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## INFLUENCE OF LEAVE POLICY ON EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION IN TELECOMMUNICATION INDUSTRY IN KENYA

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# INFLUENCE OF LEAVE POLICY ON EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION IN TELECOMMUNICATION INDUSTRY IN KENYA

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## Abstract

**Purpose:** The study aimed at establishing the influence of leave policy on employee satisfaction in telecommunication industry in Kenya.

**Materials and methods:** The target population was all employees from telecommunication industry in Kenya. A sample size of 90 respondents was derived at using stratified random sampling from the three major telecommunication industries in Kenya namely; Safaricom, Airtel and Orange Telkom. Data collection instruments used in this study was questionnaires. Policies and factors relating to work-life balance were investigated as well as their impact on employee satisfaction among the respondents under study. Data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences. The findings were presented and analyzed on the basis of the research-specific objectives. Tables and figures were used to present quantitative data where appropriate.

**Results:** The findings of the study reveals that leave policy positively influenced employee satisfaction. The study findings revealed that majority of the respondents agreed that there is provision for annual leave for a great extent.

**Recommendations:** The organizations should ensure that they adopt and implement leave policies so as to ensure employees are given time to break from their job responsibilities.

**Keywords:** *leave policy, employee satisfaction, telecommunication industry, Kenya*

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the study

Work-life balance remains a central issue for employed and employers alike, (Wharton & Blair-Loy, 2006). Pressures from an increasingly competitive work environment are leading to conflicting priorities for employers and employees creating considerable stresses for employees trying to cope with work and family responsibilities.

There is increasing awareness of the benefits of providing more flexible human resource strategies, (Grover & Crooker, 2005); recognizing the fact that work and other life commitments

cannot easily be separated. The importance of work-life balance has increased as a result of increasing workforce diversity. An organization's need to attract and retain valued employees in a highly competitive labor market is a strong motivating factor for organizational awareness and action with regard to human resource policies and practices that address work life balance. Work-life balance is an important area of strategic human resource management that is receiving increasing attention from the government, researchers, management and employee representatives and the popular media.

### **1.1.1 Work-life balance**

The issue of balancing the demands of work and the demands of life/family affects all the sectors in life. It actually affects a whole society. Organizations have realized that as much as employees are expected to perform, they also have their expectations from the employer, especially concerning their welfare. Employers must understand that employees have social and cultural obligations apart from work. Employers have realized also that a satisfied employee is one who is at peace with him/herself. To be at peace with oneself needs one to be satisfied in life. Having been able to create harmony between work and life demands. An employee who is satisfied with his/her job is definitely loyal to the job, and obviously, has been able to balance the demands of work and life/family, (Rousseau, 2005).

### **1.1.2 Telecommunications Industry in Kenya**

The telecommunication industry has undergone tremendous innovations with the advancement of information and communication technology. In many countries, more than half of the population already uses mobile telephones and the market is still growing, (Muturi, 2004). For the last one decade, the market environment facing firms in Kenya has been dynamic. Generally, there has been a shift from a stable and uncompetitive environment to one that is quite volatile, unpredictable and competitive. Up to 1990's many firms in Kenya enjoyed unchallenged monopolies and government protection. Globalization has spearheaded the integration of the Kenyan economy with other world economies such that Kenya is now part of the global village. The power of information and technology, de-regulation, globalization of markets and stiff competition has made employees better educated, more inquisitive, sophisticated and deciding. The marketing environment has tremendously changed thereby posing serious implications and challenges to the survival and profitability of firms. To address these challenges, it is necessary to improve employee engagement.

The key players in the telecommunication industry in Kenya include Safaricom, Airtel, Orange, and Telkom Kenya. Safaricom has the largest number of subscriber base estimated at 13 million persons representing a market share of about 70 percent. Airtel enjoys a subscriber base of approximately 3 million subscribers representing market share of 18 percent. Airtel offers a host of value added services including voice solutions and data solutions. Data includes provision of services such as Internet, data transfer and management. Voice product embrace services such as voice calls, short messaging system and chat. Product and service development innovations in the telecommunication industry include money transfer services such as M-Pesa by Safaricom and Zap by Airtel, (Communication Authority of Kenya, 2016).

