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EFFECT OF BENEFITS PROGRAMS ON EMPLOYEE RETENTION: A CASE OF SAFARICOM PLC

Wayayi, L.,^{1*} & Ogolla, D.²

^{1*} Candidate, Certified Human Resource Professional(CHRP), College of Human Resource Management, Kenya

²Ph.D, Lecturer, Kenya Methodist University [KEMU], Nairobi, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

The general objective of the study was to examine whether benefit programs have an impact on the rates of retention of Safaricom PLC's employees, with a target population of 249 staff in management. The study was guided by three theories namely; Social exchange theory, Herzberg's Two-Factor theory and Adam's equity theory. The sample size comprised of 120 staff in management at Safaricom PLC carefully selected using Yamane formula for sampling from a population of 249 staff in management. The study findings therefore based on the four objectives found a positive correlation between each of the independent and dependent variables with health benefits having Pearson correlation coefficient of $r=0.781$, $P<0.05$, work-life balance at $r=0.713$, $P<0.05$, Employee assistance programs at $r=0.678$, $P<0.05$ and leadership programs at $r=0.763$, $P<0.05$. All the study variables also had significant results $p<0.05$ showing that the benefits programs implemented by Safaricom positively influence employee retention. The value of R Square is 0.772. This meant that 77.2% of the variance in employee retention at Safaricom PLC can be explained by; health benefits, work-life balance, employee assistance programs and leadership programs. It also recommended that there ought to be a comprehensible communication among employees and senior management for an effectual employee benefits program policy. To completely comprehend the situation at the Safaricom PLC, the study recommended future studies should focus on 22.8% of other variables not covered by this study to explain employee retention at Safaricom PLC.

Key Words: Health Benefits, Work-Life Balance, Employee Assistance, Leadership Programs, Employee Retention

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INTRODUCTION

Due to globalization and competitions facing companies, organizations should create enabling work environment which attracts and retains employees on their jobs (Mitchell & Lee, 2011). Companies can have provisions that account for balance between the life and work of the employee and provide adequate medical insurance. These adjustments encourage employee commitment and engagement at the workplace, in addition to fostering motivation and a positive attitude among the workforce for a profitable business. Programs for retention of employees benefit an organization in various ways, such as the positive portrayal of a company's image (brand). This is because organizations that rarely recruit new employees are seen as having high retention rates for their employees, and therefore attract highly talented candidates. This cuts expenditure on advertising for replacements, headhunting for qualified candidates, training new recruits and the time wasted while waiting for a new hire to adapt to the way the business operates.

In Kenya, some of the employee benefits such as relocation allowance among others are subject to taxation, but disability and education allowances are special cases that are exempted from tax. Two authors specifically Siggler (2009) and Gillespie (2010) singled out some examples of benefit packages that are either fully sponsored by the company, or that employees co-pay together with the employer namely health plans, retirement plans, group life, disability income, profit sharing among others. Benefit programs primarily serve as contingency plans for employees during inflation or to enable staff to withstand instances of economic hardships together with their families. This helps an organization to enjoy the benefits of engaged staff. Benefit vendors use different designs for their plans, with some giving discounts on programs for skill enhancement of the staff such as boat camp, seminars, workshops and training programs that require employees to enroll for an entire year. Employers save money on training in such cases where a vendor sponsors training partially or in full.

A simple indicator called an attrition rate can be used to explain an organization's retention of its employees. For instance, if a company has an attrition rate of 100%, it suggests that the organization succeeded in retaining 100% of its employees within specified time duration and vice-versa). Successful retention of employees is not a strategy, rather it is a result of good workplace policies. Therefore, employers ought to develop mechanisms that determine the value of an employee before retaining them, rather than holding on to employees with poor performance. Leighn (2002) portrays employees as the most valuable of a company's assets, and that they should be recognized as such. Employers ought to value their employees as they give them a competitive edge over their opponents in the form of rare capabilities and skills that are hard to substitute, skills no other company can copy. Abraham (2007) recognizes the importance of planning the Human resource functions of a company to acquire appropriate staff for the right positions when they are needed and therefore help to address any surpluses or deficits of staff. As a result, a company is able to plan its manpower well and avoid exhaustion and monotony at work through underutilization and overutilization of the available staff.

Parkinson (2007) further recommended that an organization's management ought to focus on the firm's overall objective of increasing sales turnover to make the company profitable when developing policies for employee retention. This dictates that a company has to develop a clear mission and vision

statements to provide its employees with a clear focus and direction. For instance, if a firm were committed to cultivating new recruits, providing a favorable workplace culture in addition to other morals, then the result would be a dedicated and engaged workforce.

