INFLUENCE OF WORKLIFE CULTURE ON PERFORMANCE OF MIDDLE LEVEL MANAGERS IN COMMISSIONS IN KENYA

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed at establishing the influence of work-life culture on performance of middle level managers in Commissions in Kenya. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. A population of 5,679 was targeted in the 13 Constitutional Commissions in Kenya. Purposive sampling technique was used to obtain the respondents. A sample size 200 middle level managers was selected from the constitutional commissions in Kenya. Primary data was collected through a questionnaire and structured personal interviews. Drop and pick method was used to administer copies of the questionnaire. Secondary data was obtained through document analysis. Descriptive statistical tools including frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation were used. Qualitative data was analyzed thematically along the objectives of the study. Inferential statistical tools such as correlation analysis and regression analysis were used. ANOVA test was done to determine the statistical significance of each variable. The findings were presented in tables. The findings revealed a weak but positive relationship between performance and worklife culture. It was established that the worklife culture in commissions does not support worklife balance. The study established that officers who work for long hours are seen to be more dedicated. It was also established that a culture of long hours would result in poor concentration and low productivity. The study therefore concluded that a value system, assumptions and beliefs that support worklife balance greatly enhance employees worklife balance. The study recommended that policy makers (commissioners) in Commissions in Kenya need to show commitment to worklife balance by using worklife balance initiatives and by use of positive daily discourse in support of worklife balance.

Key words : Worklife balance, Worklife culture, performance, middle level managers

INTRODUCTION

A study carried out in Singapore revealed that long working hours had become the norm for Singaporeans, especially those who are just starting out in middle management positions as competition is high alongside ideologies of meritocracy and pragmatism which have seeped into their life since young (Chua, 2003). Increasingly, the distinction between work and non-work time has gotten blurred and understandings of non-work time have also come to be seen as inseparable from that of work time (Weida, 2010). Work-life culture include as the set of beliefs and values shared within an organization regarding maintaining a healthy and sustainable work-life balance. A supportive work-life culture is one where employees take up flexible working, such as teleworking or working flexible hours and not suffer career penalties. Visser, & Williams ,2017) note that work-life balance is one of those areas where public sector organizations claim to be most progressive, however a peek beneath those superficial commitments revealed what is seen is a classic rhetoric-reality gap. They noted that there was unwritten policy that employees who worked 12 hour shifts were eligible for career progression, while those who did 8 hour shifts to fit around family commitments were not. In the worst cases, managers appear to want to stamp out any modest deviation from the norm and become standard-bearers for inflexibility.

In Nigeria a study carried out by Babatunde, (2013) found out that participants explained that their lack of work life balance was not solely originating from their workplace but a dynamic interactions caused by the culture in Nigeria that gives little recognition to work- life balance policies and practices in organizations. Work-life balance for the individual is a function of both individual and organizational actions (Mayerhofer, Schmidt, Hartmann, & Bendl, 2011). Saleem and Abbasi (2015) explain that an organization's various expectations and demands such as working for longer hours , working in the evenings or even on the weekends causes employees to sacrifice their family obligations for the sake of job, this negatively affects employees work life balance .

Statement of the problem

Buchanan, Denyer, Jaina, Kelliher, Moore, Parry and Pilbeam (2013) reported that 80% of the surveyed middle level managers reported that they were always chasing deadlines and 83% noted that they often arrived early and left late. This culture of long hours and a constant struggle to maintain a balance between work and personal life can have serious implications on the life of middle level managers working in commissions. As a result of the long hours employees start suffering from stress and depression, their performance falls towards the bottom and then companies will fire them for reasons including "under-performance"(Bharat, 2008).

Kalaiselvi,Muruganandam, and Suganya, (2010) agree with Parries et.al (2008) and note that the long hours that extreme jobs entail have predictable consequences for work–life balance, and can reduce individual performance and increase the incidence of mistakes among employees working in commissions. Sessions of burn out, poor concentration and frequent errors hinder better service provision and erode public trust in these oversight institutions.

