

WELFARE PROGRAMMES AND EMPLOYEE PRODUCTIVITY IN SOFTCLANS TECHNOLOGIES LTD, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Employee productivity is a crucial element of the modern company landscape, marked by globalization and technology advancements that have heightened the demand for skilled personnel. Considering the burgeoning software development sector in Kenya, organisations are eager to attain elevated productivity levels among their staff. Organisations encounter difficulties in staff retention due to heightened competition in the field, particularly with the influx of multinational corporations. The primary aim of the study was to analyse the impact of employee welfare programs on productivity within the software development industry in Kenya, specifically at SoftClans Technologies Ltd. Social exchange theory, path-goal theory, and the Technology Acceptance Model are all proposed as theoretical basis for this research. The study employed a descriptive survey methodology to get insights into individuals' views, values, and opinions, thereby enhancing comprehension of the phenomena under investigation. The study population consisted of 1,520 individuals, with a random selection procedure employed to pick 317 representatives from the entire population. Management levels categorised the population into top, middle, and lower tiers. Primary data for the research was collected via semi-structured questionnaires. A pilot study was executed to enhance the data collection instrument, and expert assessment was solicited to appraise content validity.

Reliability was assessed utilizing Cronbach's alpha to evaluate internal consistency, targeting a value of 0.7 or more. Data regarding Kenya's software development sector was obtained through internet journals, library resources, and existing documentation. The data underwent analysis through descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics summarized the data, organized it for display, and prepared for subsequent analysis, including correlation, regression, and inferential statistics. The collected data was evaluated using a mix of qualitative and quantitative techniques in this study. To make the data more presentable and suitable for inferential statistics, correlation, and regression, descriptive statistics was used to provide a brief description of the data. The research established that employee security initiatives enhance productivity by fostering a secure and supportive workplace atmosphere. Measures for physical safety, initiatives for emotional well-being, dispute resolution strategies, and work-life balance alternatives collectively enhance stress reduction, improve focus, and elevate employee motivation. Employees that see security and value are more inclined to reciprocate with enhanced commitment and productivity, so confirming the Social Exchange Theory.

Key words: Training and Development Programmes, Succession Programmes, Employee Productivity.

INTRODUCTION

Employee productivity is a crucial element of the modern company landscape, marked by globalization and technology advancements that have heightened the demand for skilled personnel (Pradhan & Hati, 2022). Consequently, organizations are increasingly acknowledging the significant contribution of productive people to attaining their goals and objectives for enduring competitive advantage in the current business landscape (Haldane, 2017). Singh (2020) defines employee productivity as the output made by employees against the roles they are assigned. The output may be informed of units of productions, numbers of customers served, or achievement of predetermined Key Performance Indicators (KPI). According to Cooper (2018), employee productivity refers to an individual's capacity to possess qualities that enable them to operate efficiently and effectively. Prior researchers Pajrin *et al.* (2022) and Hauff *et al.* (2022) frequently identify eight critical attributes of proficient employees: learning, personal organization, time management, stress management, creativity, decision-making, teamwork, and happiness.

Programs designed to improve workers' productivity tend to have a beneficial effect on output. According to Ghamari, Zeinabadi, Arasteh, and Behrangi (2018), it is more cost-effective to acquire and sustain organizational productivity by focusing on identifying, developing, and retaining productive individuals. Furthermore, productivity at the individual level contribute to the overall success of businesses and nations. Jones *et al.* (2018) assert that the objectives of workplace employee productivity programs are to enhance morale and productivity while reducing healthcare costs (Gubler *et al.*, 2017).

Many global organizations have been focusing on employee productivity. In high income countries, big investments in employee welfare programs have been shown to deliver large productivity gains. For instance, a comprehensive wellness program that includes free meals, health services, recreational activities, and other benefits has been found to be associated with higher employee productivity (Zhang, 2018) in companies such as Apple, Facebook, and Google. Apple's wellness program is known for its comprehensive strategy, providing employees with access to state-of-the-art fitness centers, on-site medical clinics, and wellness seminars.