Safaricom PLC is a purpose-led digital solutions provider that provides a variety of communication solutions, such as voice call services, messaging tariffs, internet services, commercial and converged solutions aimed at empowering the society through connection. Safaricom's drive is Transforming lives and to this effect has come up with innovative and digital services like M-pesa, fiber connections for homes, E-Commerce platform (Masoko), use of Chatbots to answer customer queries for the Call Centre. Safaricom acknowledges that it does not operate in a void hence it has come up with ways of giving back to the community via the Safaricom and M-pesa Foundations in ways such as health provision, getting involved in education, sports, culture, and environment-related projects. Safaricom is driven by its purpose to transform lives and aims to operate as guided by their culture values namely Purpose (When we focus on our purpose profits will come naturally), Humanness (We all matter, our diversity is our strength), Growth (We are enterprising, innovative and take risks to grow; for self and business), Trust (Our customers, partners, and colleagues trust us. We are accountable, vulnerable and authentic) (Nzuve, 2012).

Safaricom PLC staff enjoys a wide range of benefits namely, medical cover, pension, leave which includes maternity/paternity/adoption, compassionate leave, social clubs (based on job grade criteria) and Employee share option plan (ESOP), Gym, Creche, discounted Loans (Mortgage and unsecured loans), among others. This study looked at the effects of benefit programs on employee retention at Safaricom PLC since the company provides perceived good working conditions that lead to employee retention.

Problem Statement

Ford (2010) argues that firms ought to focus on long-term goals for success in order to enjoy lasting productivity and permanence of their employees and operations respectively. These long-term goals include design and implementation of the best benefit types that are beneficial to their workforce, as demonstrated by the cafeteria method adopted by some organizations employees select the benefits that are most appropriate for them and their families. Employees joining and staying with an organization depends on much more than the remuneration alone. They are also interested in what an organization has to offer in total. It takes a variety of factors to make an organization the right place for employees. Employees who derive maximum satisfaction from their engagements also exhibit commitment, engagement and loyalty towards their employers and jobs (Hissom 2009).

Safaricom PLC has lately experienced increased employee turnover from the managerial level in the last 2 years with 2018 recording an employee turnover of 13% up from 8% in 2017. The employee engagement survey (called people survey) carried out in 2018 indicated an overall employee engagement score of 85.7%, an increase from 80.45% in 2017. The survey found out that 31.9% of the employees in management were ambivalent while 57.4% were engaged, and the remaining 10.7% were completely disengaged. The ambivalent group showed a higher retention risk of 4% than the disengaged group with a retention risk of 1.9% (Safaricom's people survey report, 2018).

According to Ross and Lepper (2010) for easy of understanding attrition rate, they concluded that the rate is an experimental figure, meaning it is represented as a percentage of overall staff who leave either voluntary or involuntary an organization and those that remain in the firm over a certain duration of time. This research study, therefore, sought to determine the effect of benefits programs on the retention of employees at Safaricom PLC.

Study Objectives

The general objective of the study was to investigate the effect of benefits programs on employee retention at Safaricom PLC. The specific objectives of the study were:

- To determine the effect of health benefits on employee retention at Safaricom PLC.
- To assess the effect of work-life balance on employee retention at Safaricom PLC.
- To investigate the effect of employee assistance programs on employee retention at Safaricom PLC.
- To determine the effect of leadership programs on employee retention at Safaricom PLC.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social Exchange Theory

Sociologist George Homans introduced the Social exchange theory in (1958) using the publication of his work "Social Behavior as Exchange". Social exchange theory is considered as a social psychological and sociological sentiment that clarifies any insecurity or modifications as a procedure of bargaining. According to Lawler, 2008, the theory further depicts that human interactions are subjected to a comparison of alternatives and cost-benefit analysis and that the concept is based on sociology, psychology, and economics. Features of the Social exchange theory include conventions established in structuralism and rational choice theory mostly involved in a transaction process.

This theory views organization commitment in terms of how well an employee attaches themselves to their firm because of either them getting certain rewards or benefits in return, this is a mutual benefit whereby the employer benefits by utilizing employee skills and the staffs, on the other hand, gets compensated for his or her abilities and knowledge. Based on this approach, employees, and employers most times have expectations and assumptions, an instance of employer expectation is that the employee will be productive, will follow all the business procedures, will exceed his quarterly targets, will remain with the organization for a longer foreseeable future, among others, while employees expect to find a conducive work environment, good management styles, clear career and promotion among others (Saks, 2006).