Commissions have made several achievements in the following fields; enhancement of public participation, implementation of the system of devolved governance, enactment of key legislation required to implement the constitution, enhanced disclosure to members of the general public of key government programs and activities at national and county levels among others (CIC Report 2015). However despite their achievements there is no research that has examined the relationship between worklife culture and performance in commissions in Kenya. A study by Beauregard and Henry (2009) concentrated on making the link between work-life balance practices

and organizational performance, they proposed research into whether performance is enhanced by use of work-life programs only when levels of management support are high, or when the organizational climate is supportive of work-life issues. It is against this background that this research was undertaken in order to address the research gap and better provide a better understanding of the relationship between worklife culture and performance of middle level managers in Commissions in Kenya.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the paper was to establish the influence of worklife culture on performance of middle level managers in commissions in Kenya.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Worklife culture

According to Thompson, Beauvais and Lyness (1999) a work-/family/life culture is defined as "the shared assumptions, beliefs, and values regarding the extent to which an organization supports and values the integration of employees" work and family lives'. Now that organizations already invest time, money and energy in developing and implementing worklife/family programs in order to get the maximize productivity output, they should establish a supportive workfamily/life culture to encourage employees adapt these policies and programs, (Wei, Yilli & Tian, 2013). Schein (1985) explain that organizational culture is a set of implicit assumptions held by members of a group that determines how the group behaves and responds to its environment. DeLong and Fahey (2000) agree further expound that at its deepest level, culture consists of core values and beliefs that are embedded tacit preferences about what the organization should strive to attain and how it should do it .These tacit values and beliefs determine the more observable organizational norms and practices that consist of rules, expectations,

rituals and routines, stories and myths, symbols, power structures, organizational structures, and control systems (Bloor & Dawson, 1994). Professional work-group cultures, create barriers to improved work-life balance, (Wheatley, 2012).This is emphasized by Kirby and Krone (2002) who explain that an examination of workplace conversations on the use of work-family initiatives revealed that co-workers complain about "picking up the slack" for those using family leave. This complaints discourage use of such leave. They argue that this daily discourse can reinforce or undermine work-family initiatives as this daily discourse is part of the workplace culture. Workplace culture can be either a supportive or inhibitive environment for implementing work-life balance policies (Kirby & Krone, 2002).

It is believed that negative career consequences (such as fewer opportunities for promotion and a lesser likelihood of receiving other organisational rewards) may arise when a lack of physical presence in the workplace is thought to be associated with a lack of commitment to the organisation (Thompson et.al 1999). Allen and Russell (1999) agree with Thompson et.al and note that employees who utilized family-friendly policies were found to be allocated fewer organisational rewards, including advancement opportunities and salary increases, than employees who did not use the policies. Many flexible working programs result in a reduction in pay (for example part time work or career breaks) which low paid employees in particular, simply cannot afford, (Kodz, Harper & Dench, 2002). The perception that using work-life balance practices will have a negative impact on career prospects appears to be a powerful demotivator for employees' use of these practices (Kodz et al., 2002). This perception is reinforced by organizational cultures unsupportive of work-life balance issues. Moreover, use of flexible working arrangements by women can have severe career implications, reducing opportunities for training, promotion and associated benefits such as increased pay (Wheatley 2012). Beauregard, Alexandra and

Lesley (2009) also explain the same , they note that fear of harming career prospects may discourage employees from using the work-life practices on offer, which in turn may nullify some of the intended beneficial effects of those practices. Visser and Williams (2017) note that work-life balance is one of those areas where public sector organizations claim to be most progressive, however a peek beneath those superficial commitments revealed what is seen is a classic rhetoric-reality gap. They noted that there was unwritten policy that employees who worked 12 hour shifts were eligible for career progression, while those who did 8 hour shifts to fit around family commitments were not. In the worst cases, managers appear to want to stamp out any modest deviation from the norm and become standard-bearers for inflexibility

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. A population of 5,679 was targeted in the 13 Constitutional Commissions in Kenya. Purposive sampling was used to obtain a sample of constitutional commissions. Kothari (2004) notes that purposive sampling is considered desirable when the universe happens to be small and a known characteristic of it is to be studied intensively. The list of middle level managers was obtained from the HR departments in the respective Commission. 200 respondents formed the unit of analysis in this study. This were the middle level managers representing various professions as various professions are affected by work life balance differently. Karasek

(1979) explained that jobs with different characteristics have different demand and control requirements and hence have different psychological effects. Primary data was collected through a questionnaire and structured personal interviews. Fifteen middle level managers from different professions in each of the thirteen commissions were sampled making a total of 195. According to Kinman and McDowall (2009) work-life balance issues differ by occupational context and thus worklife balance issues should be addressed by examining the work-life interface in different occupational contexts. Data was collected, coded and analyzed using SPSS. The findings were presented in form of tables and discussions and interpretation of the same given.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

A total of 195 questionnaires were administered to the middle level managers in Commissions in Kenya. 156 were adequately filled making an 80% response rate which is adequate for analysis. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) argue that a response rate of 50% is adequate for analysis.

Descriptive Statistics

Respondents were asked to indicate the average number of working hours in a week, The findings were indicated in Table 1; a majority 55.1% reported that they worked for 41-50 hours in a week; 30.1% reported that they worked for 30-40 hours per week; 13.5 % reported that they worked for 51-70 hours per week; while 1.3% reported they worked for more than 71 hours per week.