Rivaldo & Nabella (2023) state that these facilities enhance the physical health of workers and provide a sense of community and overall well-being. Apple's comprehensive strategy also includes mental health support such as access to counsellors and stress management programs. It's a sure way Apple keeps its employees engaged and focused which in turn boosts output. When workers feel valued and appreciated, they are more apt to go the extra mile in their work, which enhances the company's capacity to innovate and stay competitive.

Likewise, Facebook's productivity efforts aim to develop an amicable and balanced environment at work. The company offers a range of perks, including free food, on-site health care, fitness

classes, generous maternity leave and child-care support. These benefits help relieve the pressure and distractions employees face in their daily lives, allowing them to focus better and perform at their best (Krekel *et al.*, 2019). Facebook places importance on work-life balance by providing flexible working hours and the option to work remotely, which has been shown to improve job satisfaction and output.

The introduction of Employee Wellness Programs (EWPs) has greatly affected the productivity of employees in the United States of America (USA) since 2009. Large organizations have been leading the way with rich employee wellness programs, but mid-sized and smaller companies have quickly followed with similar initiatives based on strong evidence of their effectiveness (Hui & Grandner, 2015). Wellness programs are designed to improve employees' physical and mental health, reduce stress, and increase overall job satisfaction, all of which are critical factors in improving productivity. Many US companies provide full health insurance policies that cover treatment for dental, mental health, and medical care. These comprehensive strategies seek to improve employees' physical and emotional health, leading to reduced absenteeism and a significant boost in productivity (Bloom *et al.*, 2022).

Firms in Nigeria are advised to implement EWP programs to safeguard the well-being of the workers and increase their efficiency. Implementation of such programs is regulated by social conventions, ensuring adherence to the standards (Itodo & Abang, 2018). Efficient management of a disciplined workforce is important for business success, and EWP programs form an essential part of this strategy. According to Agubata *et al.* (2022), firms that have efficient policies and procedures exhibit high levels of production because motivated people tend to follow these policies and procedures. The underlying concept is that content and adequately motivated workers are more likely to work hard, thus contributing to profitability of the business. This connection between the worker well-being programs and productivity stresses the need to invest in the well-being of the workers.

Productivity improvement of the employees is one of the main aims in human resource management (HRM) in South Africa. Previously, there were measures aimed at improving productivity and developed in the mining industry for ensuring the safety and productivity of workers (Conradie *et al.*, 2016). Later, those metrics became more complex and included measures for the promotion of health and well-being of workers, which positively impacted the level of productivity. The development has been promoted by such an institution as South African Board for People Practices (SABPP). With the help of the SABPP, HR specialists have developed such measures that stress the importance of safety, health, and well-being of the workers as the main factors of their productivity (Dawood *et al.*, 2022).

This standard, recognized as one of the thirteen Human Resources Standards by SABPP, addresses a variety of matters and activities to make a total approach towards improving efficiency in the

workplace. It is supported by evidence that these techniques work. Research by Abbott & Meyer (2015), Condon & Edwards (2018), and Koomson & Churchill (2022) confirms that organizations that implement safety, health, and well-being activities achieve significant improvements in productivity levels of their employees. Through creating a workplace environment where the well-being of employees is promoted, organizations reduce absenteeism, increase engagement, and improve productivity levels.

The need for computer software engineers in Africa witnessed a tremendous increase in 2021 due to the global economic crisis. The Africa Developer Environment Report (2021), done by Google, states that there has been a growth in the developer environment in the region despite challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. There was a 3.8% increase in the number of professional developers from the previous year, amounting to 716,000 developers where 38% of them were hired by companies outside Africa. The growth of the software development industry has highlighted the need for measures to maintain high levels of productivity. The increasing number of developers means there is increasing potential for innovation and technological development, which is crucial for economic development. The ability to motivate skilled developers directly impacts productivity, hence the need for good management practices.

In 2022, Kenya, Egypt, South Africa, and Tunisia each had an increase of at least 3,100 developers. In 2021, they each gained 2,000 developers. On the other hand, Nigeria's developer community rose by 5,000, representing a 6 percent increase from 2020. There was an increase of 3,000 software engineers in Morocco. According to the Google Africa Developer Ecosystem Report for 2021 and 2022, Senegal, Algeria, Ethiopia, Cameroon, and Mozambique each had 1,000 new developers, resulting in 26,000 new developers throughout the continent. According to the Google Africa Developer Ecosystem Report of 2021 and 2022, it is anticipated that most engineering teams worldwide will persist in working remotely even after the pandemic. This is particularly advantageous for African developers, as the study indicates that only 13 percent of experts worked virtually before the pandemic, whereas the current figure is 74 percent. Since firms consider information technology important, information technology personnel are thus considered strategic assets (Jaiswal *et al.*, 2022).