The exchange theory also depicts an employee's approach towards an organization which either influences the rate of retention or turnover for the employees. Aligning corporate and departmental goals is key as it gives employees proper vision and plan (Shiau & Luo, 2012). The social exchange theory in this study helps to understand the human relationship that is formed through the bargaining process whereby, there is an exchange of service or skills and compensation, and this essentially determines if an employee stays with the organization or leaves.

Herzberg's Two – Factor theory

Herzberg used his Two-Factor theory to examine “what do people want from their jobs?”. He found a significant difference from the replies given when the people did not like their jobs compared to when they actually liked their jobs. He concluded that there are specific attributes that are consistently connected to job satisfaction while others are related to job dissatisfaction. Most intrinsic factors like recognition, advancement, achievement, and responsibility lean more to job satisfaction. Contrary, extrinsic factors like working conditions, company policies, and supervision are related to job dissatisfaction. The Two-Factor Theory by Herzberg also states that there is a distinct difference between the factors that lead to job dissatisfaction and job satisfaction. Consequently, administrators seeking to eradicate aspects that bring about job dissatisfaction could only create harmony but not necessarily inspiration.

According to Robbins, 2007, Herzberg's theory, recommended that to motivate people emphasis should be put on factors related to the work itself or on outcomes that are derived from it directly, like chances for personal growth, promotional opportunities, achievement, responsibility, and recognition. For one to successfully apply the Herzberg's theory, a two-stage process should be put in place to motivate people. First of all, dissatisfactions that are being experienced should be eliminated then, help the employees with finding satisfaction. Causes of dissatisfaction were described by Herzberg as "hygiene factors". In order to get rid of these factors, there is need to , provide non-intrusive, supportive and effective supervision, fix poor and uncooperative organization policies, provide for competitive wages, create a culture of respect and support it , and grow job status by giving meaningful work for all positions. The actions above will help eliminate job dissatisfaction.

Someone being dissatisfied does not certainly mean that they are satisfied hence there is a need to build up on factors promoting job satisfaction. Herzberg suggests addressing the factors that motivate employees associated with work in order to create satisfaction. He refers this to "job enrichment". He also suggested that every job should be investigated to examine how it could be made better and more satisfying to the person working on it. This concept is therefore applicable to our study since it highlights those factors that create satisfaction in employees which in turn drives their decision on how long they will stay, which is essential if they feel satisfied (Lawler, 2010).

Adam's equity theory

According to Robbins (2007), Adams equity theory judges the fairness in awarding rewards. To obtain results the employee must first invest inputs like commitment, time, experience and effort. The best option would be for the employee to feel unbiased in terms of getting the benefits obtained compared to a fair comparison with the other

An unbalanced equation may indicate that the employee receives an excessive or insufficient reward. The overpaid employee may feel compelled to be more productive. While in the case of an insufficient reward, the employee will seek balance by reducing inputs, negotiating a salary increase or, in the worst case, leaving the organization. Many organizations use employee benefits to ensure that employees feel fully rewarded for their contributions and efforts. It is in the employer's interest to ensure that his workforce remains motivated and produces.