An organization's most important people are often also the most likely to look elsewhere for other opportunities. Armstrong (2006), argues that talent will always be in high demand, and many talent groups will be attracted by the prospect of short periods of employment with a large number of employers. Telecommunication industry is no exception to these challenges. The uniqueness of the nature of services and products, industry newness in the Kenyan economy and low supply of skilled personnel increases competition for talent. Further, liberalization of the market has increased the number of participants in the industry creating job openings against a shortfall of supply. Consequently, mobile service providers suffer huge losses in terms of high turnover of specialized staff such as telecommunication engineers lured by lucrative pay offers from rival firms. Finding qualified people to fill gaps left by turnover is difficult and the cost of providing specialized engineering training to new recruits is high. Under these circumstances, firms are better off engaging their employees with the objective of retaining them for long term growth and survival.

### **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Interference between work and non-work responsibilities has a number of negative outcomes to organizations. In terms of job attitudes, employees reporting high levels of both work-to-life and life-to-work conflict tend to exhibit lower levels of employee satisfaction and organizational commitment, (Burke & Greenglass, 2009; Kossek & Ozeki, 2008). Behavioral outcomes of both directions of conflict include reduced work effort, reduced performance, and increased absenteeism and turnover, increased stress and burnout, (Anderson, Coffey & Byerly, 2002), cognitive difficulties such as staying awake, lack of concentration, and low alertness, (MacEwen & Barling, 2004), and reduced levels of general health and energy. The implications for organizations are clear: work-life conflict can have negative results for employee performance. While women workers desire to serve employers like their male counterparts, they cannot influence the environmental conditions in which they are employed. Their satisfaction and commitment depend on the motivational factors that exist in their organizations. This study sought to find out how problems stated above can be dealt with through the findings that are expected to provide new areas of knowledge.

A number of researchers have found that use of flexible working hours is associated with lower levels of work-to-life conflict, (Anderson et al, 2002). Studies have found that employee who benefit from childcare centers, referral services and other family supportive practices report higher levels of commitment to the organization, (Goldberg, Greenberger, Koch-Jones, 2009; Grover & Crooker, 2005). In a study of the 'Virtual Office', Callentine's (2005) participants attributed an increase in employee satisfaction to increased flexibility in the location and timing of their work. Similarly, a UK survey of 597 working parents (Working families, 2005) found a correlation between self-rated productivity, flexibility and satisfaction with work-life balance and enjoyment of one's job. On the other hand, research by Blum, Fields, and Goodman (2004), Galinsky and Morris (2003) found no effects of work-life practices on employees' work-life conflict levels. Similarly, Bloom and Van Reenan's (2006) study of 732 manufacturer organizations in the US, France, UK and Germany found no direct relationship between work-life balance policies and productivity.

In Kenya, very little research has been done on leave policy. A number of researches though have been done on job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Ntuara, (2008), did a survey of the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational performance of companies listed in the Nairobi Stock Exchange. She found that job satisfaction had some influence on the listed firm's performance but is minimal as it accounted for only 8.7% of the variance in performance. On the same note, Njenga, (2007), found a positive relationship between job satisfaction, organizational commitment and the performance from a study of public secondary schools in Dagoreti, Nairobi. Wang and Walumbwa (2007) found that the availability of flexible work arrangements was associated with increased organizational commitment for banking employees in Kenya, China and Thailand only when employees perceive their supervisors to exhibit transformational leadership behaviors, including individual consideration.

The above researches do not answer the researcher's question. Very little study has been done in Kenya on leave policy, thus there is a wide gap of knowledge which needs to be filled by this research. From the above background, the researcher sought to answer the following question: What is the influence of leave policy on employee satisfaction in telecommunication industry in Kenya.

### **1.3 Objective of the Research**

To determine the influence of leave policy on employee satisfaction

## **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter reviews how literature is relevant to the current study with a focus on influence of leave policy on employee satisfaction among telecommunication industry employees in Kenya. Review includes other scholars' work both at international and local arena. By pointing out the weaknesses and gaps of previous researches, it will help support the current study with a view of suggesting viable measures or ways of filling them.