Statement of the Problem

Employee productivity is one of the most important considerations for firms, especially in industries that require a lot of technical knowledge, such as software development. In this case, productivity can be expressed in terms of software development efficiency, sales revenues, and volumes, as well as improved performance scores. Nonetheless, productivity can be compromised because of lack of employee welfare programs that are well structured. As noted by Tringali, Sperati, Ivaldi, Cella, and Antoniotti (2022), given the fact that firms employ people rather than abilities, any change in the well-being of an employee emotionally, psychologically, or physically must affect his or her performance on the job. Nevertheless, some organizations believe that paying

a high salary is enough for productivity and dedication (Ruvalcaba *et al.*, 2022). Even though financial motivations are crucial, failure to address the needs of employees on an emotional and social basis might result in a reduction in productivity (Singh, 2020). Cooper (2018) and Farooq and Sultana (2022) assert that without adequate welfare measures, there will be reduced commitment of workers and poor collaboration among teams, hence, affecting the performance of the teams. This issue is especially applicable in the software development industry, where employee performance plays an important role in determining the success of the projects. It is a challenging industry that requires competent and dedicated individuals. The software development industry in Kenya is developing rapidly, but it is faced by the challenge of retaining talent.

For SoftClans Technologies Ltd, which is an average-sized software development company, this problem is aggravated because of the dependency on a limited number of employees who possess the necessary knowledge of project management. Another difficulty that SoftClans faces is the cultural and linguistic diversity of the staff. It may be perceived as an advantage but at the same time, it results in problems with communication, which cause misunderstandings, mistakes, late submissions, low productivity, and disagreements among people. There are also internal problems such as absence of clear requirements, ineffective testing procedures, documentation problems, poor project management, and high employee turnover that negatively affect the productivity.

Despite the increasing interest in employees and their productivity in the software development sector in Kenya, minimal studies exist on how EWP are used to achieve employee productivity in the sector. For instance, Daddie, Andrews, Iroanwusi, and Princewill (2018) conducted a study of select insurance companies in Portharcourt to determine the impact of an employee welfare scheme on worker productivity. Concerned with whether happier workers are more productive workers, Krekel *et al.*, (2019) examined this question empirically. Kemboi (2022) looked at how Kenyan FinTech companies' use of software development quality management standards affected their customers' experiences. The impact of staff wellbeing on commitment at the Judicial Service Commission was assessed by Muthoni *et al.*, (2020). Rotich (2020) looked on how incentive strategy affected turnover in Kenyan telecommunications companies by focusing on reward plans, appraisals, wage reviews, and grading.

In their 2018 research, Moruri, Evans, and Jennifer looked at how different motivating variables affected workers' output in the judicial systems of Kenya's North Rift Region. The impact of employee welfare initiatives on productivity was investigated by Waititu *et al.*, (2017). None of the referenced studies looked at how employee welfare programs affected productivity, especially in Kenya's rapidly expanding software development industry, even though they all succeeded in what they set out to do. Therefore, research on the subject is necessary. The purpose of this research is to fill these knowledge gaps by analysing how SoftClans Technologies LTD., a software development company in Kenya, uses employee welfare initiatives to boost productivity. The

results of this study will shed light on how successful these programs have been and give suggestions on how to boost productivity by enhancing employee welfare programs.

Empirical Review

The Influence of Training and Development Programmes on Employee Productivity

Organizational capacity building includes training and development programs, the purpose of which is to raise employee performance so that the business can reach its objectives. The primary goal of training and development is to improve employees' performance on the job by expanding their knowledge and skill sets. Training and development as a function of employee productivity has been the subject of earlier studies. Their research settings (Ellmer & Raichel, 2018; Emanikor, 2020; Samwel, 2018) differed from the software development industry, though, and their conclusions were either mixed (Beloor, Swamy, Nanjundeswaraswamy, Swamy, & Nagesh, 2020), positive (Mwashila, 2018; Sendawula, Nakyejwe Kimuli, Bananuka, & Najjemba Muganga, 2018; Kirimi & Maende, 2018), negative, or exclusively focused on training and development (Njeri & Mose, 2018, Yarrow, 2017).