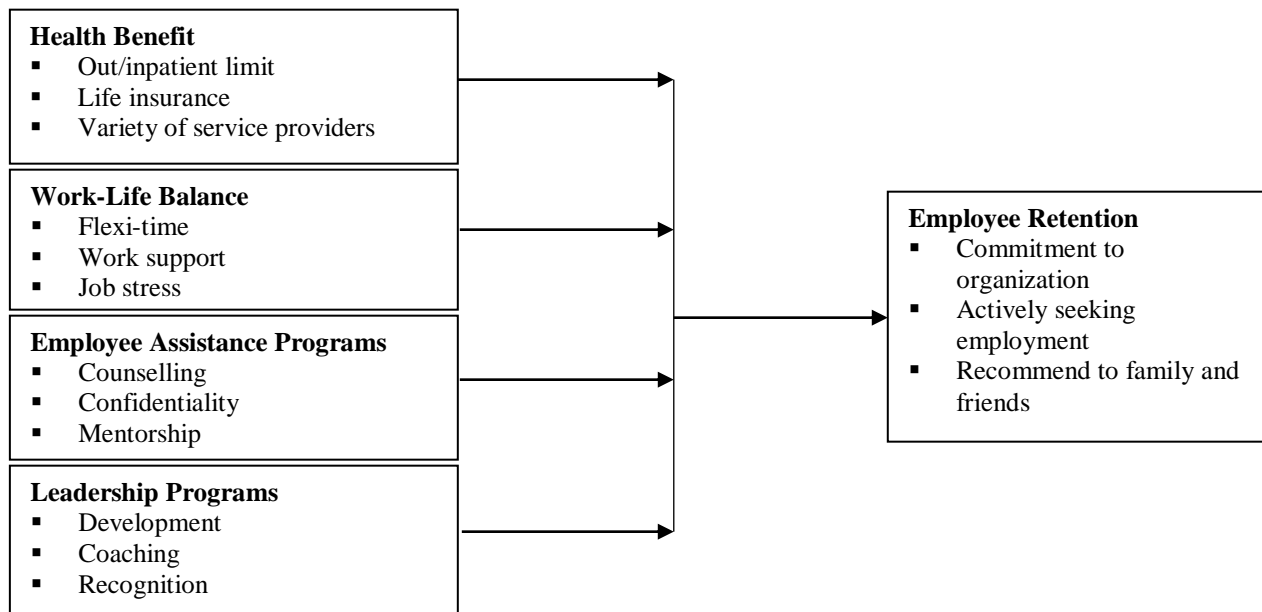
The theory evaluates the motivation of employees dependent on a person's emotional recognitions, so it very well may be hard for the manager to define how workers see their inputs, whose results they value, and who they compare themselves to. There are different measures that the organization can take to lessen sentiments of disparity or battle impression of imbalance in the working environment even though it is difficult, if not close to impossible, to anticipate with whom employees compare themselves to. As far as dealing with the appropriation of rewards, managers ought to be receptive to distributive and procedural equity.

Distributive equity includes guaranteeing that results are genuinely disseminated in the organization. According to Redmond (2009), procedural equity manages whether the procedure used to assign rewards is reasonable and transparent. Increased levels of procedural and distributive equity can help avoid the impression of disparity and any unproductive work practices. Although the meaning of procedural justice may differ amongst different organizations, there are a few basic topics that can be used to set up a simple procedure. Letting the workers have a voice in the basic leadership process, settling on unprejudiced choices, and being steady in the utilization of rules loans to a procedurally simple process. According to Deutsch, (2000), individuals feel avowed if the techniques that are embraced approach them with deference and pride, making it simpler to acknowledge results they don't care for.

Putting in place High levels of distributive and procedural justice won't really keep workers from having an impression of disparity at the workplace. Be that as it may, a business can likewise keep repercussions from the view of imbalance. For instance, Skarlick and Folger, (1997) found that workers that are treated with deference are bound to endure poor pay. Regardless of whether the compensation or remuneration is unreasonable may be irrelevant. Employees view a perception of unfair compensation to be the same as actual unfair compensation. In this way, if a worker has a view of imbalance in their pay they may be additionally ready to endure their impression of unfair pay in the event that they are treated with respect by their boss. At that point, they will be more likely to reduce their inputs or take part in unproductive work practices to make up for the perception of underpayment imbalance.

Fighting this problem effectively requires the employer to implement two strategies. At first, the employees continuously give feedback to the employer to determine what is more valuable to them and how they would like to be compensated. The employers may also offer the employees a choice of benefit, for instance, they have to choose between dependent care flexible spending account and health flexible spending account depending on what good for them. Health or dental insurance can also be included among other benefits. This plan is referred to as cafeteria-style is important since it helps the employees choose what plan best caters for them. It also helps reduce inequality since each employee chooses the plan they value most which help increase their performance when compared to their coworkers forced on plans they did not like

Managers are also able to apply intangible rewards such as simple praise in the presence of co-workers, a luncheon or even a pat on the back. They are simple rewards but are crucial in measuring inputs and outcomes. The concept is therefore relevant to this study as it promotes an understanding of inequity repercussions, such as resignations, theft and or reduced productivity.