Table 1: Average number of working hours in a week

	Frequency	Percent
41-50 hours	86	55.1
30-40 hours	47	30.1
51-70 hours	21	13.5
71 and ABOVE	2	1.3
Total	**156**	**100.0**

Respondents were asked to explain how a culture of long hours affected performance, The findings were indicated in Table 2; 42.1% (n-51) reported that a culture of long hours led to fatigue; low productivity 24.8% (n= 30); health complications 12.4% (n=15); loss of concentration 12.4% (n=15); inefficiency 8.3% (n=10).

Table 2: How a culture of long hours affects performance

	Frequency	Percent
Leads to fatigue	51	42.1%
Low productivity	30	24.8%
Health complications	15	12.4%
Loss of concentration	15	12.4%
Inefficiency	10	8.3%
Total	**121**	**100.0**

According to study findings in Table 3 respondents disagreed that the organisational culture supports employees work-life balance as indicated by a mean of 2.90 and standard deviation of 1.148. Respondents disagreed that using flexible working schedules for example part time working would have a negative impact on their careers this is shown by a mean of 2.29 and a standard deviation of 1.266. Respondents were undecided when asked if people who work overtime or on holidays are perceived to be more dedicated this is shown by a mean of 3.10 and a standard deviation of 1.343; however a majority majority 42.3% (n=66) (37 agreed and 29 strongly agreed) that people who work overtime or on holidays are perceived to be more dedicated. Respondents disagreed that use of flexible working practices resulted in a reduction in pay as indicated by a mean of 2.01 and a standard deviation of 1.087. Respondents were undecided when asked if employees in the organization are encouraged to balance their work and life this is indicated by a mean of 3.08 and a standard deviation of 1.075.

Respondents disagreed that employees were encouraged to make suggestions for improving worklife balance as indicated by a means of 2.72 and a standard deviation of 1.087. Respondents were undecided when asked if the general atmosphere is such that taking time off for family reasons such as parental or dependants leave was accepted regardless of the persons position in the company, this was as indicated by a mean of 3.28 and a standard deviation of 1.254, however a majority 48% (n=75) agreed that the general atmosphere was such that taking time off for family reasons such as parental or dependants leave is accepted regardless of the persons position in the company. Respondents agreed that workers who make use of work-life balance practises suffer negative perceptions from colleagues and supervisors, this was indicated by a mean of 2.96 and a standard deviation of 1.118. From the measurements in Table 3 we concluded that indicators used to operationalize the variable had an approximate average mean of 2.79. This meant that most respondents strongly disagreed.

Table 3: Responses on influence of Worklife culture

	1(%)	2(%)	3(%)	4(%)	5(%)	Mean	Std. Deviation

Organization Culture supports employee's work-life balance efforts.	26(16.7)	24(15.4)	55(35.3)	42(26.9)	9(5.8)	2.90	1.148
I believe that using flexible working schedules would have a negative impact on career prospects	54(34.6)	45(28.8)	25(16.0)	21(13.5)	11(7.1)	2.29	1.266
People who work overtime or on holidays are perceived to be more dedicated.	24(15.4)	32(20.5)	34(21.8)	37(23.7)	29(18.6)	3.10	1.343
Use of flexible working practices result in a reduction in pay.	66(42.3)	44(28.2)	29(18.6)	13(8.3)	4(2.6)	2.01	1.087
Employees in this organization are encouraged to balance their work and life.	14(9.0)	25(16.0)	69(44.2)	31(19.9)	17(10.9)	3.08	1.075
Employees are encouraged to make suggestions on improving work life balance.	24(15.4)	41(26.3)	51(32.7)	34(21.8)	6(3.8)	2.72	1.087
The general atmosphere is such that taking time off for family reasons such as parental or dependents leave is accepted	19(12.2)	21(13.5)	41(26.3)	47(30.1)	28(17.9)	3.28	1.254
Workers who make use of work-life practices do not suffer negative perceptions from colleagues and supervisors.	20(12.8)	26(16.7)	64(41.0)	32(20.5)	14(9.0)	2.96	1.118

Valid N =156

Respondents were asked to explain whether they felt that colleagues who used worklife programs were getting away with less work; 82.7% of the respondents reported that they did not feel that colleagues who used worklife balance programs (for example partime work, annual leave) were getting away with less work. 17.3% felt that colleagues were getting away with less work. Respondents who felt that colleagues got away with less work were further asked to explain why they felt so; 3.2% (n=5) felt that their colleagues did not meet the minimum 40 hours working hours. Respondents who felt that colleagues using worklife balance programs did not get away with less work were further asked to explain why they felt so. Their responses are indicated in Table 4. It was reported that colleagues still meet their performance

targets 56.6% (n=43); colleagues still worked for the minimum 40 hours as they could make up for the time later 23.7% (n=18) ; colleagues worked at their optimum and were productive 19.7% (15).

