that accommodates everyone.

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