Knowledge management, talent management, and staff development were the foci of Mantow and Nilasari's (2022) investigation on their effects on work performance. Two hundred and fifty IT workers residing in the Jakarta metropolitan region made up the study's sample. Analysis of data by means of the Structural Equation Model. Knowledge management and talent management were shown to influence employee performance, according to the research. One study found that the employee development variable correlated with knowledge management and performance on the job, but it had no correlation with talent management and performance on the job. Knowledge management, such as an internal forum for staff to impart wisdom, and talent management, such as initiatives to improve workers' skill sets and performance on the job, are essential components of every successful business.

In order to understand talent management in the insurance sector, Kajwang (2022) conducted research. Research shows that talent management significantly improves business results and offers companies an advantage in the market. Therefore, for insurance businesses to achieve their objectives, it is critical for HR managers to include the concept of "talent management" into their strategic planning. Furthermore, the study's authors concluded that in order to effectively manage and cultivate talent, businesses need implement strategies for talent acquisition, talent identification, and retention. We cannot generalize the findings of the 2022 Kajwang research to Nation Media Group Limited since the two studies were conducted in distinct contexts.

Beloor *et al.* (2020) conducted research in 2020 on the relationship between welfare facilities and work satisfaction in textile companies in the Bangalore area of Karnataka State, India. The research found a correlation between an employee's experience, educational level, compensation, and work happiness. Moreover, the study underscored the importance of implementing employee security programmes as an employee welfare strategy for increasing job satisfaction. The component of

training and development was highly correlated to job satisfaction, while the facility was least correlated to job satisfaction, personal benefits were moderately correlated to employee welfare, and health benefits were least correlated to employee welfare. Beloor *et al.* (2020) focus was narrow as compared to the current study, which will focus on employee security programmes among other employee welfare programmes and how they affect employee productivity in the software development sector in Kenya.

Employee welfare's effect on business output was studied by Ellmer and Raichel (2018) at the University of Salzburg. The research concluded that HRM programs should consider both financial success and the well-being of employees. The performance viewpoint is on harnessing the potential of crowd workers and molding that potential into real performance in line with corporate objectives. Human resource management (HRM) methods pertaining to crowd work have social ramifications that are highlighted from a welfare viewpoint. According to the study's findings, every one of these elements work design, planning, coordination, hiring and selection, performance management, training and development, and compensation should be taken into account from a performance standpoint. Quality of work, pay, prospects for employment, and power dynamics in group work should all be considered from the perspective of employee welfare. Ellmer & Raichel (2018) performed their research at Salzburg University, which is neither in Kenya nor involved in the software development industry like the present study.

Mwashila (2018) examined the effect of professional growth on the productivity of faculty at public institutions in the Coast Region of Kenya. The goals of the research were to ascertain the effect of career planning, promotion, and mentorship on the productivity of academic staff at public institutions in Kenya's Coast Region. Most faculty members have deliberated on their professional futures. Moreover, the research institutions were deemed to provide academic personnel with opportunities for professional growth. In the public institutions of Kenya's Coast Region, it was discovered that mentoring had a substantial impact on the productivity of the academic staff.

The research also found that the colleges and universities under scrutiny lacked effective methods of evaluating performance and measuring progress toward objectives. In addition, the academic staff at the institutions had access to well-developed training programs. In the public institutions of Kenya's Coast Region, promotion opportunities were tied heavily to the academic skills of faculty members. In addition, each university has policies in place outlining the steps necessary to advance in one's career. Mwashila (2018) focused on one aspect of employee welfare programmes, career development in relation to their performance. However, the current study will assess career development programmes amongst three other employee welfare programmes and how they affect the productivity of employees in the software development sector.

The effect of training and employee engagement on performance in Uganda's health business was studied by Sendawula *et al.* (2018). A correlational cross-sectional design was used in the study

procedure. While training was shown to have a significant link with performance in the regression study, employee involvement was found to be a more significant predictor of performance. A positive and statistically significant relationship between training and job productivity was shown by the correlation research. There seems to be a strong positive correlation between employee engagement and employee performance, according to correlation research data. It was also shown that employee engagement moderated the relationship between training and performance to some extent.