Table 4: Why colleagues using worklife balance programs do not get away with less work

	Frequency	Percent
Colleagues still meet their performance targets	43	56.6%
Colleagues still worked for the minimum 40 hours as they could make up for the time later	18	23.7%
Colleagues worked at their optimum and were productive	15	19.7%
Total	**76**	**100.0**

Respondents were asked if the organization culture allowed men to use worklife balance programs, for example, paternity leave; partime; work counseling; 85.9% of the respondents agreed that the organizational culture allows men to use work-life balance programs without any victimization; 14.1 % reported that the organization victimizes men for using such programs. Respondents were further asked to state which worklife balance programs men were likely to use 92% (n=81) reported that men would mostly use paternity leave; 4.6% (n=4) reported that men would use part-time work arrangements while 3.4% (n=3) reported that they would use counseling. Respondents were further asked to explain why they thought men face victimization in the use of worklife balance programs

(n= 4) reported that it was a matter of negative perception.

Regression Analysis

Table 5 provided the information needed to predict performance of middle level managers from worklife culture. Worklife culture contributes significantly to the model, for every unit increase in worklife culture there was a corresponding increase in performance of middle level managers by 42.9%.

The regression equation is presented as follows;
Liner equation
$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_2 X_2 + \varepsilon$
$Y = 2.119 + 0.429 X_2 + 0.54274$
Where Y = Performance and X_2 = Worklife culture.

Table 5: Coefficients Model of worklife culture

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.119	.196		10.820	.000
	Worklife Culture	.403	.069	.429	5.888	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Performance

ANOVA of worklife culture against performance of middle level managers

From the findings in Table 6; At 0.05 level of significance the ANOVA test indicated that in this model the independent variable namely; Worklife culture is statistically significant in predicting performance of middle level managers as indicated by significance value=0.000 which was less than 0.05 level of significance (p=0.000<0.05). An F statistic of 34.668 indicated that the model was significant. This was further supported by the F-Test. The F-calculated was F (1,154) = 34.668 while the F-tabulated at 0.05 significance level was F (1,154) = 3.9025. Comparing the two, F-calculated was greater than F-tabulated (21.610 > 3.9025) , which meant that the alternate hypothesis that states that worklife culture has a positive significant influence on performance of middle level managers in commissions in Kenya is true and is therefore accepted.

Table 6: ANOVA Table of worklife culture

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	10.212	1	10.212	34.668	.000[b]
1	Residual	45.364	154	.295		
	Total	55.576	155			

a. Dependent Variable: Performance
b. Predictors: (Constant), Worklife Culture

CONCLUSIONS

The study established that the worklife culture influenced performance of middle level managers in commission in Kenya. It was therefore concluded that a value system, assumptions and beliefs that support worklife balance will greatly enhance employees worklife balance Leaders in strategic positions have the power to influence, shape and show commitment to worklife balance. Introduction of worklife balance polices without a supportive culture will not assist middle level managers in their efforts to achieve worklife balance and programs will remain largely unutilised. Support to worklife balance ensures that there are no career penalties for officers who use worklife balance programs. It was also established that Commissions need to stop equating presenteesm – face time to commitment and instead draw attention to achievement of set performance targets.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In regard to worklife culture, the study recommended that policy makers (commissioners) in Commissions in Kenya need to show commitment to worklife balance by using worklife balance initiatives and by use of positive daily discourse in support of worklife balance. Negative comments against officers proceeding on leave or officers using availed worklife initiatives will create a culture that negates worklife balance. The study also recommends that commissions need to include worklife balance in their performance indicators and aim to draw attention to achievement of targets and not face time. Commissions will therefore need to come up with clear indicators that measure worklife balance. Use of worklife initiatives can be one of the indicators. Heads of departments should report on measures that they have put in place to support employees efforts for worklife balance, they should keep records of flexi-arrangements in place signed by employees reporting to them. They should also keep records of employees utilization of allocated leave days and should be called upon to explain why officers reporting to them are not proceeding on leave (if that be the case) and are therefore forced to forego their leave days. These measures will

create a positive worklife culture. It is also recommended that commissions frequently invite worklife experts and hold talks on worklife balance, its benefit to commissions, employees and their life out of the office. Officers should not be penalised for using any worklife balance initiatives, officers on any flexi-time arrangements should have a fair and equal chance of promotion or career advancement of any form.

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