Independent variables

Dependent variable

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Researcher, 2019

Empirical Review

According to the Society of Human Resource Management (2007) Job Satisfaction Survey, the foundation of any business, regardless of its size, is the recruitment and retention of skilled and qualified employees. Researchers have found that employees who experience job satisfaction are more likely to stay with their present employers. However, maintaining a team of happy and motivated employees is often hard to achieve as the expectations of employees keep shifting based on the stage they are in their careers. Demographic trends such as increasing numbers of both Generation Y and Z recruitment into the workforce, caring for aging parents, the retirement of baby boomers are the main causes of the changes in expectations. Moreover, the overall societal changes, such as the increase in stress levels among employees as they attempt to strike a balance between work and personal responsibilities can also change expectations as employees get more stressed as life becomes more challenging. Therefore, depending on employee characteristics like their gender or age, there could be a shift in the factors long thought to gratify them. Human Resource (HR) professionals are a vital link between a company and the human capital exemplified by its employees. Therefore, it is crucial for HR professionals to be mindful of the characteristics that contribute to the motivation of their employees, job satisfaction and ultimately retention as organizations prepare for a changing workforce,

Employee benefits which included compulsory benefits and fringe benefits are becoming a crucial part of the reward packages that organizations offer to their staff. Employee health benefits packages signify an employer's obligation to their employee's health and welfare, and that of their family (Peterson, 2013). The types of benefits offered by a company are typically selected based on the company's

culture, the cost of the benefit and industry trends. The types of benefits offered by an organization are usually categorized into health insurance to the employee, the employee's spouse and in some cases, the employee's children as well according to Ko and Hur, (2014). A basic health benefits package covers the costs for hospital visits, costs for surgery, and expenses for visits to a physician. In contrast, a hospital expense cover provides a combined benefit for both the employee and their covered dependents that cater to both inpatient and limited outpatient hospital costs (Anitha, 2014).

Retaining a talented workforce in the telecommunications business is a permanent cause of worry for experts and a continuing area of debate for scholars (Deery & Jago, 2015). A key contributor to employee satisfaction and consequent retention according to the author is maintaining a work-life balance. Cahill, et al., (2015) the state of the macroeconomy circumstances such as debt crisis, inflation, and recession could also influence job satisfaction and fulfillment with work-life balance. Besides, it has likewise been found that workers' jobs and family-related mentalities have been affected by different factors past the immediate employment and family realms, such as individual characteristics.

According to Arthur (2000, p550), employee assistance programs are beneficial services provided to employees experiencing a variety of personal, emotional, and psychological problems. In addition, these counseling programs have expanded their services to address legal and financial matters faced by employees. As noted by Yamatani, et al (1999, p 108), modern employee assistance projects assume a crucial role in assisting employees with mental, financial, health, individual, family, and legal challenges. Services within assistance programs for employees as per McCann, et al (2010, p 91) comprise of referrals to higher levels of treatment, problem evaluation, supportive counseling, health education and training, and subsequent follow-ups for workers and their families. This is a clear sign of how employee assistance projects are intended to aggregately address employees' issues with the end goal that, both their own lives and work exercises are not upset.

As indicated by Yukl (1994), "leadership is the process of influencing followers". Leaders assume a significant role in the fulfillment of organizational objectives by making an atmosphere that would impact an employee's behavior, attitudes, and motivation. Cole (2005) & Chowdhury (2014) characterize leadership as a "dynamic process whereby one man influences others to contribute voluntarily to the realization and attainment of the objectives towards the common goal". Roy Saunderson (2013) shares a similar opinion in his Cameron book "Positive leadership: Strategies for extraordinary performance" To affect the individual and the association, leaders must create a positive working environment and include each worker in the company to collectively play out the positive practices and not driving just those people with a vision.

Because of the lack of talented labors, economic development and staff turnover; the retention of employees is the most significant issue facing corporate leaders. As defined by Johnson (2000) retention is the capacity to hold onto those workers you need to keep, for longer than your business rivals. The evaluation of retention ought to be considered at more than just a singular level in light of the fact that the impacts of retention can emerge at numerous levels (Klein et al., 1994; Klein and Kozlowski, 2000; Raudenbush and Bryk, 2002; Yammarino and Dansereau, 2004). Several researchers have found that reducing turnover is difficult for firms, as different firms use different methods to retain staff (American

Management Association, 2001). This can be found in research by Moncarz and Zhao (2008) of US lodging properties organizational practices on worker retention and turnover. The discoveries uncover that promotions and training practices, corporate culture and hiring impact the retention of non-executive employees. Promotion practices and hiring simultaneously affect management retention, as well. Besides, the direction of an organization, employee recognition, its goals, and mission rewards retention and is considered as a comprehensive module of the strategies of an organization's human resource department. It begins with the hiring of the right personnel and proceeds with implementing programs to keep them committed and engaged to the company (Freyermuth, 2004).