Emanikor (2020) examined the impact of talent management techniques on the performance of workers in the telecommunications industry using the framework of talent management theory and the competence-based perspective theory. Human resource workforce or planning, recruiting and selection, the learning development cycle, the incentives policy, and employee performance were shown to have a substantial positive link in Kenyan telecommunications enterprises. The research concluded that talent management methods are useful for companies to use in their quest to raise employee performance. Findings showed that incentives management, recruiting, and selection had the least influence on employee performance in Kenyan telecommunications enterprises, whereas human planning and learning and development strategies had the most impact.

In 2018, Samwel set out to investigate how promotions affected the output of employees at large commercial banks in Nairobi City County, Kenya. The study's descriptive research strategy was based on the self-efficacy theory of career advancement. There was a total of 22,856 participants from the six commercial banks in Nairobi City County who were members of the clergy or had managerial positions. A grand number of 377 individuals were selected using the Krejcie and Morgan sample size determination table. There was a favorable and statistically significant relationship between employee progress and production, according to the regression coefficient. Therefore, a hard worker would feel appreciated and respected at work, which would increase the likelihood that they would remain for the long term.

The purpose of the research by Kirimi and Maende (2018) was to identify the impact of training and development strategies on worker productivity in Kenya's Ministry of Labor and Social Protection. The research looked specifically at how different forms of training affected workers' productivity in the Labor and Social Protection Ministry. According to the results, coaching has a beneficial effect on workers' professions and personal lives by encouraging them to set and work toward objectives. Employees reported higher levels of job satisfaction after participating in job rotations because they were exposed to new types of work that relieved the mental and physical strain of doing the same thing every day. Employees were able to bond via role-playing, leading to better office interactions overall.

The Ministry of Education and Skills Development provides apprenticeships, which are formalized training programs that allow learners to earn a credential and get valuable job experience that may

be taken elsewhere. Kirimi and Maende (2018) focused on one aspect of employee welfare programmes, training, and development. In this research, we'll look at how three more aspects of software developers' well-being influence their output.

Several Energy State Corporations were the subjects of an investigation by Njeri and Mose (2018) on the origins and consequences of training and development. This research used a descriptive technique since the responses were statistical in nature. As part of their methodology and designs, the researchers considered the study's demographic, sample design, data collection tools and procedures, and data analysis. Questionnaires were used to collect data. Training expenditures have a favorable and statistically significant effect on the outcomes of employee development programs run by Kenya's energy state companies. Training and development program outcomes were positively and significantly affected by employee involvement, according to the study, which was conducted at energy state businesses in Kenya.

Researchers in Kenya also discovered that energy state enterprises benefited greatly from government control in terms of training and development. Training and development outcomes at energy state businesses in Kenya were shown to be substantially influenced by employee motivation. In addition to conducting the research in the energy industry, Njeri and Mose (2018) zeroed out on training and development as an element of employee welfare programs. In this research, we'll look at how three more aspects of software developers' well-being influence their output. Yarrow (2017) analyzed the pros and cons of Equity Bank's training and development program by looking at how it affected employee performance. Learning more about Equity Bank's training and development processes, how training and development programs affect employee performance, how employee motivation affects performance, and how training and development contribute to performance overall were the goals of the study.

A stratified random sample of 138 was drawn from the staff registration of Equity Bank, which served as the sample frame. The research on the effectiveness of training and development programs revealed that Equity Bank offers courses for a wide variety of jobs inside the company. Employees' skill sets, knowledge bases, and the business have all benefited from these training initiatives. To succeed in today's cutthroat business climate, companies must have comprehensive training programs. Yarrow (2017) also focused on one aspect of employee welfare programmes, training, and development in addition to undertaking the study in the banking sector. In this research, we'll look at how three more aspects of software development workers' well-being influence their output.