#### **2.1.1 Organizational Support Theory**

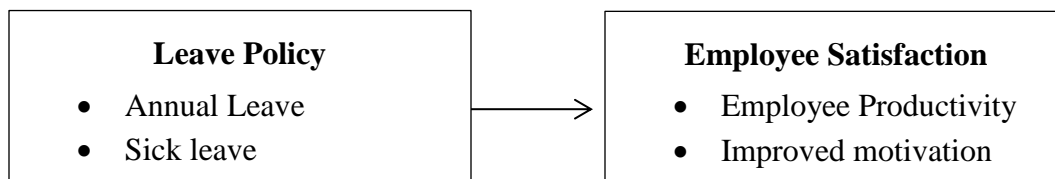
Organizational support theory posits that employees form a universal perception concerning the extent to which the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being. When employees perceive that their organization values their contribution and cares about their wellbeing, their needs for affiliation, approval, emotional support and esteem will be met leading them to identify the wellbeing of the organization as their own and feel emotionally attached to it, (Rhoades, Eisenberger, & Armeli, 2011). This personification of the organization is enhanced by the organization's legal, moral, and financial responsibility for the actions of organizational policies, norms, and culture that provide continuity and prescribe role behaviors. They also enhance the power the organization's agents exert over individual employees.

Due to this personification of organizations, employees base their judgments of their perceived value to the organization on how favorably the organization treats them. Rhoades and

Eisenberger, (2002) postulated that fair treatment, supervisory support and rewards and a favourable job are the predictors for organizations support. Employees who receive organization support from the workplace are likely to create long term relationship with the organization. It also provides opportunities to progresses professionally to its staff, while the workers play an important role in the organization’s growth and success. People join organizations with personal needs, desires and skill sets, and in return anticipates finding a workplace environment where their abilities can be utilized and most of their basic needs satisfied, (Dessler, 2012).

## 2.2 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework is formulated to guide the process of this research. It has three variables namely the independent variables, dependent variable and the moderating variables. Arrow indicators were used to show how variables relate with one another. This conceptual framework hypothesized that there is a relationship between leave policy and employee satisfaction.



**Independent Variables**

**Dependent Variable**

**Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework**

### 2.2.1 Leave Policy

Leave refers to any time that an employee spends away from work, most times on voluntary basis. Ideally, provision for leave should be governed by a policy as conceptualized in this study. However, this is not always the case.

Annual leave is covered under Rights and Duties in employment of part V of the Employment Act No.11 of 2007. Annual leave is a period of time off work that an employee is entitled to after every 12 consecutive months of service with the employer and is exclusive of public holidays. On average, Kenyan employees enjoy annual leave of 30 days. In general, temporary and fixed term workers enjoy all the rights of an employee working on permanent terms, except those that are excluded explicitly (such as entitlement to pensions). Annual leave provides employees an opportunity to relax for an extended period and to return to the job with renewed interest and vitality. When an employee transfers to another department, leave balances also transfer. Supervisors should work with employees to develop and coordinate annual leave plans so that accruals remain at manageable level and so that maximum limits are not exceeded, (Waweru, 2004).

According to the Employment Act (2007), a female employee is entitled to three months maternity leave in addition to any period of annual leave she is entitled to, and sick leave if she happens to fall sick during the time of confinement and with consent of the employer. The law does not set a limit on maternity leave. Maternity leave cannot be extended in terms of extending

the three months maternity leave. But an extension may be granted, with the consent of the employer, by taking sick leave or annual leave, compassionate leave or other leave entitlements. Male employees are entitled to 14 days annual leave in the event that their recognized wives give birth. The provisions on paternity leave under the employment act allow an eligible employee to take fully paid paternity leave.

Under the employment act, section 30, an employee is entitled to paid sick leave after a period of two consecutive months of service. The minimum period of entitlement is seven days with full pay and seven days with half pay for every 12 months, subject to production of a certificate of incapacity to work duly signed by a qualified medical practitioner. Sickness absence is a considerable economic and social problem. Sickness absence is known to be associated with behavioral attitudes. The correlation between sickness absence and employee satisfaction has been studied infrequently and with contradictory results, (Waweru, 2004). In the most of the companies, employees are granted sick leave in the event that they fall ill. However, the study seeks to establish if there is any legal framework or policy that governs this provision.