METHODOLOGY

This research study adopted a descriptive research design because it enables a researcher to interact with respondents, obtain relevant information on the issue and draw accurate conclusions from the collected data. The researcher chose to study management level staff at Safaricom PLC because of ease of access to respondents in addition to time and cost constraints. According to the Human Resources operations data, Safaricom PLC had a total of 249 employees in management. The sampling design adopted in this study was a probability sampling technique. Respondents were selected at random from management in each division to form a sample size of 153. The research study used a questionnaire to gather data from respondents. The collected data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The study applied the regression model as follows:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \varepsilon$$

Where **Y** = Retention

X₁ = Health Benefits

X₂ = Work-Life balance

X₃ = Employee Assistance Programs

X₄ = Leadership programs

B₁– B₅ are the changes introduced in Y, which represents the dependent variable ε are the random errors that influence retention but are not captured by the model.

RESULTS

Work-Life Balance

This research aimed at determining participant's views on work-life balance within the organization. A five-point Likert scale (1-5) was employed to enhance the quality of the data provided. The five points were represented as follows: 1-Strongly Disagree, 2- Do not Agree, 3- Neutral, 4- Agree and 5 - Strongly Agree. The mean scores were presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Work-Life Balance

Statement	Percent	Mean	Std. Dev.
Being allowed to work within employee comfort hours helps to retain employees in the organization (Flexi-time).	35.0%	3.96	0.752
I receive regular work support from colleagues whenever assignments are overwhelming.	32.5%	3.70	0.935

My work is just enough for me to handle.	32.5%	3.69	1.035
Composite Mean		3.78	

Source: Research Data, (2019)

On a scale of 1-5, participants agreed that being allowed to work within employee comfort hours helps to retain staff in the organization (Flexi-time) with a mean of 3.96. They also agreed that they received regular work support from colleagues whenever assignments are overwhelming and that their work is just enough for them to handle with means of 3.70 and 3.69 respectively. The overall mean score was 3.78 which indicated that most of the respondents were in agreement with the influence of work-life balance on staff retention in the organization.

Health Benefits

To establish to what scale health benefits, affect employee retention, a five-point Likert scale (1-5) was employed. The five points were represented as follows: 1-Strongly Disagree, 2- Do not Agree, 3- Neutral, 4- Agree and 5 - Strongly Agree. The mean scores were presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Health Benefits

Statement	Percent	Mean	Standard Deviation
The current outpatient limit is just enough for me and my family.	34.3%	3.72	0.752
I am happy with our current life cover benefit.	33.6%	3.68	0.935
I am happy with the consultants in the panel provided by the insurer.	32.1%	3.52	1.034
Composite Mean		3.64	

Source: Research Data, (2019)

On a scale of 1-5, most of the respondents agreed that the current outpatient limit was just enough for them and their family with a mean of 3.72 while others, with a mean of 3.68, confirmed that they were happy with their current life cover benefit. Lastly, the participants indicated that they were happy with the consultants in the panel provided by the insurer. The overall mean was 3.64 which signified that most of the respondents were positive that health benefits impact employee retention in the organization.

Employee Assistance Programs

To establish to what scale Employee Assistance Programs affect employee retention, a five-point Likert scale (1-5) was employed. The five points were represented as follows: 1-Strongly Disagree, 2- Do not Agree, 3- Neutral, 4- Agree and 5 - Strongly Agree. The mean scores were presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Employee Assistance Programs

Statement	Percent	Mean	Standard Deviation
Counseling is an important component for employees in the organization	35.7%	3.96	0.944
I have received mentorship from the program	34.9%	3.88	1.11
Our employee assistance program offers confidentiality to all	29.4%	3.26	1.05
Composite Mean		3.70	

Source: Research Data, (2019)

On a scale of 1-5, most of the respondents agreed that counseling was a crucial component for employees at Safaricom PLC with a mean score of 3.96. They also agreed that they had received mentorship from the program and also that the employee assistance program offers confidentiality to all with means of 3.88 and 3.26 respectively. The overall mean score was 3.70. This clearly indicated that most participants agreed that employee assistance programs have an impact on employee retention in the organization.