The Influence of Succession Programmes on Employee Productivity

Succession planning is the process by which a corporation identifies and trains existing employees to assume future leadership roles within the organization. Succession planning allows for the recruitment of top talent, the enhancement of that talent's expertise, and the subsequent readiness

of that individual to take on greater responsibilities. Senior management should conduct frequent reviews of both their current and potential next-level leaders as part of their succession planning. Previous research has looked at how succession planning affects productivity in the workplace. However, their study contexts (Chirchir & Koros, 2021; Thuo, Senaji, & Kirimi, 2018; Kariuki Ochiri, 2017; Waititu, Kihara & Senaji, 2017) have been different from the software development sector and their findings have been either positive or focused on the element of success planning only (Rotich & Kiiru, 2021; Ahmed, 2020; Olayo, 2019; Kurup & Rishi, 2016).

Hassan and Bichanga (2022) investigated how succession planning affected the sustainability of family-owned firms in the Nairobi metropolitan region of Kenya. The study used qualitative and quantitative data in a mixed-methods approach. Using the Yamane formula, 176 participants were selected by stratified random sampling. Regression results showed that for every one-unit improvement in successor identification, family-owned firms' sustainability increased by 0.197 units. The sustainability of family-owned businesses would grow significantly by 0.266 for every unit increase in the successors' capacity. A significant improvement of 0.332 was seen in the sustainability of family-owned businesses with every unit increase in leadership commitment. Family members are eager to pass the business on to the next generation, the study found that training future leaders gave them the financial and entrepreneurial chops to take the company to the next level, and leadership's dedication is the single most important factor in ensuring the long-term viability of family-owned companies.

The purpose of Siambi's (2022) research was to fill gaps in our understanding of leadership succession planning and its effects on businesses by reviewing relevant theoretical, conceptual, and empirical works. A theoretical framework outlining the interconnections between the recognized components of this new phenomena was also an objective of the research. Based on the findings, it is recommended to establish generational organizational transition policies, processes, practices, and programs to guarantee a smooth handoff of leadership responsibilities. This research delves at how talent development policies affect the dynamics of leadership retention, succession planning, and the smooth evolution of a company from one stage to another. Research was carried out in Nigeria by Salau (2022) to examine the effect of succession planning on the performance of SMEs. The impact was examined in terms of talent management, reward management, career management, and training and development. Rate of worker turnover, customer happiness, and new product introductions were the metrics used to evaluate performance. Participants were selected from among the registered members of the National Association of Small and Medium Enterprises, namely the Lagos State Chapter, using the standard random sampling technique. One hundred and fifty-five surveys were returned. For the most part, data is analyzed using regression analysis. Results show that training and development, reward management, and people management all have a say in succession planning, which in turn has a major impact on SMEs' performance. To better prepare for succession and increase overall performance, the study indicates that owners of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)

should prioritize on training and development, talent management, and reward management procedures.

Research was carried out in Nairobi City County, Kenya, by Rotich and Kiiru (2021) to investigate the connection between the Ministry of ICT, Innovation, and Youth Affairs' succession planning and employee performance. Talent theory served as the foundation for their investigation. Data for the investigation came from a descriptive research strategy. The purpose of this study was to poll 332 senior government employees from the Ministry of Youth, Innovation, and Information and Communications Technology. Our effective data collection process included a stratified random sampling approach applied to a total of 175 participants.

According to the results, employees are less likely to contemplate quitting the firm when succession planning approaches are used, which in turn increases their engagement and dedication to their employment. These findings support the study's conclusion that the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology, Innovation, and Youth Affairs' staff performance is positively, significantly, and considerably affected by succession planning. Internal job rotation, successor identification and evaluation, and ongoing management training were cited as major factors in this accomplishment. Rotich and Kiiru (2021) focused on one aspect of employee welfare programmes, succession planning amongst one parastatal. The current study will look at an additional three factors of employee welfare and how they affect employee productivity in the software development sector.

The study by Chirchir and Koros (2021), based on Schärmer's U-Theory and using a descriptive research methodology, aimed to determine whether succession planning improved the performance of County Government Employees in Kenya. Staff performance in Baringo County was studied with a focus on three areas: human resource planning, selection procedures, and career planning. The research addressed 14 senior personnel and 57 middle-level supervisors utilizing a questionnaire instrument. The research showed that the County Governments offered seminars and workshops for professional development. Staff members' abilities were often benchmarked to encourage growth. Mentoring programs were also discovered, which helped employees transition into new positions.