### **2.2.2 The Concept of Employee Satisfaction**

Mullins (2005) defines employee satisfaction as an emotion, a feeling, an attitude and a matter of perception. It results from an appraisal of an employee's experiences at work. Employee satisfaction involves likes, dislikes, and intrinsic and extrinsic needs. Employee satisfaction can be an important indicator of how employees feel about their jobs and a predictor of work behaviors such as organizational citizenship, absenteeism and turnover. One common research finding is that employee satisfaction is correlated with life satisfaction. This correlation is reciprocal, (Organ & Ryan, 2005).

Employee satisfaction is pleasure that an employee derives from his/her job, (Reynolds, 2005). Employee satisfaction is simply how people feel about their jobs and different aspects of their jobs. It is the extent to which people like (satisfaction) or dislike (dissatisfaction) their jobs, (Spector, 2007). It is an attitudinal variable that describes how people feel about their job. According to Mullins, (2010), the level of employee satisfaction is affected by a range of variables relating to individual, social, cultural, organizational and environmental factors. These different factors all affect the employee satisfaction of certain individuals in a given set of circumstances but not necessarily in others. Broader approaches to employee satisfaction aim to give the person improved empowerment and job enrichment through greater autonomy and authority over the planning, execution and control of their work. It focuses on intrinsic satisfaction, (Mullins, 2010).

Factors associated with high employee satisfaction include variety of meaningful tasks, unobtrusive supervision, greater responsibility, self-pacing, chances of self-development and feedback on performance. On the other hand, employee satisfaction can be increased by careful selection, setting appropriate objectives, planning the development of employees, keeping employees informed and recognizing achievements, (Spector, 2007). When people are dissatisfied with their jobs they tend to withdraw. That is, they are frequently absent and are likely to quit their jobs, (Greenberg & Baron, 2008).

There are important reasons why we should be concerned with employee satisfaction. First, the humanitarian perspective is that people deserve to be treated fairly and with respect. Employee satisfaction to some extent is a reflection of good treatment. It can also be considered an indicator of emotional well-being or psychological health. Secondly, the utilitarian perspective is that employee satisfaction can lead to positive behavior by employees that affect the organizational functioning. In the past, satisfaction was approached by some researchers from the perspective of need fulfilment, i.e. whether the job met employees' physical/psychological need. The approach has however been deemphasized because today most researchers tend to focus attention on cognitive processes rather than underlying needs. The attitudinal perspective has become the predominant one in the study of employee satisfaction, (Torrington, Hall & Taylor, 2005).

### **3.0 METHODOLOGY**

The target population was all employees from telecommunication industry in Kenya. A sample size of 90 respondents was derived at using stratified random sampling from the three major telecommunication industries in Kenya namely; Safaricom, Airtel and Orange Telkom. Data collection instruments used in this study was questionnaires. Policies and factors relating to work-life balance were investigated as well as their impact on employee satisfaction among the respondents under study. Data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences. The findings were presented and analyzed on the basis of the research-specific objectives. Tables and figures were used to present quantitative data where appropriate.

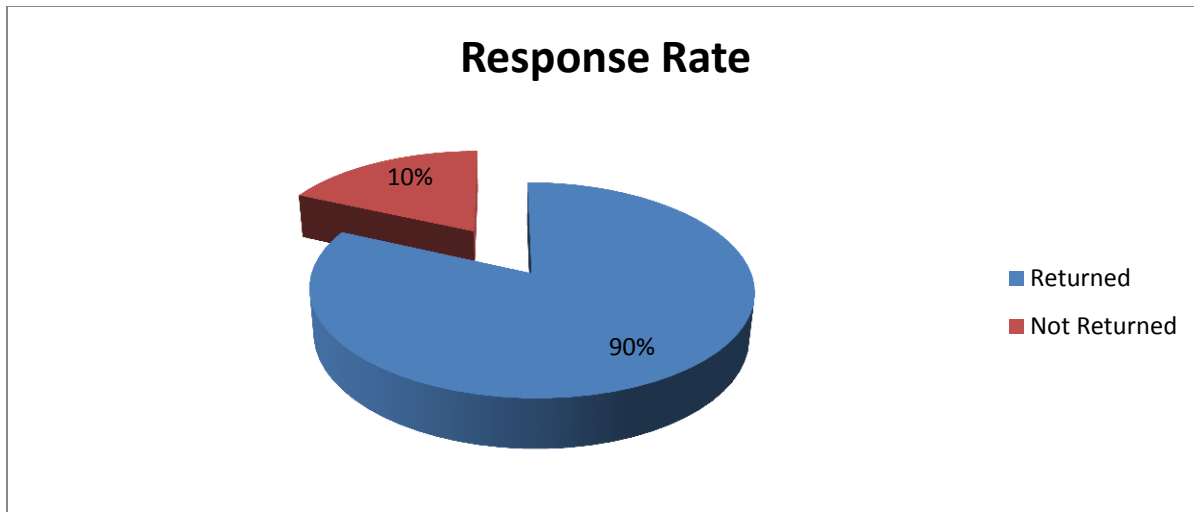
### **4.0 RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