Leadership Programs

To establish to what scale leadership programs affect employee retention, a five-point Likert scale (1-5) was employed. The five points were represented as follows: 1-Strongly Disagree, 2- Do not Agree, 3- Neutral, 4- Agree and 5 - Strongly Agree. The mean scores were presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Leadership Programs

Statement	Percent	Mean	Standard Deviation
I am happy with the leadership programs run by the organization to develop leaders	34.3%	3.76	1.101
I have received coaching in the last year.	33.3%	3.64	1.056
The organization recognizes my input and value	32.4%	3.54	1.145
Composite Mean		3.65	

Source: Research Data, (2019)

On a scale of 1-5, most of the participants in the study agreed that they were happy with the leadership programs run by the organization to develop leaders with a mean of 3.76. They also agreed that the organization recognized their input and value and that they had received coaching in the last one year with means of 3.54 and 3.64 respectively. The overall mean score was 3.65 which indicated that most of the respondents agreed that leadership programs influence employee retention in the organization.

Employee Retention

The study sought to investigate the extent of benefit programs influences employee retention in the organization a five-point Likert scale (1-5) was employed. The five points were represented as follows: 1-Strongly Disagree, 2- Do not Agree, 3- Neutral, 4- Agree and 5 - Strongly Agree. The mean scores were presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Employee Retention

Statement	Percent	Mean	Standard deviation
I like working for this company and would not like to leave for another employer	38.8%	3.83	1.116
I would leave my employer immediately when and if the opportunity arises	28.1%	2.68	0.844
I would recommend Safaricom to my family and friends as an employer of choice.	34.1%	3.36	1.137
Overall Mean		3.29	

Source: Research Data, (2019)

Based on the results in Table 5 above, most participants agreed that they liked working for Safaricom PLC and would not like to leave for another employer with a mean of 3.83 and that they would recommend Safaricom to family and friends as an employer of choice with a mean of 3.36. Additionally, the participants disagreed that they would leave the employer immediately when and if the opportunity arises with a mean of 2.83. In conclusion, the overall mean score was 3.29 which shows that most of the participants were sure that benefit programs in Safaricom PLC affects employee retention.

Inferential Statistical Results

Table 6: Correlations Coefficient

		Health Benefits	Work- Life Balance	Employee Assistance Programs	Leadership Programs	Employee Retention
Health Benefits	Pearson Correlation	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
	N	120				
Work-Life Balance	Pearson Correlation	.060	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.563				
	N	120	120			
Employee Assistance Programs	Pearson Correlation	.119	.025	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.198	.765			
	N	120	120	120		
Leadership Programs	Pearson Correlation	.067	.295**	.070	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.796	.000	.271		
	N	120	120	120	120	
Employee Retention	Pearson Correlation	.781**	.713**	.678**	.763**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.000	.000	.001	
	N	120	120	120	120	120

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

The table above showed the correlation summary where the associations between the dependent variable and each of the independent variables were significant at the 95% confidence level. There was a strong relationship ($r = 0.781$, $p < 0.05$) between health benefits and employee retention given that the Pearson correlations coefficient was higher than 0.5.

The study had also wanted to determine the effects of work-life balance on employee retention. Analysis from the study yielded a coefficient of ($r = 0.713$, $p < 0.05$) indicating that there was a strong relationship between the two variables. The analysis was also run to determine the relationship between employee assistance programs and employee retention. From the analysis the coefficient was ($r = 0.678$, $p < 0.05$) indicating a strong association between the two variables. The study determined the relationship between leadership programs and employee retention. The analysis yielded the Pearson correlations coefficient was ($r = 0.763$, $p < 0.05$) showing a strong relationship between leadership programs and

employee retention. Hence, it was evident that there was a strong relationship between the variables so the dependent variable could be explained by all the independent variables.

Table 7: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.863	.772	.694	.232

a. Predictors: (Constant), Health Benefits, Work-Life Balance, Employee Assistance Programs, Leadership Programs

R represented the correlation coefficient which indicated the relationship between the study variables. It was notable from the findings shown in table 7, that the value of R was 0.863 which was greater than 0.5 and 0.7 indicating that there existed a strong positive relationship between the dependent and independent variables. R Square was the percentage variation in the dependent variable that was supported by the variation in independent variables. The value of R Square was 0.772. This meant that 77.2% of the variance in employee retention at Safaricom PLC can be explained by; health benefits, work-life balance, employee assistance programs and leadership programs at a confidence level of 95%, $P < 0.05$. The remaining 22.8% variation in employee retention might be because of other important factors not considered in this study. Adjusted R squared is the coefficient of determination which indicated the variation in the dependent variable due to changes in the independent variable. After the analysis, the value of adjusted R squared was 0.694 indicating that there was a variation of 69.4%.