Staff performance was impacted when these were being implemented to prepare employees for promotion. Staff performance was also shown to be influenced by the selection strategy, which included both internal and external selection. Human resource management has a substantial impact on productivity as well. The County's measures helped keep layoffs to a minimum. An independent County Public Service Board existed, and performance reviews were conducted on a regular basis. Chirchir and Koros (2021) focusing on one aspect of employee welfare programmes, succession planning, and their context was county government. The current study will look at an

additional three factors of employee welfare and how they affect employee productivity in the Software development sector.

This was the driving issue behind Kariuki and Ochiri's (2017) study on the relationship between organizational productivity and strategic succession planning strategies used by Githunguri Dairy Cooperative Society. The participants in this study were managers from the Githunguri Dairy Cooperative Society, both at the senior and intermediate levels. This investigation examined all 165 senior and intermediate managers of the Githunguri Dairy Cooperative Society. This study narrowed its focus to analyze the results of four programs: strategic training, benchmarking, mentoring, and human resource planning. Job descriptions that align with key performance indicators (KPI) are regularly reviewed based on the study findings.

Within the Githunguri Dairy Co-operative Society, employees were paired with mentors who provided guidance in a way that met the business's specific requirements. The firm compared the expertise of its upper management to that of the greatest businesses in the world and in Kenya. Finally, training policies are in place to encourage staff members to continue their education and bring their skill sets up to par with those of their foreign counterparts. As a result, HR initiatives like mentorship, benchmarking, and strategic training all contribute to increased output inside a firm. Again, Kariuki and Ochiri's (2017) study focused on one aspect of employee welfare programmes, succession planning amongst one parastatal. The current study looked at an additional three factors of employee welfare and how they affect employee productivity in the software development sector.

The effect of succession planning on Family Bank, Kenya's performance was studied by Ahmed (2020). These research questions served as the basis for the investigation: The performance of Family Bank, how has talent management affected them? How have Family Bank's current succession planning strategies affected the bank's success? How has the examination of the skills and competence gaps affected the performance of Family Bank? The research indicated that the succession-planning procedures at the bank entailed preparing for a change in leadership, and it guaranteed that top-performing workers were maintained and rewarded.

Employees' self-reported professional aspirations were foundational to the bank's succession planning process since they allowed for the identification of key competencies that aspiring leaders should work to develop. Problems with leadership development and succession planning persisted despite the bank's best efforts. Ahmad's (2020) study was in the banking sector context in addition to focusing on one aspect of employee welfare programmes, succession planning. The current study will look at an additional three factors of employee welfare and how they affect employee productivity in the software development sector.

Olayo (2019) conducted research on how succession planning affects productivity in Kenya's workforce using a desk-based technique. In particular, the report provided empirical proof in the form of previously conducted research that examined the effects of succession planning on both individual workers and their employers. According to the results of the survey, most companies use a defined succession planning process to provide high-potential workers with the skills they need to succeed in management roles. As a result, succession-planning programs have become an important component in employee retention and, by extension, enhanced productivity. In Kenya, Olayo's (2019) research focused only on how succession planning can affect worker output. The current study will look at an additional three factors of employee welfare and how they affect employee productivity in the software development sector.

Waititu *et al.*, 2017 used a descriptive survey research methodology to examine how employee wellbeing initiatives affected productivity. Examining how the policies of the Kenya Railways Corporation affected occupational health, succession planning, training and development, employee referral, and pay were the specific aims of the research. The study included a total of 1,720 workers. Academic and administrative personnel made up the two halves of the target population. A total of 172 individuals from this category were surveyed using stratified random sampling. The study's conclusions stressed the need for the company to care for its workers to increase productivity. The research conducted by Waititu *et al.* (2017) focused only on physical and mental elements while ignoring other ones, and it was conducted in the train business rather than the IT industry. The present research will examine four employee welfare programs in the software development industry: employee security, health protection, succession planning, and training and development.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Descriptive survey research was used for this investigation. The target population was a total of 1,520 workers from SoftClans Technologies Ltd as the target group. According to SoftClans Technologies Ltd Human Resource Data (2023), the organization is divided into four (4) strata comprising: top management (15 staff), middle-level management (27 staff), low-level management (64 staff), and general staff (80 staff). We are so aiming for 1,520 people. Simple random selection within each stratum to pick 317 respondents, which is 10% of the overall population was used. This guaranteed that everyone's voice was heard. In order to collect primary data for the study, semi-structured questionnaires were used. The collected data was evaluated using a mix of qualitative and quantitative techniques in this study. To make the data more presentable and suitable for inferential statistics, correlation, and regression, descriptive statistics were used to provide a brief description of the data.