#### **4.1 Response Rate**

The study targeted 90 respondents but managed to obtain responses from 81 of them thus representing 90% response rate. This response rate is considered satisfactory to make conclusions for the study. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) observed that a 50% response rate is adequate, 60% good and above, while 70% rated very good. This collaborates with Bailey (2000) assertion that a response rate of 50% is adequate, while a response rate greater than 70% is very good. This implies that based on this assertion, the response rate in this case of 90% is therefore very good.

The recorded high response rate can be attributed to the data collection procedures, where the researcher pre-notified the potential participants of the intended survey, utilized a self-administered questionnaire where the respondents completed and these were picked shortly after and made follow up calls to clarify queries as well as prompt the respondents to fill the questionnaires.





**Figure 2: Response Rate**

#### 4.2 Age Bracket of Respondents

Respondents were required to indicate their age bracket. Majority (84%) of the respondents in this study were aged between 21-40 years of age. They were followed by those aged between 41-60 years of age at 14% while 2% of the respondents were aged below 20 years of age as shown in Table 1. The findings therefore revealed that the employees are energetic enough to carry their duties.

**Table 1: Age of Respondents**

Age Bracket of Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Below 20 Years	2	2
21-40 Years	68	84
41-60 Years	11	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>100</b>

#### 4.3 Gender of Respondents

Respondents were required to indicate their gender. The findings revealed that majority (52%) of the respondents were male and the remaining 48% of them were female as shown in Table 2. The findings therefore reveal that the sector is majorly dominated by men.

**Table 2: Gender of Respondents**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Male	42	52
Female	39	48
<b>Total</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>100</b>

#### **4.4 Marital Status**

Respondents were further required to indicate their marital status. From the descriptive statistics shown in Table 3, majority (62%) of the respondents indicated that they are married while 38% indicated that they are single. The findings therefore reveal that majority of the respondents in this study had family responsibilities to take care of.

**Table 3: Marital Status**

<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Single	31	62
Married	50	38
<b>Total</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>100</b>

#### **4.5 Department**

Respondents were further required to indicate which department they work. From the descriptive statistics shown in Table 4, 32% of the respondents indicated that they work in customer operations department, 25% in business enterprise department while 19% worked in sales department. In addition, 12% worked in strategy and innovation department, 7% in technical department while 5% worked in finance department. The findings therefore reveal that almost all departments were well represented.

**Table 4: Department**

Department	Frequency	Percentage
Customer Operations	26	32
Finance	4	5
Strategy and Innovation	10	12
Enterprise Business Unit	20	25
Sales	15	19
Technical	6	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>100</b>

#### 4.6 Management Level

Respondents were further required to indicate their management level. From the descriptive statistics shown in Table 5, majority (72%) of the respondents were in middle level management while 28% were in low level management. The findings therefore reveal that majority of the respondents has first-hand information requested.

**Table 5: Management Level**

Management Level	Frequency	Percentage
Middle Level	58	72
Low Level	23	28
<b>Total</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>100</b>

#### 4.7 Descriptive Results as per the Objectives

##### 4.7.3 Leave Policy

Respondents were required to indicate the extent to which they agreed to various aspects on leave policy their influence on employee satisfaction. Items that were measured on a five point Likert-Type scale ranging from 1 being “Strongly Disagree” to 5 being “Strongly Agree”. Means of between 3.7391 - 4.2174 and standard deviations of between 0.59974- 0.81002 were registered. The study findings therefore revealed that majority of the respondents agreed that there is provision for annual leave for a great extent (4.2174). They further agreed that they get time off to care for family emergencies (4.1739). However, it was clear from the research findings that the respondents agreed that there is compensation not to take leave to a moderate extent (3.7391). The findings are as presented in Table 6.