Table 8: ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	811.8	4	202.9	34.37	.001 ^b
	Residual	678.8	115	5.902		
	Total	1489.6	119			

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Retention

b. Predictors: (Constant), Health Benefits, Work-Life Balance, Employee Assistance Programs, Leadership Programs

Key; df = degree of freedom; F=Computed F-value; Sig=level of significance

From table 8, the significance level, that study revealed the correlation between the dependent variable (employee retention) and the independent variable (health benefits, work-life balance, employee assistance programs, leadership programs). The significance level was 0.01 which was less than 0.05 hence the model was found to be statistically significant.

Table 9: Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.642	.283		7.057	.000
	Health Benefits	.951	.148	.238	4.323	.000
	Work Life Balance	.169	.139	.058	2.295	.002

Employee Assistance Programs	.276	.224	.362	4.218	.001
Leadership Programs	.353	.146	.354	5.727	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Retention

The equation for predicting the association between employee retention and benefit programs was given in Table 9. Results on this table indicated a significant relationship at $P < 0.05$ existed between health benefits, work-life balance, employee assistance programs, leadership programs, and employee retention. The regression equation will be as follows:

$$Y = 3.642 + 0.951 X_1 + 0.169 X_2 + 0.276 X_3 + 0.353 X_4 + \varepsilon$$

Where Y-Employee Retention, X_1 -Health Benefits, X_2 -Work-Life balance, X_3 -Employee assistance programs, X_4 -Leadership Programs and ε -error term

CONCLUSION

This study wanted to establish how benefit programs influence employee retention at Safaricom PLC. Study findings therefore based on the four objectives revealed a correlation between the independent and dependent variables meaning that health benefits, work-life balance, employee assistance programs, leadership programs impact employee retention. A regression analysis model was also run which established a positive relationship between the independent and the dependent variables and that the study was also statistically significant.

Various researches suggest that whether or not employee benefits programs have a negative or positive effect, it all dependent on diverse aspects of the organization's human resource management practices, culture, and strategies. A study by Moncarz and Zhao (2008) indicated that training practices, promotions, and corporate culture may also impact non- management employee retention. Organizations should recruit the right people and introduce programs that will keep the employees committed and engaged in the organization.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the findings, Safaricom PLC should continue or even make better the outpatient/inpatient limits, boost life insurance and continue updating the panel of medical providers since the employees, for now, are okay with what they have. Employee health is a fundamental aspect that affects how they respond to work hence directly affecting the company's bottom-line, both positively and negatively.

Safaricom PLC should continue to promote flexi-time working schedules to provide for workers to integrate their work and life activities. This translated to a high turnover in productivity since humans tend to be more creative when they are comfortable and at ease with their environment. The study also showed that most of the employees receive support from teammates when tasks are overwhelming, thus the organization should continuously drive a culture of looking out for each other.

The organization should continuously drive counseling as a way of employees decompressing or speaking to someone on any subject considering the current environment businesses operate. Since employees feel the program offers confidentiality, Safaricom should continue to put measures ensuring this is not breached.

Since most of the employees agreed that they were satisfied with the coaching on leadership programs, the study recommended that Safaricom PLC, to look further on newer employees who may not feel the full impact of these programs or those not fully blended into the system. Award programs should also be put into place so that employees feel fully appreciated and recognized by the system since the organization harbors so many employees.

Implication of the Research Study on Human Resource Practice

The study will have significance to the Human Resource Practice by improving performance. For instance, organizations should focus more on employee benefit programs to promote the effectiveness of employee retention. For an effectual employee benefits program policy, there ought to be a comprehensible communication among employees and senior management. On the other hand, the policymakers would also benefit from the conclusions from this study as it is a basis to formulate policies that are consistent with the current trends of human resource practices.

In addition, the outcomes on the research considerably contribute to Human resource management body of knowledge as it has concluded that implementing employee benefits programs effectively enhances employee retention. In addition, human resource managers should implement employee benefits programs to retain employees.

Recommendation for future research

This research only covered the Kenyan private Sector which gave a gap for further research on other sectors particularly those in the Kenyan big four agenda namely, healthcare, food security, and housing. In addition, since this study focused only on the quantitative measure, upcoming studies are encouraged in both qualitative and quantitative measures. Therefore, it was recommended that future study work can attain a more profound perceptive on the influence that benefit programs have on employee retention in an organization if these limitations are fulfilled. In addition, future studies should focus on 22.8% of other variables not covered by this study to explain employee retention.

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