RESEARCH RESULTS

The principal findings indicated favorable relationships between every welfare program and production. Employee security programs, encompassing physical safety and work-life balance activities, demonstrated a reduction in workplace stress and an enhancement of attention. Health protection initiatives, including preventive health screenings and mental health assistance, led to decreased absenteeism and enhanced resilience. Training and development programs proved to be the most influential, exhibiting significant connections with productivity by providing employees with vital technical, interpersonal, and leadership competencies. Succession planning, encompassing mentorship and leadership development, greatly impacted productivity by enhancing engagement and equipping personnel for future positions.

Conclusion

Addressing employees' health requirements fosters a robust workforce adept at managing the challenges of a dynamic work setting. Training and development appeared as the most significant welfare category, with high positive relationships with production. These programs equip individuals with technical, interpersonal, and leadership skills, ensuring their competence and adaptability in an industry characterized by rapid technological development.

Continuous learning is essential in the technology business, as obsolete skills can hinder effectiveness and impede organisational progress. Succession planning enhances productivity by equipping individuals for leadership positions and promoting a feeling of career continuity. By means of mentorship, career trajectories, and leadership cultivation, SoftClans can sustain a proficient leadership pipeline. This investment in succession planning fosters employee loyalty and engagement, as individuals recognize prospects for career advancement inside the organisation. Moreover, welfare initiatives substantially improve productivity at SoftClans by meeting employees' diverse demands. The research emphasizes the necessity of incorporating welfare efforts into organisational culture, as these programs enhance employee well-being and foster a high-performance environment matched with organisational objectives.

Recommendations

Expanding soft skills training is another key recommendation. The study revealed that while employees value soft skills training, they also see areas for improvement. Essential soft skills such as communication, teamwork, and problem-solving are fundamental to fostering a collaborative workplace. SoftClans could strengthen these skills through targeted workshops, team-building exercises, and practical training sessions that emphasize real-world applications of these skills in the workplace. By enhancing soft skills training, SoftClans can cultivate a more collaborative work environment where employees communicate effectively and work cohesively across teams, leading to smoother operations, improved morale, and, ultimately, higher productivity.

The study also suggests broadening career pathways to accommodate a wider range of career aspirations among employees. Structured career progression pathways scored moderately, indicating that while they provide some direction, additional flexibility or customization could make them more attractive. SoftClans could introduce more individualized career tracks or role-specific development plans, which would enable employees to choose pathways that align with their personal goals and professional strengths. A wider array of career options can enhance job satisfaction and loyalty, as employees will see that their aspirations can be fulfilled within the company. This approach can motivate employees to invest in long-term growth with SoftClans, fostering a committed and driven workforce.

Increasing leadership development opportunities is also recommended, particularly for junior and mid-level employees who aspire to managerial roles. Leadership training received high marks from employees, reflecting a positive reception and an interest in acquiring managerial skills. To maximize this interest, SoftClans could consider expanding leadership development programs, pairing formal training with mentorship from current leaders. By creating a mentorship network within the organization, junior employees can gain insights from experienced managers, preparing them to take on future leadership roles. This reinforcement of succession planning efforts strengthens organizational resilience by ensuring that future leaders are well-prepared, engaged, and aligned with SoftClans' goals.

Enhancing preventive health measures could further improve productivity and employee well-being. While health screenings and physical fitness initiatives are in place and well-regarded, SoftClans could expand these efforts by introducing incentives for physical activity, such as wellness challenges or subsidized gym memberships. These initiatives would encourage employees to adopt healthier lifestyles, which can improve physical well-being, reduce stress, and contribute to mental clarity and focus at work. By promoting a health-conscious culture, SoftClans can reduce health-related disruptions and ensure that employees are more engaged and energetic in their roles.

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