**Table 6: Leave Policy**

<b>Aspects</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
Provision for annual leave	4.2174	.59974
Compensation not to take leave	3.7391	.81002
Provision for Maternity/annual leave	3.7628	.66217
Carrying forward leave days	3.7826	.67126
Sick leave	3.7468	.65762
Getting time off to care for family emergencies	4.1739	.65033
Being able to schedule your preferred day-offs	4.0397	.65971

The results reveals that, in every working condition there is need to take leave from normal duties so that an employee and can relax and get energized to work. This is in line with earlier studies which indicates that, behavioral outcomes of both directions of conflict between work and personal life include reduced work effort, reduced performance, and increased absenteeism and turnover, increased stress and burnout, (Anderson, Coffey and Byerly, 2002), cognitive difficulties such as staying awake, lack of concentration, and low alertness, (MacEwen and Barling, 2004), and reduced levels of general health and energy.

#### **4.8 Employee Satisfaction**

Respondents were finally required to indicate the extent to which they agreed to various aspects on employee satisfaction in telecommunication industry. Items that were measured on a five point Likert-Type scale ranging from 1 being “Strongly Disagree” to 5 being “Strongly Agree”. Means of between 2.4559 – 4.6522 and standard deviations of between 0.54374- 0.97600 were registered. The study findings therefore revealed that majority of the respondents agreed that provision of teleworking policy has influenced employee satisfaction to a great extent (4.6552). They further agreed that provision of employee welfare has influenced employee satisfaction to a great extent (4.2174). On the contrary, it was clear from the research findings that majority of the respondents were of the opinion that provision for leave has influenced employee satisfaction to a moderate extent (2.4559). The findings are as presented in Table 7.

**Table 7: Employee Satisfaction**

Aspects	Mean	SD
Provision for leave has influenced employee satisfaction	2.4559	.54374
Provision for personal development has influenced employee satisfaction	4.0435	.97600
Provision of teleworking policy has influenced employee satisfaction	4.6522	.48698
Provision of employee welfare has influenced employee satisfaction	4.2174	.90235
Generally will you say you are satisfied with your job with regard to work life balance policies and practices	3.8696	.96786

According to Mullins, (2010), the level of employee satisfaction is affected by a range of variables relating to individual, social, cultural, organizational and environmental factors. These different factors all affect the employee satisfaction of certain individuals in a given set of circumstances but not necessarily in others. Broader approaches to employee satisfaction aim to give the person improved empowerment and job enrichment through greater autonomy and authority over the planning, execution and control of their work.

Factors associated with high employee satisfaction include variety of meaningful tasks, unobtrusive supervision, greater responsibility, self-pacing, chances of self-development and feedback on performance. On the other hand, employee satisfaction can be increased by careful selection, setting appropriate objectives, planning the development of employees, keeping employees informed and recognizing achievements, (Specter, 2007). When people are dissatisfied with their jobs they tend to withdraw. That is, they are frequently absent and are likely to quit their jobs, (Greenberg & Baron, 2008).

## **5.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Summary of Findings**

#### **5.1.1 Leave Policy**

The findings of the study reveals that leave policy positively influenced employee satisfaction. The study findings revealed that majority of the respondents agreed that there is provision for annual leave for a great extent. They further agreed that they get time off to care for family emergencies. However, it was clear from the research findings that the respondents agreed that there is compensation not to take leave to a moderate extent. Results of the inferential statistics such as unstandardized regression coefficients show a positive effect on employee satisfaction. This further indicates that leave policy had a significant effect on employee satisfaction as

indicated by the low p values. Regression model shows that there is positive relationship between leave policy and employee satisfaction.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

The study concludes that provision for leave influences employee satisfaction.

## **5.3 Recommendations**

### **5.3.1 Leave Policy**

The organizations should ensure that they adopt and implement leave policies so as to ensure employees are given time to break from their job responsibilities. Employees should be given opportunity to schedule on when they would like to take their leave at a convenience basis. All the leaves should be given without any discrimination and as per the employment Act.

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